

# Understanding Mentorship

“Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be.” – Eric Parsloe, the Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring

## OVERVIEW

Mentees/Mentors are asked to meet a minimum of once a month (in person or virtually) over the course of the winter season. It will be up to each Mentee/Mentor to work together to create a mentorship relationship and program which works for them based on their goals and expectations.

## EXPECTATIONS

Mentee:

- Schedule meetings each month.
- Take responsibility for identifying your needs and goals
- Give and receive feedback from your mentor
- Commit to and prioritize the work you have taken on with your mentor

Mentor:

- Guide, support and develop your mentee
- Attend all meetings set by the mentee
- Observe, listen, and ask questions to understand your mentee's situation
- Provide resources, feedback and advice based on your wealth of experience
- Create a relationship of trust with your mentee by being reliable and responsive to their needs

## HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL

Mentee:

- Set expectations from the beginning – have an honest conversation with your mentor at the start of the program to ensure you both understand what the other expects from the relationship. This can include things like communication outside of meetings, how much time

each person is expected to devote to the relationship outside your meetings, and the expected turnaround time for your mentor to review work.

- Be invested in planning - spend time planning your meetings and come prepared with discussion points and questions you may have. Coming prepared ensures you maximize the time you have together.
- Think of questions you can ask your mentor in order to understand their experiences and how they can help you.
- Engagement – please remember that your mentor is investing their time and expertise into your journey. Mentors will be less inclined to share their time and knowledge with someone they feel is disinterested or not giving the partnership the engagement it deserves.
- Be open to feedback - part of your mentor's role is to question, challenge and reimagine aspects of your journey that you may not have considered. Be open to their opinions and ideas, and try to view their challenges as an opportunity for growth rather than as negative feedback.
- Mind your mentor's time - they are choosing to help you on your journey, and their time is valuable. Thinking about how you can best use their time will ensure the highest level of success for both parties. Things like keeping emails as to the point as possible, being prepared for every meeting, and sticking to deadlines will maximize their time with you.
- Finally, be organized, enthusiastic, energetic and focused. Mentors are looking for mentees that are capable of seeing something through to the end, and who understand that it will take time and hard work to reach their goals.

## Mentor:

- Set expectations from the beginning – have an honest conversation with your mentee at the start to ensure you both understand what the other expects from the relationship. This can include things like communication outside of meetings, how much time each person is expected to devote to the relationship outside your meetings, and the expected turnaround time to provide feedback to your mentee.
- Make your meetings a priority. Don't keep rescheduling or cancelling - this is an easy way to lose respect and engagement from your mentee.
- Investment - the more you put into this program/partnership, the more you will get out of it.
- Check your biases and impulses, and ensure you are not projecting them onto your mentee.
- Don't assume anything about your mentee - ask for clarification if you have any questions or things you are unclear about.
- Own your mistakes (both the personal and the professional) and use them as learning points for your mentee.
- Challenge them, but also celebrate their achievements.

- Be engaged – It can be disheartening to a mentee if they feel that their mentor is not giving the relationship the respect and focus it deserves.
- Be open to feedback – whilst part of your role as a mentor is to question, challenge and reimagine aspects of your mentees journey, it can also be a two way street. Open yourself up to their opinions and ideas, and you could be surprised what you learn yourself.
- Recognize your position in the relationship – being a successful mentor is about recognizing the experience you have, but not projecting that on to your mentee. You can give them the best advice in the world, but ultimately it is their life and they are entitled to make their own decisions about it.
- Use questioning techniques to facilitate the mentee's own thought processes in order to identify solutions and actions, rather than take a wholly directive approach.
- Ensure that the mentee develops personal competencies and does not develop unhealthy dependencies on the mentoring relationship.

## BENEFITS OF MENTORSHIP

For the mentee: increased learning, motivation, self-efficacy, and productivity, greater compensation, decreased feelings of isolation, greater career mobility, and an overall increase in career and self-satisfaction.

For the mentor: a renewed sense of commitment to the job, stimulation of new ideas, continuous learning and career development, the building of reputational capital, enhanced leadership skills, the satisfaction of giving back to the instructing community.