

Mentoring Toolkit

Mentoring is a proven way to foster collaboration, develop skills, and enhance job satisfaction. This self-guided toolkit was created to provide you with accessible, comprehensive, and effective tools that support professional growth via mentoring. Recognizing the various needs and goals across our organizations, these resources are tailored to be adaptable to the needs of your division, department, or team. We have also included links throughout this document for additional training, articles, and resources. For example, [40+ Definitive Mentorship Statistics and Research for 2024](#), which give insights into just how much value mentoring can give to individuals including that: “90% of workers who have a mentor report being happy in their job”, “employees who are involved in mentoring programs have a 50% higher retention rate than those not involved in mentoring”, and that, “93% of mentees believe their mentoring relationship was useful”.

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Best Practices

Following the best practices outlined below helps to ensure effective mentoring experiences for individuals or teams. From setting clear objectives to measuring success, these guidelines provide a roadmap for fostering meaningful connections and achieving your personal or team goals! You can also check out the [Best Practices for Mentors and Mentees in Academic Settings](#).

Clear Objectives: Establish the purpose of the mentoring partnership and set specific goals. Examples include skill development, knowledge sharing, empathetic support, career progression, onboarding support, or cross-departmental collaboration.

Pair Strategically: Use activities that match mentors and mentees based on complementary skills, career goals, and interests. Encourage both parties to communicate preferences.

Discuss Expectations Early: Outline roles, responsibilities, and boundaries for mentors and mentees.

Training and Support: Offer mentors and mentees guidance on building effective relationships, communication skills, and conflict resolution.

Regular Check-ins and Feedback: Promote consistent meeting schedules and provide periodic informal evaluation to ensure the program or partnership is meeting its objectives.

Encourage Flexibility: No two partnerships are ever alike. Allow the mentoring experience to address individual needs and circumstances.

Promote Belonging: Ensure options are accessible for all levels, various roles, and backgrounds.



Topics to Explore via Mentoring

Below is a list of topics to explore career growth, skill-building, and personal development within a mentoring partnership. While this list is not exhaustive, it provides a flexible framework to help mentors and mentees address common challenges and opportunities. Feel free to adapt these topics to meet the specific needs of your mentoring partnership.

1. Understanding the organization's culture, values, and expectations.
2. Exploring career growth and leadership opportunities.
3. Building technical and soft skills for success.
4. Balancing work responsibilities and personal well-being.
5. Networking across departments and the organization.
6. Communicating effectively with colleagues and stakeholders.
7. Managing projects, programs, and resources efficiently.
8. Navigating organizational policies.
9. Supporting belonging and engagement.
10. Enhancing skills to support student success.
11. Setting and achieving professional development goals.
12. Managing stress and building resilience.
13. Building greater business acumen in understanding the higher education landscape.



Team Activities to Inspire Mentoring Partnerships

Each activity below is designed to facilitate organic, informal, or structured interactions, helping participants identify mentors or mentees who align with their interests, goals, and skills. Whether through one-on-one conversations, themed discussions, collaborative exercises, or interactive networking, participants have opportunities to gain valuable insights, build relationships, and create opportunities for ongoing mentorship. Regardless of the method, all formats encourage knowledge-sharing, mutual support, and professional development.

Speed Networking for Mentorship

Set up short, timed conversations (5–7 minutes each) between potential mentors and mentees. After each round, participants rotate to meet someone new.

Coffee Chats or “Matchmaking” Meetups

Host casual meet-and-greet sessions where participants can mingle over coffee or snacks. Provide conversation prompts or topic cards (career growth, challenges, skills) to spark discussion.

Panel Discussions or Storytelling Events

Invite experienced members of your team to share their journeys, lessons learned, and tips for success. Afterward, organize informal breakout discussions.

Shared Interest Roundtables

Set up themed tables or breakout rooms based on interests or professional goals (leadership development, technical skills, career transitions). Participants choose a topic that aligns with their aspirations.

Reverse Mentorship Mixer

Allow mentees to highlight their unique skills or knowledge (digital tools, social media) in short presentations or discussions. Mentors can then identify mentees they might learn from or collaborate with.

Collaborative Problem-Solving Sessions

Group participants into mixed teams to tackle hypothetical challenges or case studies. Rotate groups periodically.

Mentoring in Action Workshops

Host an interactive workshop where participants practice mentoring skills through role-playing or structured activities.

Interest-Based Networking Boards

Create a physical or virtual board where mentors and mentees can post about their interests, skills, or goals. Participants can “match” themselves by responding to posts.

Lunch-and-Learn Pairing Activity

Pair participants for lunch based on shared interests or goals (using pre-event surveys). Provide conversation guides to facilitate discussions.

Informal Office Tours or Shadowing Days

Organize opportunities for mentees to visit different areas or shadow potential mentors.

Get to Know You Icebreakers

Organize fun icebreaker activities like “Two Truths and a Lie” or “What’s Your Superpower?” to help participants learn more about each other.

Monthly Mentoring Mixers

Host recurring casual networking events with a focus on specific topics or themes (leadership, career growth, innovation).

Online Mentorship Marketplace

Set up an internal platform or spreadsheet where participants can list their skills, expertise, and what they are looking for in a mentor/mentee.

Matching Cards or Surveys

Use pre-event surveys to collect information on participants’ interests, goals, and mentoring needs. Provide this information on cards or profiles during the event for quick reference.

Collaborative Goal Setting Sessions

Have participants write down their professional goals and exchange them with others in small groups for discussion and brainstorming.

Mentorship Spotlight Activity

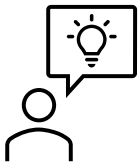
Have participants share quick introductions (1-2 minutes) about their career journey, skills, and what they are looking for in a mentor/mentee.

Gamified Mentorship Matchmaking

Use a fun game or activity (a scavenger hunt, trivia, or bingo) where participants uncover clues about each other’s skills, interests, or expertise.

Reflection and Discussion Circles

Organize small-group discussions where participants reflect on their professional journeys, strengths, and areas of growth.



Individual Activities to Inspire Mentoring Partnerships

Mentoring does not require a leader's intervention! By actively engaging in networking opportunities, professional associations, online platforms, or workplace initiatives, individuals can build meaningful mentorship relationships on their own. These activities empower individuals to connect with experienced professionals, seek guidance, and learn from varied perspectives. Whether through informal connections or special projects, these ideas can help to gain valuable insights, career support, and professional development.

Networking Events and Conferences

Engage in events or local meetups where you can connect with experienced professionals.

Join Professional Associations

Many industry groups offer formal or informal mentorship programs that can connect you with others.

Leverage LinkedIn and Social Media

Use your online presence to identify potential mentors, reach out via direct messages, or join relevant groups.

Tap into Alumni Networks

Your school or university alumni group can be a rich resource. Many institutions offer alumni mentoring programs.

Online Communities and Forums

Engage in discussions on platforms like Reddit, industry-specific forums, or Facebook groups to meet mentors who share your interests.

Ask Your Manager for Guidance

Discuss your career goals with your supervisor and ask if they can recommend someone as a mentor.

Engage in Internal Social Platforms

Utilize Connect and Teams to connect with and learn from others!

Volunteer for Special Assignments

Take on challenging projects or stretch assignments that allow you to work closely with leaders who can offer mentorship.

Attend Internal Networking Events

Engage in our events, workshops, or lunch-and-learns to meet potential mentors from various departments.

Participate in Cross-Functional Projects

Join teams or committees that include others you don't often see to broaden your exposure and build mentoring relationships.



Mentoring Others

Before stepping into a mentorship role, take a moment to evaluate your readiness. Use this checklist to determine if you are ready to take on the rewarding role of mentoring others. Answer each question honestly and consider areas where you may need additional prep work.

Readiness Personal Assessment

Personal Readiness

- ☐ Do I have the time and capacity to commit to a mentoring partnership?
- ☐ Am I genuinely interested in helping others grow and succeed?
- ☐ Can I be patient, open-minded, and approachable?
- ☐ Am I prepared to listen actively and without judgment?

Professional Experience

- ☐ Do I have knowledge, skills, or experiences that can benefit someone else?
- ☐ Have I achieved professional success that allows me to provide guidance to others?
- ☐ Can I share my expertise in a way that is clear, actionable, and relevant?

Communication Skills

- ☐ Am I comfortable giving constructive feedback in a supportive manner?
- ☐ Can I communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing?
- ☐ Am I willing to ask questions that challenge my mentee to think critically and grow?

Commitment to Growth

- ☐ Am I open to learning from my mentee as much as I teach them?
- ☐ I understand that mentoring is a two-way relationship built on trust and mutual respect.
- ☐ Can I help someone set realistic goals and hold them accountable?

Emotional Readiness

- ☐ Am I able to celebrate successes and offer encouragement during challenges?
- ☐ Can I maintain confidentiality and create a safe space for honest conversations?
- ☐ Am I ready to invest in someone else's success, even if their journey differs from my own?

Reflection and Feedback

- ☐ Am I prepared to reflect on my own experiences and share lessons learned?
- ☐ Can I accept feedback from my mentee to improve the relationship?
- ☐ Am I willing to evaluate the relationship periodically to ensure it remains beneficial?

Reminders

If after taking the assessment you feel you are ready, the following are ways to ensure you mentor effectively and that you do: [What the Best Mentors Do](#):

1. **Listen Actively:** Be fully present and show genuine interest in the mentee's goals and challenges.
2. **Provide Constructive Feedback:** Offer insights/advice in a supportive, non-judgmental manner.
3. **Share Experiences:** Use personal anecdotes to illustrate lessons or strategies.
4. **Encourage Problem-Solving:** Guide mentees to think critically and develop their own solutions.
5. **Be a Role Model:** Exhibit behaviors and attitudes you wish to inspire in your mentee.

Resources

[Being a Good Mentor](#) (1h 0m) from LinkedIn Learning

[How to Be a Good Mentee and Mentor](#) (27m 13s) from LinkedIn Learning

[Becoming an Inspiring Mentor](#) (47m 8s) from LinkedIn Learning

[Giving and Receiving Feedback](#) (33m 44s) from LinkedIn Learning



Being Mentored

Before beginning your mentorship journey, take a moment to assess your readiness. Answer each question honestly and consider areas where you may need additional preparation.

Readiness Personal Assessment

Personal Readiness

- ☐ Do I have the time and commitment to invest in a mentoring partnership?
- ☐ Am I genuinely interested in learning and personal growth?
- ☐ Can I be open, honest, and proactive in seeking guidance?
- ☐ Am I ready to listen and reflect on feedback, even when it is challenging?

Goals and Self-Awareness

- ☐ Do I have clear goals or areas where I seek mentorship?
- ☐ Can I articulate what I hope to gain from a mentoring partnership?
- ☐ Am I aware of my strengths and areas for improvement?

Communication Skills

- ☐ Am I comfortable initiating conversations and asking questions?
- ☐ Can I communicate my needs and expectations effectively?
- ☐ Am I prepared to share my experiences and insights with my mentor?

Commitment to Growth

- ☐ Am I open to new perspectives and constructive feedback?
- ☐ Do I understand that growth requires effort and self-reflection?
- ☐ Am I willing to take ownership of my development and follow through on actions?

Emotional Readiness

- ☐ Can I approach the mentoring partnership with trust and mutual respect?
- ☐ Am I ready to embrace challenges as learning opportunities?
- ☐ Can I remain adaptable and patient throughout the mentoring process?

Reflection and Feedback

- ☐ Am I willing to evaluate the partnership regularly to ensure its effectiveness?
- ☐ Can I provide feedback to my mentor constructively and accept theirs with gratitude?
- ☐ Am I prepared to take responsibility for my own progress and celebrate my achievements?

Reminders

If after taking the assessment you feel you are ready to be mentored, here are some ways to ensure your mentoring experience is effective:

1. **Select Your Mentor Well:**

- ☐ Are they recognized as an effective leader (not by role, but by actions)?
- ☐ Are they considered role models of our values?
- ☐ Do they develop others well?
- ☐ Does the prospective mentor show strategic planning and thinking?
- ☐ Do they have a history of positive relationships with many individuals?

2. **Show Appreciation:** Acknowledge your mentor's time and effort. Keep in mind that you are requesting a favor that will require a potential mentor's time and energy. Convey that you respect the person and their work, you have enthusiasm for growth, and your desire to learn from their skills and experiences.

3. **Be Proactive:** Take initiative in scheduling meetings and preparing agendas.

4. **Set Goals:** Define specific objectives for the mentoring partnership. Communicate clear goals, objectives, and expectations to your potential mentor.

5. **Communicate Openly:** Share your goals, challenges, and feedback honestly.

6. **Be Receptive:** Accept constructive feedback with an open mind.

7. **Don't Give Up:** If your desired mentor does not work out, ask if they would be willing to refer you to another possibility. Understand that disappointment is natural. Remember that a "no" is not a personal failure but part of the journey towards finding the right mentor for you. If appropriate, follow up with a message. For example:

"Thank you for considering my request. I completely understand your decision. Could you share any feedback or suggestions on how I might improve my approach or areas I should focus on developing further?"

Resources

[Being a Good Mentee](#) (54m 2s) from LinkedIn Learning

[How to Be a Good Mentee and Mentor](#) (27m 13s) from LinkedIn Learning

[Giving and Receiving Feedback](#) (33m 44s) from LinkedIn Learning

[Mentee Best Practices](#) from Yale.edu



Meeting Guidance for Mentors & Mentees

Mentoring is a collaborative relationship focused on growth, learning, and support. In practice, it can take many forms; regular one-on-one meetings, informal check-ins, or even project-based collaboration. There is no single formula for mentoring; each partnership is unique and shaped by the needs, goals, and personalities of the individuals involved. The key is to create a space where both mentor and mentee can connect, share, and grow together.

To Make the Most of Your Meeting Time:

1. Regular and scheduled contact is necessary.
2. Schedule your meetings in advance. A reoccurring time is easiest to honor.
3. The mentee should become good at making the most of brief encounters.
4. The mentee should prepare for the meetings by providing questions and other topics.
5. The mentor should have some dialogue prompts and be prepared for what is to be discussed.

Proposed Mentoring Agenda

First Meeting	On-going Meetings
Welcome and introductions. Discuss goals and expectations. Set meeting cadence. Set communication preferences. Review confidentiality and boundaries. Discuss a potential timeline and end.	Recap previous discussion points. Discuss progress on goals. Address current challenges or questions. Plan next steps and schedule a follow-up.

Possible Meeting Prompts

Rapport Building	Skill Development	Challenges and Growth	Change and Balance	Reflections	Aspirations
How can I help you to navigate our culture, practices, or values?	What skills do you feel are most important for your current or future roles?	What is a challenge you are currently facing, and how can I support you?	How do you manage competing priorities between work and personal life?	What progress have you made since our last meeting?	Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?
What are your personal and professional strengths?	Can you share an example of a skill you are proud to have improved in the past?	Are there any recurring obstacles that make your work or progress more difficult?	What activities or habits help you recharge and stay balanced?	What challenges or successes would you like to reflect on today?	What key milestones or experiences are you excited to pursue?
What do you enjoy most about your work?	What strategies have worked well for you in learning new things?	What lessons have you learned from past challenges that might help now?	What are effective ways to stay adaptable and resilient during transitions?	How do you feel about the progress toward your goals so far?	
How do you prefer to give and receive feedback?	Discuss skills that will help you while working here.	What aspects of your current role or work energize and motivate you?	How do you manage stress, and what strategies work best for you?	What is one thing you have learned recently that surprised or excited you?	

You can also get ideas for how to structure these meetings here:

[Mentees and Mentors: How to Ace Your First Mentor Meeting](#) from Fellow

[How to Organize Effective Mentor Meetings for Professional Growth](#) from Workhuman

[Mentor Meeting: A Complete Guide for Mentors and Mentees](#) from Notta

[How to Structure a Productive Mentor Meeting](#) from Coffee Pals

[Prepare for your Mentor Meeting: Questions and Best Practices](#) from Johns Hopkins



Ending the Mentoring Partnership

In any mentoring partnership, establishing clear, flexible expectations and a prospective timeline from the outset is key. Regular check-ins and open dialogue allow both parties to reassess the relevance and progress of their mentoring commitment. When the initial objectives of the mentee have been met, time becomes scarce, or if the dynamic starts to feel misaligned, it is a signal to consider a transition. Whatever the reason, it is crucial to end the mentoring partnership respectfully and thoughtfully. Both mentors and mentees should express gratitude for the experience and discuss any learnings, celebrations, or next steps, such as transitioning the relationship.

A **mentee** might tell a mentor something like this:

- *"Your insights have been invaluable to me, and I truly appreciate the time and effort you've invested. I think it might be the right moment for me to take the next steps independently. I hope we can continue to stay connected and that I can occasionally seek your advice."*

A **mentor** might tell a mentee something like this:

- *"Now that we've reached the milestones you set out for, I believe it's a good time to end our meetings; but please remember I'm always here if you need any advice in the future."*
- *"I appreciate our journey together, but I've realized that I no longer have the capacity to provide the level of guidance you deserve."*
- *"Upon reflection, I believe that my mentoring style may not be fully effective for you, and I would be happy to assist you in finding another mentor who can offer that support."*



Closing

What if I need additional assistance?

Mentoring is a wonderful resource for individuals, teams, and divisions and can be done informally!

If you need assistance with utilizing this mentoring self-guided toolkit, or support in developing your mentoring plan, please contact Organizational Development and Engagement within Human Resources, at ODE@untsystem.edu or visit these resources linked below.

[Developing a Mentoring Program](#) (1h 5m) from LinkedIn Learning

[How to Build a Mentoring Program](#) Toolkit with worksheets from USPTO Leadership Development Program

Give us feedback!

Let us know if this was helpful or how we can improve by taking our quick, anonymous survey.

https://unt.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_087EzzEZYSwVZPM



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