**Mentoring Relationships**

**OVERVIEW**

The success of a mentoring relationship depends on the ability to:

* recognise and respect each other’s strengths and differences
* clarify expectations and roles
* establish clear goals
* manage the mentoring process to ensure effective meetings take place.

Your mentor plays an important role in your career development through the sharing of a significant wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise. Mentors can help you develop your skills, build your networks, and provide you with opportunities for personal and professional growth.

The following page provides you with tips on how to develop your mentoring relationships.

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| **THE MENTOR** |  | **THE MENTEE** |
| **What do you want from your mentor?**  Let your mentor know the role they play in your life, career, research and PhD. It may help them be a better mentor. As a mentee, you’ll need the following from your mentor: |  | **What should you do as a mentee?**  Make sure you’re a good mentee. The mentoring relationship will be more valuable to you, if you’re prepared to contribute equally. As a mentor, they’ll need you to do the following: |
| * **Discretion:** You’ll likely be sharing personal and private information that you may want kept confidential. So, you’ll need to be sure your mentor will keep the conversations private. Discuss this early on in the relationship and agree on what information remains confidential. * **Trust:** You’ll need to trust your mentor. Trust that they’re giving you the best advice. Trust they have your best interests at heart – even when the message is difficult to take or deliver, (e.g. pulling you up on bad behaviour or poor performance). * **Engagement:** Many mentoring relationships are informal. You may meet on an ad hoc basis or mentors may be unavailable when needed. It’s important the mentors you have are available to you and are engaged in the process – either through their responsiveness or the establishment of a routine that you both adhere to. * **Openness:** Your mentor should be willing to share their advice and life experiences with you. As appropriate, this should extend to making introductions to the right people at the right time – particularly where career advancement is concerned. * **Expertise:** You’ll need to be clear on what you specifically want from the relationship and have a pretty strong idea that the mentor can deliver on it. Make the mentor aware of their role in your life. Take it further, by letting them know they’re a mentor for specific reasons (whatever they might be – experience, networks, expertise). |  | * **Discretion:** Keep their private personal information safe. Confidentiality is an essential part of the mentoring partnership. It’s a good idea to discuss this early on in the relationship and agree on what information remains confidential. * **Trust:** Trust them and their advice. Provide them with all of the necessary details – even when it involves embarrassment or appearance of failure on your part, or theirs. Listen to their perspective as well as to constructive feedback and criticism. Be prepared to be challenged by your mentor and be open to considering suggestions that you may not have considered previously. * **Engagement:** You too need to be available and engaged in the process. Make sure you act on their advice (or have a good reason for why you didn’t). Make sure you follow up on their referrals – especially when it’s within their networks of friends or colleagues. * **Openness:** Share your successes and failures willingly. Communicate what it is that you want to get from the relationship. This includes clearly articulating questions and concerns and suggesting to your mentor specific actions that can assist you. * **Respect:** Recognise the time and effort provided by your mentor. Time is the most precious thing we have. No amount of free coffee, lunch or dinner will make up for it – especially when an hour of their time might be worth anything from $50, to more than $100. Recognise if or when the relationship is not working and call it to a close. |