

Suggestions for Mentees

The mentor/mentee relationship can be very rewarding but will be vastly improved by having realistic and explicit expectations of the relationship, as well as adequate meeting preparation. Below are some suggestions of generally helpful mentee behaviour and ideas for discussion with your mentor.

Do's and Don'ts:

- **Don't** expect your mentor to tell you what to do, solve all your problems, or get you a job.
 - They can offer advice but will expect you to have done some reflection about what makes sense for you personally.
 - They are also not oracles; they can't predict the future of an industry or job market.
 - They can't guarantee you that your career will turn out perfectly if you follow their advice.
- **Do** be open to suggestions.
 - Don't shoot down every idea your mentor has, even if you don't think it's a good idea at first.
 - Even if their exact suggestion doesn't work for you, perhaps you can find a way to incorporate an aspect of the suggestion into your plan.
- **Do** take your role as a mentee seriously.
 - Your mentor is volunteering to help you in your career journey.
 - Be respectful of their time, show up when you say you will, and be prepared (see below for meeting discussion ideas).
- **Do** ask focused questions:
 - Poor: What job should I look for?
 - Better: I'm thinking about doing either a or b; here's what I see as the positives and negatives of each. What do you think?
- **Do** take time to explicitly discuss the relationship:
 - How often will you meet? In what format?
 - What topics does the mentor feel most qualified to discuss?

Possible areas of discussion:

- Career Management
 - Identify career goals
 - Match interests to the organisation's expectations
- Networking
 - Discuss how to create a professional network in the field
 - Identify individual and organisational leaders in the field
 - Discuss highest-impact conferences or professional groups
- Productivity
 - Share experience in managing time
 - Handling stress
 - Balancing workload efficiently
- Life-long learning
 - Explore research and sponsored funding opportunities
 - Educational opportunities
- Personal
 - Balancing family and career
 - Financial concerns/impact on career choice

Further reading:

- [Making the Most of Mentors: A Guide for Mentees](#) *(estimated reading time 14 mins)*
- [Building and sustaining mentor interactions as a mentee](#) *(estimated reading time 25 mins)*
- [Mentee Best Practices](#) *(estimated reading time 1 min)*
- [Creating a Program for Junior Faculty Professional Development: A Tool Kit](#) *(estimated reading time 15 mins)*

Our best wishes for thriving mentoring relationships!