

PREPARING FOR A MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

A GUIDE FOR MENTEES

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is an intentional relationship designed to foster your growth and development. Your alumni mentor acts as an informal tour guide for the particular field or profession that interests you. He or she is also a role model and a resource to help you develop your own potential.

Successful mentoring is based on a reciprocal and comfortable relationship between you and your mentor. Both of you must work together to make the relationship successful. Remember to be open-minded and respectful.

What can you expect from your mentor?

A good mentor:

- Stimulates your learning and reflection, but won't necessarily provide you with all the answers you need
- Is available and willing to connect with you, giving appropriate guidance and feedback
- Is open-minded, flexible, empathetic, and encouraging

A mentor IS NOT:

- A tutor
- A counselor
- Someone you approach for a job

The mentor's role

- To share knowledge about a particular profession or field
- To act as a resource for professional contact in a particular field
- To encourage and support your career and leadership development

The benefits of having a mentor

- Increased knowledge about a prospective field or profession, including its values and culture
- Increased personal knowledge and organizational awareness
- Access to an effective learning tool that stimulates goal-oriented planning
- Increased networking opportunities

Key expectations for student mentees

- Come to the relationship prepared: successful mentorship experiences happen when students have questions in mind or activities to suggest when meeting their mentors
- It is important to have an idea of what you would like to learn and know as well as what kind of mentoring relationship you want. It is also important to communicate these to your mentor at the start of your relationship
- DO NOT ask your mentor for a job
- You should define the boundaries of your mentoring relationship early on: remember, your mentor is a role model and guide and not a counselor

On being a student mentee

Confidentiality

- You and your mentor are responsible for identifying and observing areas of confidentiality
- These areas may include personal or privileged industry information

Dress code

- You should expect to dress in appropriate business attire when you meet with your mentor – especially at your first meeting
- Take cues from your mentor on how to dress appropriately in his or her workplace

What are your responsibilities as a mentee?

You should embark on your mentorship relationship with three goals that will help

you outline what you would like to achieve over the course of the year. Use the Goal Setting worksheet to help you set learning goals.

Your goals may be to:

- Set short-term learning objectives, and short-term and long-term career goals
- Obtain advice on specific learning or development opportunities
- Obtain substantive knowledge related to your field
- Obtain insights into best practices, values, and culture within your field
- Explore career choices and opportunities
- Meet other professionals in the prospective field
- Ascertain your strengths and areas for development

A good mentee:

- Is proactive in and committed to cultivating the mentoring relationship
- Is respectful of the mentor's time (i.e., is punctual and gives advance notice of cancellations)
- Thinks about questions and issues to discuss in advance of the meeting (i.e., has an agenda for the meeting)
- Is willing to participate in an open and honest discussion about their background, interests, work experiences, and about their career goals
- Follows up meetings with a thank-you email (or phone call)
- Respects the confidentiality and privacy of the mentor

Effective communication with your mentor

Effective and professional communication is an essential part of a successful mentoring relationship.

- In your written communication, be professional in your spelling, composition and phrasing.
- Be assertive and honest in your communication, but be respectful.
- Respect your mentor's time and schedule – allow your mentor enough time to respond to email or voicemail before following up.

Things you can discuss with your mentor

- Discuss your background to find out if it fits with your career choice, e.g., do you require further education, and, if so, what kind?
- Ask for advice on how you can market your skills and/or experience in your field of interest, e.g., what experiences should you emphasize when applying for a job?
- Ask about the culture and values of the prospective field. What kind of challenges has your mentor faced?
- Ask your mentor to describe how the actual workplace experience compares to his or her expectations as a student.
- Ask your mentor to critique your CV or resume and cover letter for positions you are applying for or general advice preparing for your career.
- Towards the end of your mentoring relationship, ask for:
 - A tour, if possible, of your mentor's workplace
 - Referrals and any recommended readings

Mentoring Agreement

The mentoring partners listed below agree to enter into a mentoring relationship.

Mentee Name:

Signature:

Date:

Mentor Name:

Signature:

Date:

To get the most out of your mentoring experience, you should talk about the expectations and goals that you and your mentor have for the mentoring relationship.

Agree on Expectations: How will the relationship work?

1. Meeting together: What works best? Will we meet:
 - In-person
 - Skype
 - Phone
 - Email
2. In general, how often would we like to meet/interact (e.g., once per week, every other week, etc.)? Renegotiate as needed.
3. If an email or voicemail is received, we will get back to each other within:
 - 24 hours
 - 1-2 days
 - Other
4. If we can't make an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?

Agree on goals: what do you hope to gain from the relationship?

1. What are the mentee's goals for this mentoring relationship? What are the 3 things you would like to learn or develop as a result of interacting with your mentor? (See *Goals-setting worksheet, Page 7*)

MENTEE'S GOALS	
1 st Goal	
2 nd Goal	
3 rd Goal	

2. What are the mentor's goals for this relationship? What would you like to share with or impart to your mentee?

MENTOR'S GOALS	
1 st Goal	
2 nd Goal	

3. What actions can you both take to achieve these goals?

Agree on privacy, confidentiality and trust:

1. We both agree to protect each other's privacy and abide by the boundaries of the mentoring relationship.
2. We both agree to abide by and appreciate that our conversations are confidential.
3. We agree that if either of us wishes to leave the program early, we must advise the program coordinator.

Goal Setting

Purpose of goal setting:

Setting goals will help you strive to achieve. Although goal setting is often challenging, it will increase efficiency and effectiveness in your mentoring relationship.

Goals are important because they:

- Guide and direct behavior
- Provide clarity
- Reflect what the goal setters consider important
- Help improve performance
- Increase the motivation to succeed
- Instill pride and satisfaction in achievements
- Provide challenges and standards
- Bolster self-confidence and decrease negative attitudes

Set goals that are SMART:

- **Specific:** use detailed information in plain language (i.e., names, dates, places, amounts - whatever details are necessary to make it clear). What do you want to achieve?
- **Measurable:** quantifiable ways to know goals are working or if goals have been completed. Establish criteria for how to achieve a goal.
- **Accountable:** indicate your role in achieving each aspect of the goal. Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.
- **Realistic:** ensure the suggested goals are practical and achievable. Strive for attainable goals and consider the resources and constraints relative to the situation.
- **Timetabled:** include dates of when things need to be completed and allow reasonable time to complete each goal.

Goal-setting worksheet

1. To help you set goals for your mentoring relationship, indicate your level of interest in the following activities. Rate interest as Low, Medium, or High:

Indicate your level of interest in the following activities	Low	Medium	High
Critiquing mentee's resume or CV			
Developing interviewing or informational interview skills			
Guidance on how to seek a job or internship in the field			
Decision to attend graduate or professional school			
Discussion on academia versus industry			
Shadow your mentor at his or workplace			
Introduction to colleagues or contacts			
Attending a professional meeting or program with your mentor			
Insight into your mentor's own academic experience			
Review of mentor's resume or CV			
Discussion on how your mentor navigated graduate or professional school (if applicable)			
Other:			
Other:			

This list will help inform your discussion with your mentor.

2. Using the SMART model outlined on Page 7, develop and record 3 short and/or long-term goals that you would like to work on through the mentoring relationship: