INDUSTRY EXCHANGE NETWORK

National Framework for IXNs
Guidance Document (2020 collection)

Who are appropriate for IXN technical mentors and projects leads in IXN host companies and organisations?

Authors: Dr Dean Mohamedally (UCL), Dr Graham Roberts (UCL)

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Rationale: From a decade of experimental teaching methods within the IXN framework, there are some key roles identified that have made IXNs more operationally capable. This document sets out some guidelines for defining the appropriate roles needed from within a company's own IXN structure.

Each student on an industry project should be assigned to a technical mentor governed by the industry projects lead. The suggested best practice roles are from the following backgrounds:
1. a company technical recruit specialising in a field/technology, looking for management skills
2. a master inventor/researcher/product technical specialist who also is passionate about teaching
3. an exec who sees value in technical teams and appoints that technical person
4. a retiring or distinguished level senior exec who wants to see programme continuity or evolution in their company

They should not be a sales person/sales team or an entrepreneur without technical skills as both of these areas have shown evidence of insufficient academic directorship for university students and with a different ethos as to the student's gain in experience on their IXN programme.

For each of those four types of backgrounds, the following obligations should be adopted:

1. Following the IXN Rule of 4:
   a. Making their project data available for experimentation (synthetic, sampled, GDPR compliant and not real users),
   b. technical expertise from the organisation with techniques, methods, tools and best practices as part of the industry insights shared with their students (mentor-apprentice behaviours)
   c. Weekly negotiated engagement with the students with reviews of their work (students will have timetables as well as executives with their own schedules)
   d. personal (or virtual) attendance to all invited examinable events with enough notice given on the schedule.

2. Defined a contractual time obligation for meeting with the students.
3. Creating both continuity of work and project pathways should anything change with that tech mentor or projects lead.
4. Creating repair pathways and standby project definitions as back up plans in case the project has unforeseen project risks and dynamics (e.g. 2020 Covid Outbreak: all remote projects, no access to hardware, distributed teams).
5. Appropriate legal, ethics and GDPR compliance training from the universities' own guidance, for the tech mentor and projects leads, which is then effectively conveyed to the students involved before the project starts in introductory sessions.