



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

ENGINEERING ALUMNI NETWORK ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAM MENTOR HANDBOOK

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MENTOR HANDBOOK

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is an intentional, outcome-driven relationship designed to foster the growth and development of your mentee. Overall, the relationship is predicated on a mutual willingness to learn and share.

The outcome of an alumni-student mentoring relationship is usually related to career development – either the exploration of a potential profession or the development of particular skills needed for a particular profession.

A good mentor:

- » Has strong communication skills
- » Stimulates the student's own thinking and reflection and supports his or her personal development
- » Is available and willing to connect with his or her mentee, giving appropriate guidance and feedback
- » Is open-minded, flexible, empathetic, and encouraging

A mentor's responsibilities:

Depending on the particular goals of the mentee, as a mentor, your responsibilities may include:

- » Helping to set short-term learning objectives and short-term and long-term career goals
- » Recommending and/or creating specific learning or development opportunities
- » Transferring substantive knowledge related to your profession or field
- » Relaying and modeling the best practices, values, and culture within your field, including challenging aspects
- » Exploring career choices and opportunities
- » Introducing the mentee to other professionals in your field
- » Recognizing strengths and areas for development

A mentor is not:

- » A tutor
- » A counsellor
- » Someone that the mentee approaches for a job

The benefits of mentoring:

Mentoring will allow you the opportunity to:

- » Influence a student's experience outside the classroom
- » Contribute to a student's learning and development
- » Reflect upon your own career
- » Share your experience and knowledge
- » Discover new ways of thinking

Mentoring benefits a student mentee by providing:

- » Increased knowledge about your field, 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

What are some best practices for managing a mentorship relationship?

Successful mentoring requires a reciprocal and comfortable relationship between a mentor and a mentee. Both parties must work together to be open-minded and respectful of one another.

Mutual benefit and mutual respect:

- » The mentoring relationship is designed to foster the growth and development of the mentee; however, the relationship should be defined from the beginning as mutually beneficial
- » Some goals that you may have as a mentor include: influencing the mentee's experience beyond the classroom, contributing to the mentee's professional development, reflecting on your own career

Confidentiality:

- » Maintaining an environment of confidentiality is important in building trust between you and your mentee
- » You and your mentee are responsible for identifying and observing areas of confidentiality

Professional communication, honesty, frank feedback

- » Your mentee will look to you to set the tone for acceptable levels of professionalism.

Building the mentoring relationship

Help your mentee set goals

Setting goals with your mentee at the start of your mentoring relationship is critical as it informs the direction the relationship will take.

If your mentee is not clear on his or her goals, setting these goals can be the topic of your first mentoring meeting. You may ask questions like:

- » What made you sign up for the mentoring program?
- » What specific concerns or questions do you have (vis-à-vis your professional life, student life, post-graduate work, etc.)?
- » How may I help you?

Your mentee will have resources to help him/her set goals. Remember, goal setting is a process: make sure to continually check in and ask your mentee if his/her priorities are changing or evolving.

Sample Questions

Here is a list of questions your mentee may ask you. Many of these examples pertain to a mentoring relationship that is career-related.

Obtaining Employment & Career Advancement

1. What are the most important skills someone should have to find success in this occupation?
2. What types of part-time, full-time or summer jobs should I be doing right now which may prepare me for this career path?
3. What avenues did you explore to find job openings in your field?
4. What kind of experience is needed to obtain an entry-level position in this profession?
5. How long should I expect to stay in an entry-level position?
6. What are the opportunities for advancement?
7. Is this type of work available on an international basis (without further training)?
8. In what ways did your education contribute to your career?
9. What academic courses do you find most relevant to your day-to-day work?
10. Is a post-graduate certificate, diploma, or degree necessary within this field?

Networking

1. Who helped you to get into this field?
2. How important is it to know someone in your profession/industry?
3. What professional associations or organizations are useful to belong to in this field?
4. What magazines, journals, or websites are important to read in this field?

Corporate Culture & Expectations

1. What do you do in a typical day?
2. What kind of salary may I expect in an entry-level position?
3. What are some other jobs in your field that are similar to your own?
4. What terminology or ideas should I remember when I am applying for a job in this field?
5. What kind of corporate culture exists in your field?
6. How many hours are in a typical work week?
7. What type of supervision is typical in this career?

Personal

1. Who had the most significant impact on you choosing this career?
2. What are the things you find personally rewarding in your career?
3. What are the things you find frustrating or disappointing?
4. What extra-curricular or co-curricular activities should I pursue to help me prepare for this career area?
5. What kind of volunteer experience would be beneficial?
6. Why did you get into this field?
7. Is travel a component of the job?
8. How stressful is this occupation?
9. How do you personally balance home and work?
10. How do you make your commuting time most productive?
11. What was the most surprising part of your transition from university to work?
12. What do you see as the biggest challenges for new graduates when they enter your industry?