

MAKE MENTORING MEANINGFUL WORKSHOP: QUESTIONS TO ASK AND POINTS TO PONDER FOR MENTORS AND MENTEES

QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTOR

1. A postdoc appointment is typically 2-3 years, and one should be actively preparing for the next career level during this period. However, the postdoc research work itself, is intense. How should a postdoc find balance between focusing on current job and looking for the next one?
2. What is the most meaningful thing you have learned related to your career goals while at Argonne or as a graduate student?
3. How can I get involved with extra projects, volunteer work or professional development at Argonne without seeming unfocused to my supervisor?
4. I am in an early career stage. Based on my current accomplishments, what suggestions do you have to help me be more successful in my career development? Is there anything you think I need to work on/stress more?
5. Who else should I be talking to about my projects (or any other issues)? This question stresses the value of networking.
6. How should I prepare for the next career stage?
7. What are some good avenues for networking?
8. What were the biggest obstacles you faced at my point in your career and how did you overcome them?
9. How did you get to where you are now? What types of obstacles did you have to overcome?
10. As my mentor, what are your expectations of me as a mentee? What is the best way I can communicate any of my frustrations to you?



11. Why are you interested in mentoring me?
12. With your current schedule, are you able to meet with me monthly? (establishing a plan for mentoring)
13. What career trajectories can I take at this point?—may need to seek resources for mentee. Good sources include professional societies, the National Postdoctoral Association, SciPhD, Versatile PhD.
14. In what ways do you believe your experience and knowledge could be beneficial to me?
15. What would you do differently in your career?
16. How and when do you prefer I contact you and what time limitations do you have?

MENTORING AT ARGONNE

Argonne Mentoring Blog:
<http://blogs.anl.gov/mentoring>

Postdoctoral Mentoring Program:
<http://www.anl.gov/postdocs/mentoring>

QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTEE

1. Where do you want your career to go over the next three years?
2. What are your long-term personal and professional goals?
3. How can I help you with your professional development?—gets mentee to think about this—encourages ownership/independence
4. Why have you identified me as a mentor? What are your criteria in selecting a mentor?
5. What career path do you want to pursue? Academic? Industry? National Lab? Other?
6. What are your personal and professional goals both for the mentoring relationship and your goals in general or for career development?
7. How can I help you as a mentor and why did you choose me from all the mentors available?
8. What do you enjoy the best/least about your work?
9. What is your dream job?
10. How do you believe my knowledge and experience could be beneficial to you?
11. What goals can I help you with?
12. What are you currently working on (professionally, personally, developmentally)?

QUESTIONS THAT COULD ENCOURAGE PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING

1. Mentee-to-mentee: what questions should I ask to improve my career development?
2. Mentor-to-mentor: what are some differences between mentoring one mentee versus mentoring many at once?
3. For anyone: How do I find multiple mentors?
4. For anyone: At what point should I ask someone to formally be my mentor?
5. For anyone: What would you recommend a mentor advise someone who is intent on going into academia, but is in a group that does not publish frequently?

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Is mentoring encouraged/incentivized by your manager (lab management)? Is there a way to make this happen and strengthen it throughout the institution?—submitted as a question a mentee could ask of a mentor. Mentee as an advocate for mentoring.
2. Mentoring and being mentored is a growth process—“I’m driven to be both a good/better mentee and mentor so [I can] provide and accept information and knowledge that is aimed at building abilities and personal confidence to succeed in career goals.
3. Mentees must set clear goals.
4. Mentees/mentors should think in each other’s mindsets.
5. Schedule regular meetings and stick to an agenda.

RESOURCES

Building skills for both mentors and mentees:

<https://mentoringresources.ictr.wisc.edu/MentoringResources>

Mentoring Up Toolkit:

http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/general/custom.asp?page=beyond_mentoring

Mentoring, Sponsoring and Coaching:

<http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/topics/sponsorshipmentoring>

Mentoring in Management (series of articles and tools for mentoring in the workplace):

<http://tinyurl.com/hyz2crg>

AWIS resource list on mentoring and coaching:

<https://awis.site-ym.com/?Mentoring>

UCSF Mentor Development Courses and Resources:

<http://accelerate.ucsf.edu/training/mdp-materials>