



Apprenticeship Handbook

The
**GIRLS
GUILD**

Apprenticeship Handbook

We've got your back.

We're super excited that your apprenticeship is beginning, and want to let you know we're here to answer any questions along the way. Just hit us up at hello@girlsguild.com or **512-553-2243**.

What's this handbook for?

Apprenticeships can look very different depending on the work you're doing and the timeframe you're doing it in, but the key to a successful apprenticeship is getting on the same page about your goals and expectations.

To help with that, we put together this handbook to give you some practical suggestions for setting expectations and communicating about the work you're doing, and to offer some optional ideas for topics to chat about and activities you could do together.

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Keep in mind...

These are just some of our suggestions for getting the most out of your apprenticeship - it's up to you if you want to follow them! You'll probably find that some topics are more applicable to your particular apprenticeship than others, so together you can pick and choose what makes sense for your situation.

We're always looking for feedback on what parts of this handbook are helpful to you, and where we can be more supportive as you go through your apprenticeship. We'd love to hear from you about your experience!

~xO,

Cheyenne & Diana
GirlsGuild Co-Founders

Your First Meeting

Let's get this party started!

To get things rolling smoothly, it's a good idea to take some time in your first meeting to get the logistics of scheduling and communication worked out together, along with your goals for the apprenticeship.

1. Share your expectations

It can take a little while to get in the groove of working with each other. To make it easier, start by talking together about what you hope to get, and give, in this apprenticeship.

Schedules & Availability It's a good idea during your very first meeting to firm up the schedule for your apprenticeship by getting some dates and times on the calendar. Make sure you have each other's contact info so you can keep in touch between meetings, too.

Set Goals Talk to each other about what interests you in doing this apprenticeship. What are your goals for learning, as well as your goals for getting work done together? Look at your Apprenticeship Log sheets and write down these goals so you can remember them and update them as you go.

How you learn & communicate Be upfront with each other about your style of communicating, as well as learning/teaching. If you have a habit of speaking bluntly, let her know it doesn't mean you're angry. If you learn best by watching and observing before getting hands-on, ask her to show you what she's doing before you try it yourself. And don't forget to take a tour of the workspace!

2. Record & reflect

One of the most important things you can do to make this a successful apprenticeship is to take the time to log your experience and document the work you're doing. We'll periodically ask you to share your experiences by posting a tweet, updating your goals, or keeping a journal about your apprenticeship.

Take lots of photos Take pictures during the apprenticeship of your work in progress, the workspace, and of course, the finished product. You'll be happy later when you can show off what you've learned! (Be sure to ask your maker-mentor if it's ok first).

Journal / Sketch Get in the habit of writing or drawing a little after each work session, even if it's just to make notes about what you worked on and what you'll be doing next. Keeping a journal or sketchbook for your apprenticeship will help you process what you're learning, record your ideas and designs, and remember the next steps you'd like to take.

Log your skills & tools Sit down together and review your Apprenticeship Log sheet. Set your goals for the apprenticeship - we suggest starting out with three. Write down the projects you'll be taking on, and log your progress as you go. List the tools and skills you'll be learning. Help each other understand where you're at, and where you want the apprenticeship to go.

Waiver: Make sure to sign the apprenticeship participation waiver and keep a copy for your records.

3. Have fun!

Taking on an apprenticeship does mean taking on a responsibility, but it's also a chance to have fun collaborating on something amazing with someone brilliant, who thinks you're rad too - which is altogether, um... pretty cool.

Guidelines

We know you're awesome.

You've already succeeded by putting yourself out there to start this apprenticeship. Keep up the good work and continue pushing yourself to become comfortable with the unknown. This might be your first apprenticeship, but don't worry, as the saying goes, "You make your path by walking." And this handbook will give you some suggestions to help you take the first steps.

Defining “Apprenticeship”

We define apprenticeships as more hands-on than a “mentorship”, more supportive than an “internship” – they are a collaborative way to trade knowledge and skills for help with making. This aspect of trade within an apprenticeship model is something we take very seriously, and is the main difference between apprenticeships and internships.

An apprenticeship should benefit both the maker and the apprentice – the maker gets help with their work, and in return for that help, teaches the apprentice tangible, valuable skills and offers mentorship around the work and lifestyle of their trade.

Supporting an equitable trade

If the maker is not paying their apprentice, they should ensure that the trade of work for knowledge/skills is equitable by considering:

Is the apprentice doing what was described in the apprenticeship posting?

We include the type of making in the title of the apprenticeship, and that type of making should be at least 50% of what the apprentice is spending their time doing or learning. We recognize that much of what it means to be a maker is supporting your work through administration, communication or organizational activities. But this type of activity should always be 50% or less of what the apprentice is spending time doing or learning, unless she is particularly interested in this portion of the apprenticeship.

To help keep track of this balance, makers can ask their apprentice to log hours spent doing different tasks and activities, like learning a new tool or designing something vs. administrative work such as writing a newsletter campaign.

Is the maker spending time working alongside the apprentice?

The maker shouldn't leave the apprentice alone for more than 50% of the time, because this is time spent practicing without feedback or fulfilling tasks without the opportunity to ask questions.

To make time for feedback and learning, makers can set aside some time every week to chat with their apprentice about certain relevant topics, answer any questions, check in about goals and objectives, offer feedback, and make sure their schedules are working out well.

The question of compensation

We know that running an independent business gets insanely demanding. If the maker doesn't have the time or bandwidth to strike the balance outlined above, an alternative is to consider compensating the apprentice.

For example, if the apprentice is expected:

- to have a fairly high level of skill before they start,
- to meet professional standards in their work, and
- to be able to spend most of their time working productively on their own

...then they're doing work that probably merits pay.

Part 1: Practice

Let's figure it out as we go.

"Still figuring it out" was the title of a great TED talk by ROOKIE founder Tavi Gevinson, who spoke about the benefits of embracing your complexity and allowing yourself the room to constantly be "still figuring it out". We felt there were a lot of similarities between this mindset of striving for a perpetual state of imperfection, and the mode of experimenting with different creative practices through apprenticeship.

For us, "practice" means finding environments where we're constantly learning, becoming better collaborators, and strengthening our voice through this process. We are students of practice and iteration as humans, so let's embrace that mode as professionals as well.

Topics to chat about

Inspiration What does inspiration look like for you?

Ideation What are your methods for generating new ideas or new projects?

Iteration What does iteration look like for your process, and what are some examples of useful failures?

Environment How does your environment function to support you? [Tour the workspace]

Stress How do you manage stress; what are some techniques you use to keep calm and carry on?

Balance What does balancing mental and physical health look like doing the work you do?

Do Together (if you haven't already)

Set goals & projects Take a look at your Apprenticeship Log sheets and set your goals for the apprenticeship together, as well as writing down your initial projects so you can track your progress as you work on them. Jot down the tools and skills you'll be learning, and then log your hours and rate your confidence with them each week.

Waiver Print and sign the waiver for your records!

Schedule Remind each other at the beginning of each meeting how much time you have together so you can plan the time accordingly.

Apprentice Homework

Document Take pictures of the work you started this week, even if it doesn't seem photo-worthy. When the work is finished it's awesome to be able to show the process you used to make it.

Log After your first week working together, go back to your Apprenticeship Log sheets and record the tools and techniques you've worked on.

Sketch / Reflect Write down your first thoughts about what having a practice means for you in your apprenticeship journal. Feel free to also use this journal in any way you want!

Share Let your maker know your thoughts, ideas, and further questions about starting your own practice. Share with your friends, too - if you have a Twitter account, you could create a tweet thanking your Maker-mentor or showing what you've worked on this week.

Part 2: Tools & Materials

Get your hands dirty!

We hope your apprenticeship has gotten off to an awesome start, and you're soaking it all in. During this round we want to remind you both to chat about tools and materials of the trade - both physical as well as digital/online tools and resources.

It can be a challenge to know where to start when choosing the right tools and resources for your work, and then to learn the ins and outs of using them. Share your thoughts about the best places to find materials, tools, and resources; both online and locally.

Topics to chat about

Sourcing How have you found the best tools and materials for the job?

Learning How did you learn to use those tools?

Impact What are the environmental impacts of using these kinds of materials?

Cost How do you stay thrifty when paying for services, materials, or operational costs?

Resources What are the best online resources for sourcing, learning, book keeping, collaborating, etc?

Do Together

Field Trip Take a field trip somewhere (either online or in person), to look at sourcing tools, materials, or inspiration.

Experiment Try things out with the materials and tools you're learning to discover how they work and behave. Play around with designing something of your own or making a simple project.

Apprentice Homework

Document Get some photos of the materials you're using and what you're making with them, and if possible, of the sourcing you do on your field trip.

Log Track the hours you've spent on different tools and skills, and log your progress on the goals and projects you set out at the beginning of your apprenticeship.

Sketch / Reflect Take notes on the tools and materials you're using, and jot down the resources you learned about in your apprenticeship journal. Feel free to also use this journal in any way you want!

Share Show someone (your Maker-mentor, a friend, or a family member) what you made with the new tools and materials you've learned, and ask for their questions or feedback. If you have a Facebook account, you could post a picture of your field trip or your work to show off what you're learning.

Part 3: Theory

Dig into the good stuff.

Let's chat about what the history and discourse is around your work. No one creates in a vacuum – we're all inspired and influenced by the culture and society we live in, and the work that was made before and alongside ours. Critical theory and discourse are the academic terms for thinking seriously about what our work means in its larger context, and how it participates in the cultural conversation of its time.

Thinking about why we make what we make, and being able to articulate that when we put our work out in the world, is as fundamental a skill as using tools and materials.

Topics to chat about

History What are some of the historical movements that have brought us to where we are?

Ideas What ideas are you putting forward with your work (even if it's craft-based)?

Community Who else is doing similar things in this space?

Inspiration What big ideas have inspired you and why?

Vision What kind of world do you want to live in, and how are you moving towards it?

Do Together

Geek out Put together a reading/viewing list for each other where you share the work and ideas that influence your perspective on the world, and on making.

Practice critiquing Take a look at something you've made, something your Maker-mentor has made, or a piece you both love, and talk about what it means, why it's effective, and where it could improve. Remember, be constructive in your criticism (tell *why*, not just what you think of it), and don't take it personally! Like they tell you in art school, "You are not your work. You are still a good person. You are still fun at parties." :-]

Apprentice Homework

Read Read at least one thing from the list of articles/essays/books/links your Maker-mentor gives you and take notes or make sketches on what it means to you.

Log Write down the theory, tools, techniques, and skills you're learning, and rate your progress.

Sketch / Reflect Start thinking about how your work relates to a historical narrative and write or sketch your thoughts on the topic in your journal.

Share Write a short (or long, if you want!) blog post on your ideas about theory and how it relates to your apprenticeship. Don't have a blog? We do! We'd be happy to have you guest post on the GirlsGuild blog.

Part 4: Creativity

Ok, let's get weird y'all.

There's a time for logic and analysis, and then there's a time for giant abductive leaps, instinct, and associations. And it's AWESOME.

Fortunately there's very little that's too weird these days, so let's really let down our guard, quiet the filter, and let 'er rip. We won't judge. In fact, much of the most progressive discoveries, inventions, and designs have come from a place where judgement was suspended.

Topics to chat about

Creative process What are your methods for synthesizing your research and inspiration, and developing ideas from there?

Ideation Where do good ideas come from? Magic? Genius? Hard work? Observation?

Iteration What do you do when your first idea fails? Or when you can't get the idea in your head to come out the way you want it to? How do you work through failure?

Putting yourself out there How do you make a habit of exposing yourself to new ideas and new people frequently, and exposing your ideas to the world as practice?

Do Together

Share inspiration Put together a Pinterest board (or a physical pin board) to make a mood board (a collection of work that conveys the mood you want to express in your work) and gather inspiration for a personal project you want to design.

Make a mix tape ...Or a playlist, whatever you want to call it! Put a bunch of songs on it that inspire you and make you want to make things.

Get creative Based on your mood board, start sketching ideas for your design - as many as you can come up with! Don't judge them yet, just get them out on paper.

Apprentice Homework

Document Take photos of your mood board and sketches, and keep them to show your process when you make a portfolio.

Log Track the skills you're developing, and rate your progress on your projects and goals.

Sketch / Reflect Keep working on iterating on your sketches and developing your design. Ask someone if they'd like to collaborate on the design with you (you can just sketch it out together, or bring it all the way to life).

Share Share your thoughts on your experience as an apprentice with a few friends, and ask for feedback.

Part 5: Community

So what's it all mean?

Well, it wouldn't mean much if you didn't have anyone to share it with! Start building a voice, first by putting your ideas out into the world and then by teaching what you know.

When you communicate your ideas by writing them down or talking them through with someone, you force yourself to synthesize the information and define your opinion. The same thing happens when you teach; by explaining what you know (whether it's skills or ideas) to someone who doesn't know it, you solidify and synthesize your own knowledge by re-telling its story.

Topics to chat about

Collaboration What makes a good collaborator? What traits do you bring to the table as a collaborator, and what traits would you want to see in someone you're working with? What do you need to work on?

Connection How do you stay connected to your wider community? What groups or events do you participate in? Where do you want to be more involved?

Supportive Community Where in your practice are you or have you been supported by your community? How do you make room in your work or practice to be supportive in turn?

Do Together

Build your network Make a list of contacts in the maker community - people you want to meet, and people your Maker-mentor knows and can introduce you to.

Introduce yourself Schedule a coffee date with someone from your list [and buy them coffee!]. Chat about what they do, and tell them about what you've been doing in your apprenticeship.

Apprentice Homework

Document Write down the makers you've connected with in the community, and the groups or events you'd like to get involved with. Consider following them on Twitter/Facebook/Instagram to keep the conversation going.

Log Track the skills you're developing, and rate your progress on your projects and goals.

Sketch / Reflect Write an entry in your journal after having your coffee date, and think about how their perspective is similar or different from your own, and what new ideas it inspired for you.

Share Introduce a friend to the maker community you've discovered, or share some resources for getting involved on your social networks.

Wrapping Up

Where will you take it from here?

Coming out the other side of a new experience can be a big eye-opener. Learning new things and getting insight into someone else's perspective can change the way you look at the world, or it might confirm some ideas you were already thinking about.

With an apprenticeship under your belt and some solid skills at hand, what are you inspired to do next? Even if the answer isn't clear and concrete, you'll still need to make your path by walking - and dreaming of where it could lead can point you to the direction you want to go.

Topics to chat about

Goals and dreams What are your goals and dreams? Have they changed or grown since you started this apprenticeship?

Next Steps How can you take the small first steps to continue moving forward with your goals? What can you put in place now to keep the momentum rolling?

Success How do you measure success? What does failure mean?

Do Together

Wrapping up Take some time to sit down together and review the work you've done during your apprenticeship. Share feedback on the projects you worked on and your progress towards your goals, and sketch out how you could show it off in your portfolio!

Keeping in Touch As your apprenticeship gets close to its completion date, make plans to keep in touch. Decide on a time to meet up down the road; we suggest meeting up again in 3-6 months to catch up and share what you've been working on.

Apprentice Homework

Document Take photos of the projects you've been working on, and the studio.

Log Go back through your logs to see how far you've come! Use your progress with what you've learned to set new goals for moving forward.

Sketch / Reflect Write a blog post (or just an entry in your journal) on what you've learned in your apprenticeship, where you'd like to go from here, and how you want to be involved in this community.

Share Consider scheduling a GirlsGuild workshop to lead together with your Maker-mentor, to pass on the skills you've learned in your apprenticeship to the newbies in the maker community!