Level 20 Mentoring 2025/26

FAQs

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Application & Eligibility

Key Dates and Resources

Mentor Informational Webinar – 13:30–14:30 (GMT) Fri 07 March 2025
Mentee and Mentor Applications Open – 09:00 (GMT) Mon 10 March 2025
Mentee Informational Webinar – 10:00–11:00 (GMT) Mon 10 March 2025
Mentee Applications Close – 09:00 (GMT) Mon 14 April 2025

Get Ready
1.Watch our Mentoring Overview
2.Update your Member Portal
3.Review your eligibility details here
4.Register for our informational sessions via your Member Portal > Events
5.Mark your calendar with key programme dates

Visit the Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring

How can I apply to the Level 20 mentoring programme?

Mentee and Mentor Applications Open – 09:00 (GMT) Mon 10 March 2025

Apply via the Level 20 Mentee Application Form – the link can be found by visiting the Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring

How will I know if I have been successful in securing a place on the programme?

Ineligible applicants will be notified promptly, with the aim to inform them by July 2025.

Due to the thorough and detailed review and pairing process, eligible applicants may not receive notification of their success in securing a place on their chosen programme until Autumn 2025. This timeline may vary depending on the volume of applications.

Application form is closed, can I still apply?

Yes, we have several mentees who are about to go, are on or are returning from family leave in our mentoring programmes. Similarly, we have a few mentees returning to the industry or from sick leave.

Do I need to work in Private equity to apply to the mentoring programmes?

We only place candidates working in private equity, growth, and venture capital strategies.

What is the eligibility criteria for the Level 20 1-to-1 mentoring programme?

For the 2025/26 mentoring cycle, we offer 14 programmes across all Level 20 Chapters.

For a detailed overview of each programme's structure and eligibility criteria, please visit the
Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring.

Can I participate in a Level 20 mentoring programme both as a mentor and mentee, can I apply?

Yes, we have several professionals who have participated as both a mentor and a mentee simultaneously. To apply, please complete both the Mentee Application Form and the Mentor Application Form.

Do you need to work for a Sponsor firm to apply?

No, professionals from any Private Equity, Venture Capital firm, or Family Office are welcome to apply. Level 20 Mentoring is not exclusive to Sponsor Firms.

I have taken part in the programme before, can I apply again?

We recommend a minimum of one year between completing a Level 20 Mentoring programme and participating again. Many of our programmes include this as part of their eligibility criteria, so please review the Programme and Eligibility Guide in the Member Portal.

However, if it has been more than one year since you completed a Level 20 Mentoring programme, you are welcome to apply. There are no limits on how many times a mentee can participate, and no restrictions on seniority.

Can I be mentored if on parental leave?

Yes, you can still participate in Level 20 Mentoring and Professional Development programmes while on parental leave, as long as you are employed at a Private Equity, Venture Capital firm, or Family Office at the time of the programme launch.

Are non-deal professionals considered?

Some of our programmes are specifically for mentees in deal professional roles, while others are open to mentees from a variety of positions.

For a comprehensive overview of each programme's structure and eligibility criteria, please visit the Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring.

Can someone in our Finance or Legal team be mentored?

Support functions including Legal, Finance, HR, and other operational roles are not eligible for the mentee programme.

For a detailed overview of each programme's structure and eligibility criteria, please visit the
Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring.

Do they need to meet the professional experience upon application or when the programme starts?

Mentees must meet the required professional experience and PE/VC background by the programme launch.

For a detailed overview of each programme's structure, eligibility criteria, and specific experience requirements, please visit the Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring and refer to the Programme and Eligibility Guide for the relevant timeframe.

Is there eligibility requirements to be a Mentor?

Our prerequisites for mentors are as follows:
·Current or previous employment at a Private Equity or Venture Capital firm.
·Experience in one of the following roles: investment deal professional, investor relations, portfolio management, origination, or ESG teams.

We are seeking senior leaders to participate as mentors to ensure an appropriate level of seniority and a meaningful experience gap with mentees.

Do I need to live in said chapter?

Please apply for the programme in the Chapter where you spend the majority of your time.

The only exception is for the CEE Pilot (digital-only), where mentees are paired with mentors outside the region for virtual mentoring.

Do you allow Real Estate & Credit?

Strategies outside of Private Equity and Venture Capital will not be eligible.

For a detailed overview of each programme's structure and eligibility criteria, please visit the Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring.

Can I participate in a Level 20 mentoring programme both as a mentor and mentee, can I apply?

Yes, we have several professionals who have participated as both a mentor and a mentee simultaneously. To apply, please complete both the Mentee Application Form and the Mentor Application Form.

Mentor & Mentee Roles

Who is the mentoring programme targeted for?

The Level 20 Mentoring Programme is targeted at women working in private equity and venture capital who are looking to progress in their careers.

- Female
- Level 20 Full Member
- Employment: Must work at a Private Equity (PE) firm, Venture Capital (VC) firm, or Family Office
- Job Roles: Open to professionals in investment deal roles, investor relations, portfolio management, origination, or ESG

For a detailed overview of each programme's structure and eligibility criteria, please visit the Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring.

What is the Level 20 Mentoring programme?

Level 20 Mentoring Programmes offer a structured 12-month experience that includes group mentoring, peer-to-peer networking, and tailored professional development. Mentees can build lasting support networks with peers at similar career stages while accessing training sessions focused on industry-specific challenges. The programme encourages insight into the barriers women face in the industry, providing mentees a space for objective career reflection and growth.

How is Level 20 programme different from other programmes in the industry?

The Level 20 Mentoring Programme stands out from other mentoring initiatives in the private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) industry due to its focus, structure, and impact-driven approach. Here's how it differs:

1. Focus on Gender Diversity in Private Equity & Venture Capital
   - Unlike generic career mentoring programmes, Level 20 is specifically designed for women working in PE and VC. The programme aims to address the underrepresentation of women in the industry by fostering career progression, leadership development, and retention.

2. Structured & Tailored 12-Month Programme
   - Many industry mentoring initiatives are informal or short-term, but Level 20 offers a structured, year-long experience.
   - It combines 1-on-1 mentoring, group mentoring, training workshops, and networking events tailored to the challenges women face in PE/VC.

3. Exclusive Access to Senior Industry Professionals

- Mentors are senior leaders in private equity, offering high-quality guidance.
- Unlike general career coaching programmes, Level 20 ensures mentees are paired with mentors from different firms, avoiding conflicts of interest and broadening industry insights.

4. Career Stage-Specific Programmes

- Level 20 offers 14 different mentoring programmes, catering to women at different career levels across Europe.
- Some programmes, like Netherlands NEXT, specifically support mentees progressing from previous Level 20 initiatives.

5. Peer-to-Peer Networking & Community Building

- In addition to mentoring, the programme fosters peer support groups within each cohort.
- Unlike traditional mentoring, which is often one-directional, Level 20 encourages collaborative learning and networking among women at similar career stages.

6. Industry-Specific Training & Workshops

- Many generic mentoring programmes focus on soft skills and leadership.
- Level 20 integrates industry-specific training, such as investment strategies, fundraising, deal structuring, and ESG topics relevant to private equity.
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7. Non-Profit & Mission-Driven Approach

- Unlike commercial leadership programmes, Level 20 is a non-profit initiative.
- Its goal is to create long-term gender balance in PE/VC, rather than just individual career advancement.

8. Prioritisation of Key Roles

- Many industry mentoring programmes are open to professionals across various finance roles.
- Level 20 prioritises women in deal-making, investment, and senior roles, directly targeting areas where female representation is lowest.

Why should we use the Level 20 programme versus an internal programme?

Our programme offers unique advantages:

- Demonstrated high promotion and retention rates
- Industry-wide perspective and expertise
- Complementary to internal programmes (we recommend not participating in both simultaneously)
- External viewpoint that enhances internal relationships including reverse mentoring
- Structured approach with proven success metrics

Who are the mentors?

The mentors in the Level 20 Mentoring Programme are senior professionals in private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC), selected based on their experience, leadership, and commitment to supporting gender diversity in the industry.

How Are Mentors Selected?

- Experienced senior professionals are invited or apply to join the programme.
- They attend an informational webinar before mentoring begins.
- Mentors are carefully matched with mentees based on career goals, expertise, and industry focus.
- Conflict checks are conducted to avoid firm affiliations or personal/professional conflicts.

Can I be mentored by someone from my own firm?

No, Level 20 does not pair mentees with mentors from their own firm.

·Ensures unbiased guidance – A mentor from another firm can provide objective career advice without internal politics or conflicts of interest.
·Encourages cross-firm learning – Mentees gain new industry perspectives, best practices, and insights beyond their current workplace.
·Avoids conflicts of interest – Level 20 conducts conflict checks to prevent pairings where there may be firm affiliations, project overlaps, or personal connections.

Is it only one mentee per firm?

No, Level 20 does not limit participation to just one mentee per firm. Multiple women from the same firm can apply and be accepted into the programme, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

·Each mentee is paired with a mentor from a different firm to maintain objectivity and cross-firm learning.
·Selection is based on merit, not company quotas—priority is given to deal professionals and more senior candidates if applications exceed available spots.
·Multiple mentees from one firm may be accepted into different programme streams or regional chapters.

What seniority do I need to hold to be a mentor?

Our prerequisites for mentors are as follows:

- Current or previous employment at a Private Equity or Venture Capital firm.
- Experience in one of the following roles: investment deal professional, investor relations, portfolio management, origination, or ESG teams.
- We are seeking senior leaders to participate as mentors to ensure an appropriate level of seniority and a meaningful experience gap with mentees.

Mentoring Structure & Matching

What happens if I move firms during mentoring?

If you move firms during the mentoring programme, you can generally continue your participation as long as you remain in a relevant role within Private Equity, Venture Capital, or a Family Office.

We encourage you to inform us as soon as possible so we can assess any potential impact on your mentoring relationship and ensure a smooth transition.

Can my mentor be male or female?

Mentors can be either male or female. The programme focuses on matching mentees with experienced senior professionals based on career goals, expertise, and industry focus, rather than gender.

The focus is on finding the most suitable mentor who can provide valuable guidance and support for each mentee's specific career development needs, regardless of the mentor's gender.

How is the matching process done?

The Chapter’s individual Mentoring Committee which is made up of volunteers (typically a mix of PE professionals and recruiters) first considers multiple factors for selecting potentially mentees:

- Career objectives and development goals
- Industry expertise and experience level
- Sector focus and specialisation

Then will try to source a potential mentor using application data and personal insights and networks and factor in:

- Professional and personal background
- Personality fit and mentoring style
- Geographic location when relevant
- Potential conflicts of interest

While we strive to create the best possible pairings, final decisions are based on availability and the overall balance of the programme.

Who decides the pairings?

Pairings are carefully decided by the Level 20 Mentoring Committee. The committee considers factors such as professional background, experience level, career goals, and industry focus to ensure a strong and meaningful mentoring match.

While we strive to create the best possible pairings, final decisions are based on availability and the overall balance of the programme.

What conflict checks are in place?

We implement several safeguards:
• No matches between professionals from the same firm
• Screening for personal and professional conflicts
• Review of competitive relationships between firms
• Assessment of potential recruitment conflicts

What do you consider during pairing process?

The committees consider several factors but try to find someone more senior in a similar (but not conflicted) firm or sector, or someone with unique skills/experience to support the mentee with the goals/objectives they outlined in their application form. The committee will then also factor in more personal factors such as personality, mentoring style etc.

Can you guarantee a mentor gets placed?

While we strive to place all mentors who apply, we cannot guarantee placement. Pairings are determined based on mentee demand, industry focus, and overall programme balance. If we are unable to match you in the current cycle, we encourage you to apply again in the future.

Can a Mentee/Mentor reject a pairing?

Ahead of the programme launch we will contact mentors and mentees separately regarding their proposed match, this is to conduct a conflict check to see if any conflicts arise regarding firm affiliations or personal/professional conflicts.

If you have significant concerns about your pairing after the programme has launched, please contact your Chapter Mentoring Committee or the Level 20 Mentoring team. While pairings are carefully selected, we will review your feedback and, where possible, explore alternative options.

We encourage open communication and will work with you to assess your concerns. However, any adjustments are subject to availability and the structure of the programme.

When do we find out about pairings

Please refer to individual programmes for specific timelines.
Ineligible applications will be notified as soon as possible. We aim to notify ineligible candidates by June 2025.

Successful mentees and mentors will be informed about pairings once the matching process is finalised, which typically occurs after the conflict checks and committee review.

Sponsors will be notified of successful pairings in tandem with the programme launch. Eligible but unmatched candidates will be notified as soon as possible after pairings are finalised.

Programme Commitment & Involvement

What are the benefits of being a mentee?

As a mentee, you gain valuable guidance from experienced mentors, helping you navigate your career, expand your professional network, and enhance your skills. You'll receive tailored advice, support for personal and professional growth, and insights into industry trends.

Is there a limit on the number of times I can be mentored?

We recommend a minimum of one year between completing a Level 20 Mentoring programme and participating again. Many of our programmes include this as part of their eligibility criteria, so please review the Programme and Eligibility Guide in the Member Portal.

However, if it has been more than one year since you completed a Level 20 Mentoring programme, you are welcome to apply. There are no limits on how many times a mentee can participate, and no restrictions on seniority.

What happens if I don't like my mentor?

If you find that the mentoring relationship isn’t working for any reason, please communicate your concerns to Level 20 Mentoring or your Chapter Committee. They will assess the situation and, if appropriate, work with you to find a more suitable mentor or support alternative solutions.

We typically find that it takes around three mentoring meetings for mentees and mentors to establish a strong connection. We encourage participants to refrain from forming conclusions after the first meeting.

What is the commitment requirement for Mentees?

Mentees are expected to actively engage in the programme by attending scheduled meetings, being open to feedback, and making an effort to apply the guidance provided by their mentor. Consistency and a willingness to learn are key.

What are the time commitments involved in being on the programme?

The time commitment varies depending on the programme, but typically includes regular meetings with your mentor, which may be weekly or monthly. Mentees should also be prepared to allocate time for reflection, setting goals, and any follow-up tasks or actions agreed upon with the mentor.

Programmes Offered

What is the Level 20 1-to-1 mentoring programme?

The Level 20 1-to-1 mentoring programme pairs senior leaders with female talent in the industry for personalised, one-on-one mentoring. The aim is to provide guidance, career development, and support tailored to the mentee's needs and goals.

What is the Level 20 group programme?

The Level 20 group programme brings together small groups of mentees and mentors for collaborative learning and support. Mentees benefit from peer interactions and shared experiences while receiving guidance from their mentor. This programme focuses on creating a community of learning and networking.

What countries does the mentoring programme currently operate in?

To celebrate Level 20's 10th Anniversary we're launching our most extensive mentoring initiative yet, featuring 14 programmes across all Level 20 regional chapters in the UK & Europe.

Including; Belgium, CEE, DACH, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Nordics, Spain and UK

Where do you offer mentoring?

Mentoring is offered through a combination of in-person and virtual meetings, depending on geographical location and programme structure. This flexibility allows mentors and mentees to connect regardless of location.

How long does the mentoring programme run?

The duration of the mentoring programme varies by cohort but typically runs for around 12 months, with regular meetings between the mentor and mentee over that period and/or a schedule of workshops and events.

What are the mentee events and workshops?

Mentee events and workshops provide additional opportunities for professional development, including networking, skill-building sessions, and industry insights. These events are designed to complement the mentoring experience and offer further resources for growth and learning.

Sponsor Nominations & Placements

How many people can we nominate?

Each firm may nominate up to two individuals per programme. While there's no limit on direct applications from your firm, we must prioritise nominations based on eligibility and programme fit. We recommend carefully selecting nominees who best align with the programme's objectives and eligibility criteria.

How come the mentee I nominated didn't get placed?

Nominating a mentee does not guarantee they will be paired. Mentee placements depend on factors such as application volume, eligibility, and suitable mentor availability. Unfortunately, due to high demand and limited spaces, not all nominees are placed. Nominated mentees must complete the application form to be considered, meet eligibility criteria, and have a suitable mentor match. While we aim to place at least one mentee per sponsor firm, this can be through either nominations or direct applications. Our goal is always to make the best possible pairing for each mentee.

Can I nominate someone after applications are closed?

No, nominations cannot be submitted after the application deadline. To ensure a fair and structured selection process, all nominations must be received before the application closing date.

We encourage you to plan ahead for future programmes and refer to the Member Portal > Resources > Mentoring for key dates and application details.

Who informs the mentee they have been nominated?

Who informs the mentee they have been nominated?
There's a dual notification process:

1. Sponsoring firms should inform their nominees immediately upon submission
2. Level 20 will:

· Send nominees the application form link directly.
· Follow up with nominees who haven't applied two weeks before the deadline.
· Keep sponsoring firms informed about any nominees who haven't completed their applications.

What happens if I want to change who I nominated?

Once applications have closed, nominations cannot be changed. If you need to make an adjustment before the deadline, please contact the Level 20 Mentoring team as soon as possible.

Do you tell us about who is placed and with whom?

We will disclose successful placements, if they agree to sharing the information (they will be asked in their application). All successful applicants will be notified directly, and pairings are managed confidentially.

Do we find out about the individual who applied outside of nomination and didn't get placed?

No, we do not share information about applicants who were not placed. However, applicants will be informed directly about the outcome of their application.

What happens if someone leaves our firm?

Obligation is determined by mentee's firm at the time of launch. If a mentee or mentor moves firm during the programme, they may still participate, provided they remain in a relevant Private Equity, Venture Capital, or Family Office role. Please inform the Level 20 Mentoring team as soon as possible so we can assess any potential impact.

Can we place someone on the mentoring programme mid-year?

No, due to the structured nature of the programme and the careful pairing process, we do not accept mid-year placements. All applications must be submitted within the designated application period.

How many mentor and mentee places do we have? What if we have more people to recommend than you guarantee?

The number of available mentor and mentee places varies by programme and depends on demand. If you have more candidates than spaces available, we encourage you to prioritise nominations based on eligibility and alignment with the programme's objectives. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee placement for all applicants.

What happens if I want to change who I nominated?

You have until 31st March to let us know if you wish to change or add a nominee. All nominations must be submitted before the application deadline to ensure a fair and structured selection process. This is also to ensure any new nominees have 2 weeks to complete their application forms.

However, if nomination deadline has passed but the mentee has already applied, we will endeavour to help. The deadline is strict, to maintain programme integrity and equal opportunity for all candidates and ensure all mentoring programmes launch in a timely manner. We can't offer extensions.

Why would you place someone who hasn't been nominated by the firm?

We look to pair the individuals who need mentoring the most and for whom we can find the best mutually beneficial match.

Other Questions & Issues

What happens with recruitment?

Recruitment refers to the inappropriate use of the programme by mentees or mentors for job searching, hiring, or promoting hiring within their organisation. This is not the intended purpose of the mentoring programme.

What do you have in place to stop recruitment?

We require all mentors and mentees to pledge not to use the programme for recruitment purposes and to maintain confidentiality. This is reinforced during onboarding and throughout the programme. If any conflicts arise after pairing, the mentoring relationship will be ended, and we will work to re-pair the individuals. We are also careful during the matching process to avoid potential conflicts that could lead to inappropriate use of the programme.

Do you tell Sponsor Firms about who is placed and with who?

We will notify sponsors as follows:
• Successful placements are communicated with participant consent
• Mentor-mentee pairings remain confidential
• Self-applied candidates who aren't placed remain confidential
• Regular updates on programme progress while maintaining individual privacy

Note: All information sharing requires explicit participant consent.

Contact Us

General Mentoring Queries
mentoring@level20.org

Sponsor - Primary Contact
sponsor@level20.org