



We Speak and University of Kent impact report



In Summer 2023, We Speak and University of Kent ran a programme aimed at Stipend Ambassadors.

6 Stipend Ambassadors and **4** Student Ambassadors increased their speaking confidence by **43%** on average over the course of a 4-week online programme.

We trained **6** Peer Mentors from University of Kent to support the students on their confidence-building journey.

Mentors from global bank **Investec**, delivery brand **Just Eat** and tech company **Dojo** who gave personalised feedback and guidance.

Ed, Stipend Ambassador, 90% increase in confidence

"Before We Speak, I had low confidence. I liked the small breakout rooms, the friendly people and It really helps to build confidence. I have confidence now. I don't get lost in what I am trying to say, because I just have to follow the structure I learned at We Speak. Keep doing what you do, it will help a lot of people."



Content of the programme for Ambassadors

A month-long online programme, with 1.5 hour interactive sessions each week.

Session	Description
Introduce	Student Ambassadors meet the Mentors for the first time and take part in interactive exercises to develop speaking confidence.
Discover	Through our Discovery activity, Ambassadors explore ideas through conversations with the Mentors, and develop communication skills for the workplace.
Interview	Mentors talk to the Ambassadors more about working in their sector and support them with a practical exercise to develop online interview skills.
Practice	Ambassadors practice an individual presentation, with constructive feedback from their Mentors to help them build confidence and skills.
Certificates	Certificates of Achievement are given to Student Ambassadors who have completed the programme

Emma Friend, Senior Commercial Strategy Manager, Dojo



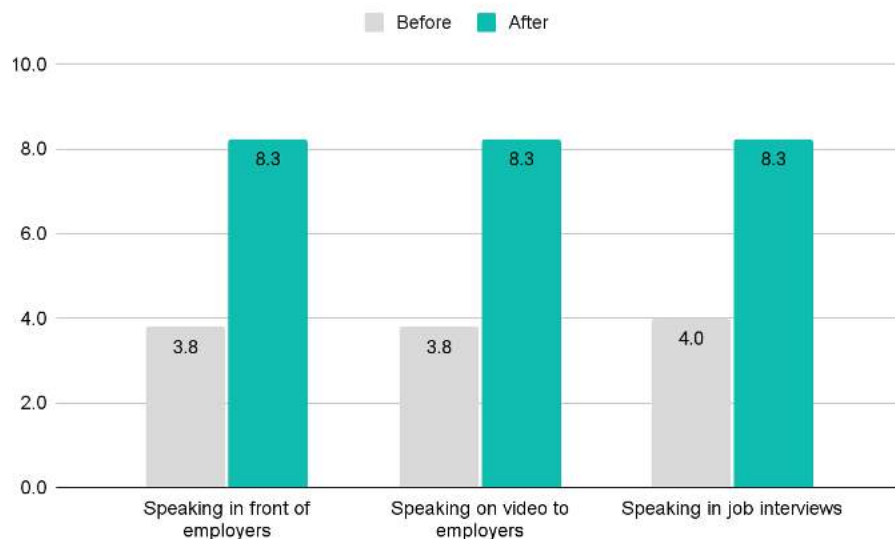
“Getting to know the students and watching them develop over time was so lovely. Most were much more eloquent when delivering their talks. It was great to be able to build their confidence and make them feel noticed and heard. Thank you - I'm really happy to have been involved, programmes like these are really important.”

Impact: 45% more confident speaking in front of employers



The students increased their confidence overall by **43%**. In addition, the students' confidence increased in a range of employment related scenarios:

- **45%** more confident speaking to a group of employers
- **45%** more confident speaking to employers on a video call
- **43%** more confident speaking in a job interview.



Joshua, Stipend Student Ambassador, 60% confidence increase



"I was afraid of messing up but the We Speak programme helped me to become a more articulated speaker. Now, I ramble less, my points are clearer and better signposted. I feel prepared. The massive confidence boost it gave me was perfect. I met some amazing mentors with really good and solid feedback, they were very kind and encouraging."

Mentor support from top employers



Melanie, Stipend Ambassador

At the start, I felt worried about speaking in front of a group. I liked the opportunity and the good feedback. Also it's good as I feel I'm meeting new people. I feel more confident because I know I can do it. My only suggestion is to keep up what you're doing, it's great! I'm going to miss this, but this is the sign of an amazing course!

Teena, Principal Engineer and Mentor, Investec

I loved the experience. It's fun and engaging, and I enjoyed interacting with the students the most. It's almost like we can see the students' growth and comfortability with every passing week. I'd like to continue working with Melanie. I love how straight forward she is - she speaks from the heart.

Dee, Product Manager and Mentor, Investec



"Absolutely amazing. Love the energy and curiosity the students brought. The sessions were very well structured and managed. I enjoyed doing a deep dive with a small group of students. Gave me a chance to learn so much from the students while giving my observations too. It was brilliant."

What changes have Ambassadors noticed in themselves?

- I have more confidence in myself, plus a live life to the full attitude I seem to have developed
- I am now able to talk to a variety of people on a variety of topics.
- I smile more and can really give some good talks, and I don't feel as nervous as before.
- I can maintain a clear structure and not ramble or lose focus.
- I gained confidence after realising what I do well and I can improve
- It improved my online communication skills
- I have more ease in expressing myself

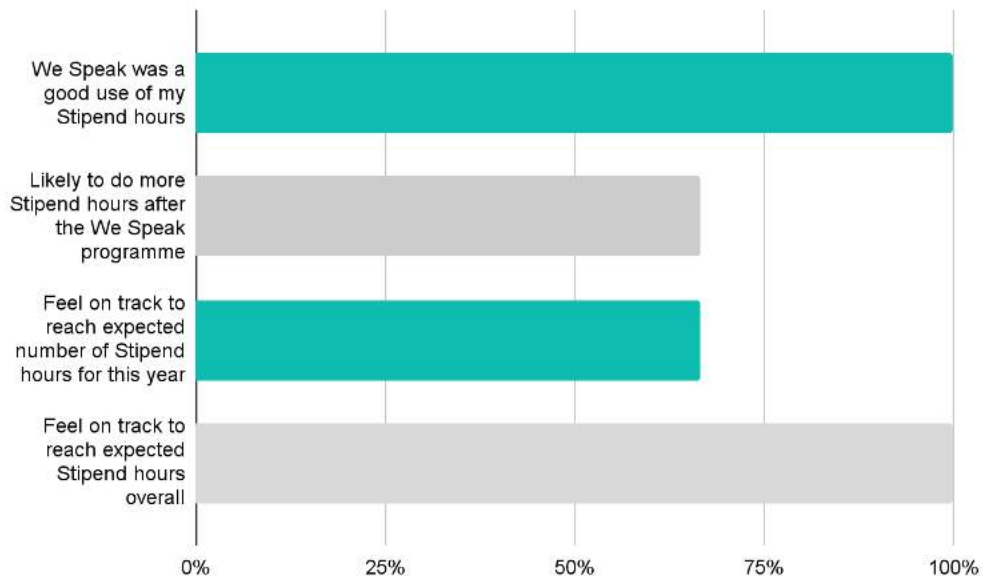
What did the Ambassadors think of the programme overall?

- It really helped to build confidence
- Practice makes perfect and We Speak is a really great programme
- Everything helped me improve, from the wonderful staff and mentors giving feedback, to tasks that made the session fun and engaging.
- The mentors are so encouraging and supportive! I loved getting written feedback via emails every week - this definitely boosted my confidence.
- Lots of relevant, practical exercises and the advice was valuable
- Interaction to a good extent. I think doing it in person would help more.
- Great opportunities to practice public speaking with professionals
- It's rather useful, pretty comprehensive
- We Speak really helped me feel more comfortable speaking to strangers or through the screen

What did the Ambassadors think we could improve?

- I can't think of anything, it was great.
- More feedback
- Maybe have the same people in breakout rooms
- More time to chat with mentors and facilitators
- My only suggestion is to keep up what you're doing! its great!
- Nothing comes to mind
- Longer sessions
- This is more than enough to me
- Longer time spent with ambassadors
- I'd have loved more time in the breakout rooms

Stipend Student Ambassador analysis



■ **100%** of Stipend Ambassadors thought the **We Speak programme was a good use of their hours**. Here are the reasons:

- I feel like I am a better ambassador because of those hours.
- It really should be something that any stipend ambassador should know about, as the programme gave me the training that I needed in my position
- I was getting paid to do something that has really benefited me and that otherwise I would've had to pay for to do – it was a great opportunity! One I probably wouldn't have considered otherwise and would've missed out on. I'm glad that I was a part of it, regardless of the contribution to my hours.
- Because it is incredibly relevant in helping me work with larger groups of people as an ambassador.
- It definitely helps with confidence
- Training to be more confident speaking in front of groups is crucial for my role

■ **66%** of Stipend Ambassadors are **more likely to do more stipend hours after taking part in We Speak**. Here are the reasons:

- I feel more confident
- Because I feel more confident to apply for opportunities that I would not have applied for previously
- I have completed my hours recently, a big part of it was the hours I gained with We Speak

- I feel a lot less insecure doing my work
- **44%** of Stipend Ambassadors thought they'd do the same amount of stipend hours after the We Speak programme. Here are the reasons:
 - Between the same and more – I already do a fair amount and feel confident in my ability to communicate with students/applicants.
 - I have been taking more and more different jobs that I have never done before and have been doing more jobs with longer hours
- **66%** feel they're on track to reach expected hours for this year.
- **44%** feel they're not on track to reach expected hours for this year. Here are the reasons:
 - Time management
 - Unfortunate course timetabling, plus some of the opportunities that best fit my schedule are payroll :/
- **100%** feel they're on track to reach expected hours overall
- These are the responses to the question: "How do you feel about having a target of Stipend Ambassador hours to meet?"
 - It's good as a guide, especially when you're new.
 - It serves as a good reminder, although I would prefer if the total amount of hours thus far was easily available to see via the portal
 - It's alright
 - It gives me a sense of goal to reach and motivates me to do more
 - It's something to aspire to
- The average enjoyment of their Stipend Ambassador role was **9.2/10** (where 1 = don't enjoy it at all and 10 = really enjoy it.) Comments were:
 - I love it! I love working with so many different people and helping prospective university students to feel confident in their suitability for Uni and ability.
 - Getting paid to improve my talking skills is amazing
 - It can sometimes be a hassle, especially on back-to-back opportunities, but overall it is worth it.
 - Talking and meeting new people all the time.
 - It's a great job, it's well paid and the staff I work with are all lovely. And I seem to be not awful at it either which is nice!
 - I love being able to help students towards understanding what they could do in the future, knowing that I was in the same shoes as them and had no idea what I wanted to do in the future.

We Speak Peer Mentors

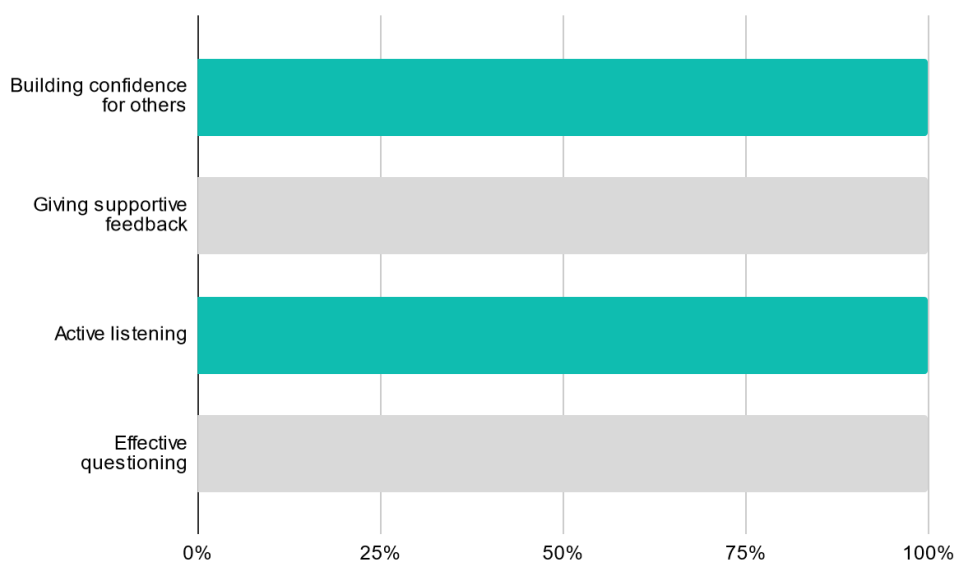
We Speak trained **6 Student Ambassadors as Peer Mentors** so they could share their skills with the participants.



We Speak Peer Mentor skills development

100% of students who participated as a peer mentor, would be interested in being a Peer Mentor again. **100%** of the Peer Mentors said they'd improved their skills in 4 key mentoring skills:

- **Building confidence in others** to help them feel more comfortable speaking
- **Giving supportive feedback** to help build skills and boost confidence
- **Active listening** to increase rapport and facilitate equal dialogue
- **Effective questioning** to enable others to speak freely and explore ideas



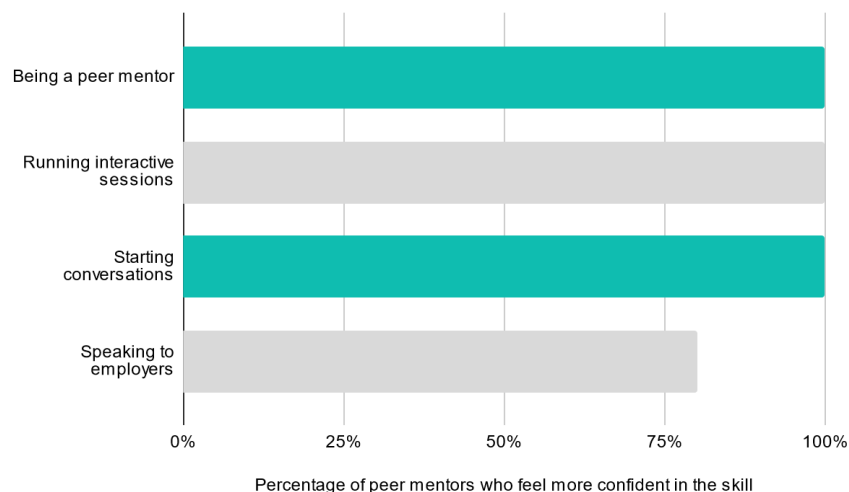
Other skills development for Peer Mentors

100% of Peer Mentors said they developed skills in the following areas:

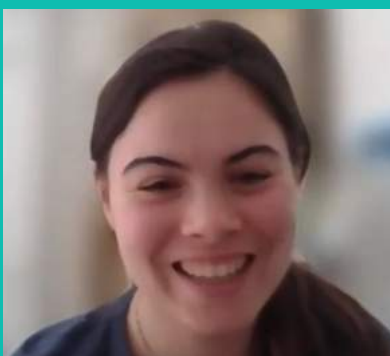
- **Being a Peer Mentor** to students and sharing advice
- **Running interactive sessions** for groups of students
- **Starting conversations** with the students and corporate mentors

80% of Peer Mentors developed skills in the following area:

- **Speaking to employers**



Cristina, Peer Mentor, University of Kent



“Loads of students had so much confidence in speaking to large groups and even mentors at the end of the programme compared to how they were when they started. I really liked teaching the students and giving them helpful advice that they then incorporated later on. The advice that the mentors shared with us was amazing. Not only did it help the students massively, but I also found it extremely helpful.”

What did the Peer Mentors think of the programme overall?

- I believe this is a brilliant programme and is very needed for students, especially after covid and for those who are less likely to be social
- I had a really great and positive experience. Going through We Speak, I learnt a lot of confidence and feel really positive about the programme.
- It's a great programme overall. Things can feel a bit rushed at times
- I think the students really enjoyed it, it is fun and it is also very insightful.
- From a peer mentor's view I felt that it was a really beneficial experience. It was a fun way to build confidence and learn life skills and I would recommend it to anyone.

What did Peer Mentors enjoy the most?

- Speaking to students and the mentors, and getting to know them
- Meeting the wonderful mentors and facilitators who were amazing to work with. I also thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to listen to ambassadors who shared their interests and thoughts.
- I enjoyed mentoring different people with different skills and confidence levels. This helped me practice how to skillfully interact with people depending how shy they are, how talkative they are etc...
- I really enjoyed chatting with people that normally I wouldn't get to talk to. And seeing them improve their confidence over the 4 weeks and being proud of them is even more of a plus.
- I loved helping individuals to build their confidence and felt that the tips helped them to improve a lot. I felt that the team was really helpful and supportive and it made me happy to be a part of it.

What did Peer Mentors think could be improved?

- I found it challenging at times when student ambassadors had a lot to share as, at the beginning, I lacked some confidence when intervening.
- More opportunities for me to be involved because I truly did feel fulfilled helping other students.
- I was confused (only once or twice) over small details on guides given.
- The most challenging part was completing some of the tasks within the time requested, especially with more of the chattier students.
- A longer duration of the programme - I think this is a skill that needs developing over the long term.

Molika, Peer Mentor, University of Kent



“I had an amazing experience. I have increased my overall confidence in speaking to others in different scenarios. I felt nervous at first taking on the challenge of being a mentor, especially of groups. But going through We Speak, I feel more confident now. I have had the chance to work with professionals, and practice skills that will help demonstrate the skills that employers are looking for.”

Omotomiwa, Ambassador, 60% increase in confidence



I loved the feedback from the mentors as they were very encouraging. Molika and William, my peer mentors, were very engaging and great listeners. I have come a long way from the initial session. I've discovered that I can get a career of my choice which has boosted my confidence. I built up my confidence in 4 weeks and feel more comfortable speaking or presenting to people. I might even sign up for a TED talk at this rate.

We Speak builds the speaking confidence of Student Ambassadors so they can fully engage in their ambassador work and increase career opportunities.

We Speak won NatWest Star of the Future Award (2022), an UnLtd Award (2021) and Investec Beyond Business (2019).

We work with companies including Investec, Just Eat and Google, and universities including UCL, University of Sussex and .

07779 240 556 | 020 7175 1610 | laura@wespeak.co | www.wespeak.co

