**CONNECT TO SUCCESS**

BUILDING GLOBAL BRIDGES, EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

**POWERED BY ULSTER UNIVERSITY**

**CORPORATE MENTORING PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Connect to Success (C2S) Corporate Mentoring Program is dedicated to advancing gender equality and enhancing Northern Ireland’s economy by empowering women-owned businesses (WOBs) through mentorship from some of the world’s most successful companies. This program offers WOBs the invaluable opportunity to focus on strategic growth by working "on" their businesses, rather than getting caught up in day-to-day operations. With guidance from a team of subject matter experts from top global corporations, participants will develop and implement effective scale-up strategies.

Through this program, WOBs are paired with teams of experts from renowned corporations, gaining critical insights to strengthen and accelerate the growth of their enterprises. Over the course of a year, mentors and mentees will meet monthly for two-hour sessions, either in person or virtually, with ongoing, informal communication throughout the month. The program’s objective is to identify each business’s strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats, and then to craft implementable strategies that address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities.

**Who Can Apply?**

To be eligible, a business must be at least 50% women-owned and controlled and located in Northen Ireland. Additionally, the business should have generated at least £200,000 in revenue during a previous fiscal year, be on track to meet this revenue milestone in the current fiscal year, or demonstrate significant growth and sustainability potential, even if the £200,000 revenue benchmark has not yet been reached.

**Criteria for Significant Growth and Sustainability Potential:**

* **Customer Base Expansion:**
	+ **Customer Acquisition Rate:** Demonstrate rapid customer growth, highlighting key demographics or sectors.
* **Scalability:**
	+ **Infrastructure Readiness:** Showcase the company’s ability to scale without proportionally increasing costs.
	+ **Technology Adoption:** Emphasize the use of scalable technologies that support growth without sacrificing quality.
* **Strategic Partnerships and Alliances:**
	+ **Partnership Growth:** Highlight partnerships that open new markets, technologies, or expertise.
	+ **Collaborative Initiatives:** Provide examples of successful collaborations that enhance growth prospects.
* **Financial Health:**
	+ **Profitability and Cash Flow:** Strong profit margins and positive cash flow are key indicators.
	+ **Access to Capital:** Demonstrate the company’s ability to secure funding or credit.

**Timeframe**

* + The Corporate Mentorship Program will commence in January 2025 and will run through December 2025, spanning a total of 12 months.

**Best Practices**

Throughout the year, WOBs will engage regularly with their mentoring teams, with a minimum commitment of a monthly two-hour face-to-face or virtual meeting.

To maximize the benefits of the program, it is recommended that WOBs:

* **Respect the Mentors' Time:** Recognize that mentors are volunteering their expertise; every interaction is an opportunity for valuable feedback.
* **Be Open to New Ideas:** Embrace different perspectives and discuss strategies openly with your mentoring team.
* **Prepare for the Kick-Off:** Bring all relevant business information to the initial meeting to ensure a clear understanding of your business’s current stage and challenges.
* **Stay Proactive:** Attend each meeting prepared, showing progress since the last session to ensure continuity and development throughout the program.

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**CORPORATE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Overview**

**Application Period:**

* Opens: Wednesday, October 2, 2024
* Closes: Thursday, October 21, 2024, at 23:59

**Step 1: Confirm Eligibility**

To be eligible, a business must be at least 50% women-owned and controlled and located in Northen Ireland. Additionally, the business should have generated at least £200,000 in revenue during a previous fiscal year, be on track to meet this revenue milestone in the current fiscal year, or demonstrate significant growth and sustainability potential, even if the £200,000 benchmark has not yet been reached.

**Step 2: Application Review and Selection**

The Corporate Mentorship Program’s Executive Council, comprised of representatives from our corporate partners, Ulster University, AwakenAngels, and the C2S Executive Director, will review all applications and supporting documentation. Projects will be selected based on the strength of the WOB’s application, the relevance of their needs to the mentoring support available, and any specific requirements from our corporate mentors.

**Note:** This is a highly competitive process with a limited number of spots based on the availability of our corporate partners.

**Step 2: Announcement of Selected WOBs**

Selected WOBs and Finalists will be notified the week of October 28th via email and/or a call from the C2S team. All Selected WOBs must attend the Orientation Session and Reception, to be held on November 14th (time and location TBD). Finalists will also be invited to the reception. The public announcement of the Selected WOBs will be made during the reception, which will also offer networking opportunities for both the Selected and Finalist WOBs with Corporate Mentors, and C2S partners, and supporters.

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**CORPORATE MENTORING PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM**

This application form consists of three parts, which should be completed fully and clearly. Please ensure that every field is filled in. If a question is not applicable to your business, please respond with "not applicable."

**Part 1: Company Information**

1. **Ownership Confirmation:**
Confirm that your company is 50% or more women-owned and led: Yes / No
2. **Confirm Revenue Benchmark OR Significant Growth Potential:**

Confirm that your business generated at least £200,000 in revenue during a previous fiscal year, be on track to meet this revenue milestone in the current fiscal year, or that you can demonstrate significant growth and sustainability potential, even if the £200,000 benchmark has not yet been reached. Yes / No

1. **Company Name:**
[Your Company Name]
2. **Company Website:**
[Your Web Address]
3. **Social Media Profiles:**
Please provide your LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and any other relevant social media addresses.
4. **Business Type**:
Does your business offer a service or a product?
5. **Industry:**
Describe the industry associated with your business in ten words or less.
6. **Company History:**
How long has your company been in business?
7. **Employee Count:**
	1. Full-time employees:
	2. Part-time employees:
8. **Financial Information:**
	1. 2023 Sales Revenue:
	2. 2024 Sales Revenue to Date:
	3. Anticipated Total Revenue for 2024:
	4. If the £200,000 revenue benchmark has not yet been reached, demonstrate your company’s significant growth and sustainability potential. (250 words or less) refer to Criteria for Significant Growth and Sustainability Potential in the Corporate Mentoring Overview for assistance.
9. **Attachments:**
Please attach your business plan (if available) and any other materials that may support your application. Indicate what documents you have attached, if any.

**Part 2: Contact Information:**

1. **Name and Title:**
[Your Name and Title]
2. **Business Address:**
[Your Business Address]
3. **Business Phone:**
[Your Business Phone Number]
4. **Cell Phone:**
[Your Cell Phone Number]
5. **Email Address:**
[Your Email Address]

**Part 3: Essay Section**

Please respond to each question in fewer than 250 words.

1. **Business Need:**
Explain the need that your company’s products or services fulfill.
2. **Program Goals:**
Clearly articulate the goals you wish to accomplish through your participation in C2S’s Corporate Mentoring Program and how a Corporate Mentoring Team could assist you in growing your business.
3. **Ideal Mentoring Team:**What type of specialists would make up an ideal corporate mentoring team for your business? (For example: human resource specialist, marketing specialist, finance specialist, technology specialist, business strategy specialist, etc.)
4. **Candidate Suitability:**
Explain why you would be an excellent candidate for C2S’s Corporate Mentoring Program.
5. **Media Consent:**
Do you give permission for photographs taken of you at C2S events to be shared on social media and our website?
Yes / No
6. **Feedback Consent:**
Do you give permission for the C2S team to use any positive feedback you provide about your participation in the program in marketing materials, websites, social media, or speeches?
Yes / No
7. **Supporting Documentation:**
Upload any additional documentation that supports your application (e.g., marketing materials, internationalization plan, etc.).

**Important Notes:**

The application process is highly competitive, with limited spots available. It is essential that your essay responses are creative, concise, and focused.