



Mentoring Guide

All You Need to Know about Being a SAM Mentor

Stanford Alumni Mentoring Leadership Team



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STANFORD ALUMNI MENTORING (SAM): AN INTRODUCTION

What is a Stanford Alumni Mentor?

As a Stanford Alumni Mentor you are a guide, friend and resource who shares your Stanford education and professional experience to help pave the way for students to succeed at Stanford and beyond. A Stanford Alumni Mentor derives satisfaction from helping Stanford students fulfill their potential.

"My mentor is amazing. Not only is he full of stories and advice, he's incredibly encouraging. I feel like he truly believes in me and would like nothing more than to see me succeed."

-Stanford Mentee

As a Mentor You Play Several Roles, Including:

Motivator: Expresses belief and confidence in the mentee's abilities, and encourages the mentee to try new things.

Resource: Teaches and advises the mentee on how to make professional contacts, and introduces the mentee to new people, places or ideas.

Supporter: Encourages open and honest dialogue, and listens to and responds to the needs of the mentee.

Coach: Helps the mentee develop, and work to achieve, realistic and meaningful goals.

"The most rewarding aspect of mentoring has been making a meaningful connection with my mentee and feeling that I have made a positive impact."

-Stanford Alumni Mentor

The Mentoring Relationship

For mentoring to be successful there must be a reciprocal, comfortable relationship between mentor and mentee. Both parties must work at the relationship to make it successful by being open-minded, respectful and keeping to the expectations they have set for the relationship. Ideally, the mentoring relationship will be a mutually beneficial one; as the mentor learns from the mentee and the mentee from the mentor.



THE MENTORING EXPERIENCE: BENEFITS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MENTOR

How Will I Benefit as a Mentor?

We believe that mentoring will be a positive and enriching experience for you. Specifically, we hope you will:

- ❖ Refine your coaching and mentoring skills
- ❖ Develop meaningful connections with students
- ❖ Learn about the Stanford of today and the next generation
- ❖ Experience a reconnection with Stanford
- ❖ Expand your professional network

"I enjoy making new contacts with current Stanford students and helping them field some of the key questions they have about majors, career fields, and what growing up is like."

-Stanford Mentor

What is Expected of Me as a Mentor?

Our mentors say that one of the best aspects of volunteering with SAM is that it is flexible – you and the mentee can decide on how the relationship will work. We do, however, have some minimal expectations of our mentors, including:

- ❖ Spend at least two hours per month building the mentoring relationship
- ❖ Set expectations with students for how and when you will contact each other
- ❖ Help your student in identifying and setting goals, track progress and make changes
- ❖ Approach mentoring relationship with an open mind, professionalism and respect
- ❖ Support student's professional and personal development
- ❖ Respond to all communications in a timely manner
- ❖ Maintain and model professional behavior. Define professional behavior if needed
- ❖ Communicate problems with the mentoring relationship to SAM program staff at mentoring@stanford.edu

What is *Not* Expected of Me as a Mentor?

- ❖ To offer jobs or internships to your mentee
- ❖ To have all the answers for your mentee
- ❖ To initiate all contact with your mentee

"The most rewarding aspect of mentoring is informing my mentees of the benefits of public service, becoming acquainted with them on a personal level, and maintaining contact after SAM ends."

-Stanford Mentor

THE MENTORING EXPERIENCE: BENEFITS AND EXPECTATION FOR THE MENTEE

*"The best part of having a mentor was hearing about different career paths, being introduced to other professionals in my field, and getting feedback on interviews and accepting an offer."
-Stanford Mentee*

How will the Mentee Benefit?

Following are some general ways we hope the students will benefit from being in a mentoring relationship:

- ❖ Build a professional network
- ❖ Develop and enhance professional and communication skills
- ❖ Connect academics and career; acquire advice on experiences and courses that would be of greatest benefit
- ❖ Explore new ideas and areas of interest
- ❖ Gain exposure to career options, advice and job search tips

What is Expected of the Mentee?

Before a student can search for a mentor, they must attend a mandatory orientation in which they are instructed to think about what they want out of a mentoring relationship. They are informed of our expectations, which include:

- ❖ Spend at least two hours per month building the mentoring relationship
- ❖ Make the first contact with the selected mentor and respond to *all* communication
- ❖ Set specific goals for the mentoring relationship with mentor
- ❖ Agree and commit to expectations and goals set with the mentor
- ❖ Be appropriate in their requests of their mentor, in particular, in NOT asking for a job or sponsorship
- ❖ Approach the mentoring relationship with an open mind, professionalism and respect
- ❖ Be receptive to suggestions and feedback
- ❖ Communicate problems with the mentoring relationship to SAM program staff at mentoring@stanford.edu

*"It's fun to try and improve the life of the next generation by passing on the lessons I think I learned while at Stanford."
-Stanford Mentor*



HOW SAM WORKS

The Matching Process

Students register with SAM at the **beginning** of each academic quarter, and attend a mandatory orientation. After the orientation, students request mentors based on search criteria that they select using our search engine.

We do not match you with students. If you receive a request, you have the option to accept or decline.

*"It is great to know that we
are offered this wide and
great range of people who
are willing to mentor us."*

-Stanford Mentee

Mentoring Sessions

The mentoring sessions run for **six months** for Undergraduates and Masters students and **nine months** for PhD students. At the end of the mentoring session we formally release you so that you are able to work with another mentee (or mentees), and your mentee can work with a new mentor. SAM's goal, however, is to develop on-going relationships, so we encourage you to continue your relationship on an informal basis.

When a Student Requests You

If student(s) request(s) you as a mentor, an email will be sent to your primary email with *Subject: "Stanford Alumni Mentoring: Mentee Request"*.

- ❖ Students can only request one mentor at a time. Please respond within **three days**
- ❖ You can either **accept or decline** a request. If you choose to decline, please send a message to student with your reason when prompted
- ❖ If you accept, **contact information** is emailed to both parties

You are in Control!

By logging into the SAM website, you can:

- ❖ Choose the maximum number of mentees you want during any given session
- ❖ Change the number of mentees you want to work with at any time
- ❖ Take yourself in or out of the mentor searchable pool at any time

*"The most rewarding aspect of mentoring is
the gratification I experience when the
mentee shares their excitement from having
learned or grown from our interaction."*

-Stanford Mentor



ONCE A MATCH IS MADE

Initial Contact with your Mentee

Students are expected to initiate contact with you once the match is made.

- ❖ We encourage the students to send an **introductory email** to the mentor, so be on the lookout and please respond in a timely manner
- ❖ Sometimes, however, students are nervous or intimidated to reach out, so if you don't hear from your mentee, please feel free to **take the lead**
- ❖ If the student **does not respond** to your messages or you have any other problems, please contact the program staff at mentoring@stanford.edu

What Should I Expect of the First Conversation?

We strongly suggest that you have a conversation early on in the relationship in-person, over the phone, or via Skype. This personal interaction will go far in creating a connection and setting up a good foundation for your relationship. Here are some guidelines for the conversation:

- ❖ Tell the mentee that you are **excited** about being his/her mentor! Sharing your enthusiasm will help reassure them that you are committed to making the relationship succeed
- ❖ **Build rapport** with your mentee by asking questions about the mentee's background and experiences. Remember, you have Stanford in common and that is a great place to start!
- ❖ It is important at the beginning of the relationship to talk about **expectations and goals** for the mentoring experience. Make sure to either start this dialogue in this first conversation or set up another time to do so. You can use our SAM Mentoring Agreement, which can be found at <https://mentoring.stanford.edu/index.php?content/resources>

"The most rewarding aspect of mentoring was talking with my mentor about my future goals and expectations and having him speak frankly to me about what he likes and dislikes about his career."
-Stanford Mentee

BUILDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Every mentoring relationship is unique. In fact, there is so much to learn that there are entire books devoted to how to build a mentoring relationship. Following are a few guidelines based on feedback we have received from our mentors that we hope will help you in creating a satisfying relationship with your mentee.

Set Goals with Your Mentee

- ❖ Setting goals with your mentee at the **beginning of the relationship** is critical because it gives direction to the relationship and informs you in how to help the mentee. See Appendix B and C for goal setting help
- ❖ If your mentee doesn't know his/her goals, this can be your **first mentoring moment**. You can ask questions such as "What made you sign up for the mentoring program?" or "What about my profile stood out to you?" or "What are your specific concerns and questions right now?" or simply "How can I help you?"
- ❖ Remember, goal setting can be a **process**, so make a point to check in and ask the mentee if his/her priorities are changing or evolving

"We had a very clear discussion of who we were and what are goals are, so that we made the sure the connection we made reading resumes was a connection that would serve his needs."

-Stanford Mentor

"I try to ask the mentee exactly what they want to get out of the mentoring relationship. We try to share a little about each other's backgrounds and experiences."

-Stanford Mentor

Set Expectations with Your Mentee

- ❖ **Stick** to the decision you made with your mentee on how and when you will communicate with each other. Renegotiate as needed
- ❖ If the mentee is **unresponsive** at any point in the relationship initiate contact. Some students will be overwhelmed by how much they are doing and forget to contact you
- ❖ If your mentee doesn't respond to you after multiple attempts, please **contact** the SAM program staff at mentoring@stanford.edu

BUILDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP - continued

Get to Know your Mentee

- ❖ Ask **thoughtful** questions about the mentee's interests, experiences and background
- ❖ **Follow up** on any important steps the student has taken, such as a job interview or a leadership experience, and ask what he/she learned
- ❖ Be an **active listener** by feeding back what the mentee says, avoiding interrupting and show interest in your voice and posture

"It was through the questions that my mentor asked me that I was able to figure out where I fit into the whole business scheme. It was great to have someone in my life who I could talk openly with."

-Stanford Mentee

Offer Options Versus Solutions

- ❖ **Avoid** giving quick solutions. Ask the mentee what he/she is thinking and help him/her process his/her own ideas
- ❖ Make **suggestions** of things the student might try, for example, "Have you looked into..." or "Something I found helpful when I was at Stanford..." versus "You should..." or "You need to..."
- ❖ Remember, often times people will not do what we say, so **don't get discouraged** if your mentee does not heed your advice

"The most rewarding aspect of the mentoring experience was hearing my mentor's personal story. I think the best advice I got was just hearing about the path she took. From that personal anecdote I saw a lot of myself and realized which aspects of her journey might apply to me."

-Stanford Mentee

Share your Story

- ❖ Telling your mentee **about yourself** and your experiences builds trust and rapport
- ❖ Think about how you have learned from your **mistakes** and how your mentee can learn from them
- ❖ Share your **lessons learned** during college and beyond with your mentee



STANFORD ALUMNI MENTORING

BUILDING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP – continued

Be a Coach!

- ❖ Encourage your mentee **to take risks**. They may need a little push, but it will help them in the long run
- ❖ Remember, students have much to learn from a **professional like you** - everything from how to dress to being on time
- ❖ Don't hesitate to **give your mentee feedback** if he/she is not acting in a professional manner - it could make a huge difference for his/her first interview, job and other life experiences

*"I liked getting feedback and
frank answers from
professionals who have gone
through similar decisions
before."
-Stanford Mentee*

Coordinating Schedules

- ❖ It may be difficult to find the time to talk or meet with your mentee, so schedule your **next conversation** at the end of each meeting
- ❖ Keep the relationship a **priority** and ask your mentee to do the same
- ❖ If you are on opposite coasts or international, take advantage of **student late-night routines** and schedule a Skype or phone conversation

*"I found similarities with my
mentor, and that made me feel
more secure - that he felt like I did
at some point, and that it all works
out in the end. It's okay to not
know what you want to do
sometimes."
-Stanford Mentee*

How to Relate

- ❖ Ask about the mentee's **Stanford experience**, as you have that in common
- ❖ Share what you might have **done differently** if you were a student again
- ❖ **Refer** to the "Suggested Mentoring Activities" on the following page for some ideas of what to do together or talk about

SUGGESTED MENTORING ACTIVITIES

You and your mentee may decide what you want to work on together from the onset. But if you need some ideas on what to do with your mentee, the following list is a great place to start.

Career Conversations

- ❖ Discuss your educational background and the role of educational preparation in your field
- ❖ Share information about a current event or issue in your field
- ❖ Schedule a shadow visit, if appropriate

Job Search Process

- ❖ Critique the mentee's resume and/or cover letter
- ❖ Lead your mentee through a mock interview
- ❖ Offer guidance on where to best look for jobs/internships in your field

"The most rewarding aspect of having a mentor has been his advice and critique of my resume and cover letter, answering lots of questions, talking about internship searching and advice about certain classes to take."

-Stanford Mentee

Graduate School Consultations

- ❖ Share what you learned about navigating your graduate studies
- ❖ Discuss how you worked with your advisors
- ❖ Tell the mentee how you prepared for your transition from school to professional world

Tell Your Story

- ❖ Share how you have balanced personal life and career and what to expect
- ❖ Discuss what you would have done differently at Stanford if you had to do it over
- ❖ Talk about how you have dealt with personal or professional challenges

Networking Pursuits

- ❖ Introduce your mentee to colleagues or other contacts
- ❖ Attend a professional association meeting or conference together
- ❖ Guide your mentee in how to conduct an informational interview



THANK YOU SAM MENTORS!

We want to extend our deepest gratitude for your participation in the Stanford Alumni Mentoring Program. This program would not be possible without your commitment and enthusiasm to connect with Stanford students and your willingness to share your life and experience.

This guide will evolve with the Stanford Alumni Mentoring Program. As we work together throughout this year, we welcome your suggestions for improving our written materials as well as our program. Your participation in this process will help the Stanford Alumni Mentoring Program become a best practice model for Stanford and other universities.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at mentoring@stanford.edu or 650-723-2870.

Best,

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Stanford Alumni Mentoring Program Manager
Career Development Center

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"It's been great being able to share my personal experiences as well as hear about student life and how much things have changed on campus. I really enjoy providing perspective and helping as much as possible by providing information and knowledge about my life after Stanford."

-Stanford Mentor

In preparing this Mentoring Guide we have used material from sister institutions. We particularly acknowledge using material from University of Minnesota Alumni Association Mentoring Handbook 2008 and Cornell University Alumni-Student Mentoring Handbook 2008.

Appendix A**MENTORING AGREEMENT: SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS**

To get the most out of your mentoring experience, SAM requests that you talk to your mentee about the general expectations and goals that you have for your mentoring relationship.

Agree on Expectations: How will the relationship work?

1. **Meeting together:** What works best? (remember, you want to have at least one meeting or conversation) 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, once a month)? Renegotiate as needed.
3. If an **email/voice mail** is received, we will get back to our partner within:
 - ☐ 24 hours
 - ☐ 1-2 days
 - ☐ 3 days
 - ☐ Other
4. If we can't make an expected meeting/interaction, how will we get in touch?
5. When will we meet or talk **next**?

Agree on Goals: What do you hope to gain from the relationship?

1. What are the **mentee's goals** for this mentoring relationship? (see SAM registration form) Is there any clarification needed?
2. What are the **mentor's goals** for this mentoring relationship?
3. What **actions** can you and your mentee take to achieve these goals? See Appendices B & C for goal setting resources.

Appendix B

GOAL SETTING

Purpose of Goal Setting

Setting goals helps people strive to achieve. Although goal setting may be challenging, it is worthwhile. The intention is to increase efficiency and effectiveness by specifying desired outcomes. Hellriegel, Slocu, and Woodman & Martens (1992) find goals to be 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 attitude

SMART Goal-setting Model

The SMART guidelines can facilitate setting effective goals in traveling the road to success.

SMART means:

Specific – A goal of “graduating from college” is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished, e.g. “study more in order to receive better grades.”

Measurable – Establish criteria for how to achieve a goal. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to measure your success in completing the long-range goal.

Action-oriented – Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.

Realistic – Strive for attainable goals; consider the resources and constraints relative to the situation.

Timely – Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time that you lose focus or motivation.

Source: University of Minnesota Alumni Association, 2008 *Mentor Handbook*

Appendix C

GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

First, discuss mentor's background. Then discuss the student's major coursework and work experience to date.

Next, the mentee can indicate their level of interest in the following activities. Rate interest level as low (L), medium (M) or high (H).

Gain insight into mentor's academic experience	L	M	H
Introduction to colleagues or contacts	L	M	H
Attend a professional meeting or program with mentor	L	M	H
Critique mentee's resume/portfolio/CV	L	M	H
Develop interviewing or informational interview skills	L	M	H
Discuss how personal and professional life can fit together	L	M	H
Review of mentor's resume/CV	L	M	H
Process the decision to attend graduate school	L	M	H
Guidance on how to seek a job/internship in the field	L	M	H
Discuss how the mentor navigated graduate school/worked with advisors	L	M	H
Shadow mentor at workplace	L	M	H
Discuss working in academia vs. industry	L	M	H
Other _____	L	M	H

After completing the above, discuss ways that the mentor might be able to help the mentee with items rated high or medium interest.

Using the SMART model, determine two short-term and one long-term goal that the mentee wants to work on.