

MAKE MENTORING MEANINGFUL: TIPS AND CHECKLIST FOR MENTEES

WHAT IS MENTORING?

You are looking for a mentor or have been paired with a mentor. Now what?

At its very basic core, mentoring is a relationship in which an individual shares professional expertise, experiences and support for a less experienced colleague to enable that colleague to achieve their full potential.

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor is a trusted colleague or advisor whose experience may help the mentee work towards their goals and achieve their full potential. Mentors might be chosen for their ability to:

- ✓ Offer sound advice and feedback
- ✓ Listen actively and sympathetically
- ✓ Help people work through an issue
- ✓ Coach a mentee towards professional growth
- ✓ Be a good role model
- ✓ Challenge mentees to achieve their potential

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Mentoring is beneficial throughout all career stages. Mentors may help you:

- ✓ Expand your own network
- ✓ Work on building professional skills
- ✓ Learn new things, especially in an ever-changing environment
- ✓ Help you assimilate to the Lab and become part of a community
- ✓ Realize your potential through challenging you and asking questions



HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Mentoring works best when there is a good fit between the mentor and mentee. If you have not been paired with a mentor, ask your peers and others in your division for referrals. In the initial stages it will be helpful to:

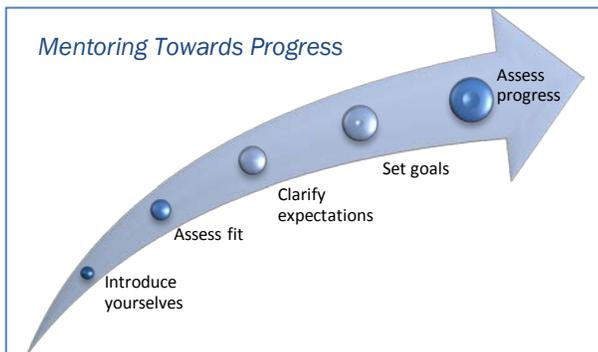
- ✓ Asses what you need from a mentor—sounding board? Advice? Feedback?
- ✓ Think about your career or development goals and develop some ideas of what you'd like to work on with your mentor
- ✓ Ask the mentor for some background information about him/herself
- ✓ Discuss with your mentor what you hope to gain from the mentoring relationship
- ✓ Determine if it is the right fit

MENTORING AT ARGONNE

Argonne Leadership Institute:
<http://leadershipinstitute.anl.gov/>

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

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



NOW WHAT?

Once you and your mentee have assessed fit and have agreed to continue, your mentoring relationship will benefit from clarifying expectations, setting goals and assessing progress towards goals.

At the first meeting you may wish to

- ✓ Discuss your background
- ✓ Ask your mentor to tell you about him/herself
- ✓ Discuss your goals with your mentor
- ✓ Clarify expectations—what can you reasonably commit to and what are your and your mentor’s responsibilities
- ✓ Set goals and agree upon a plan for approaching them
- ✓ Schedule your next meeting

At subsequent meetings you may wish to

- ✓ Review the last discussion
- ✓ Discuss progress on any action items
- ✓ Ask open and clarifying questions that will further expand on feedback
- ✓ Ask for/listen for feedback from the mentor
- ✓ Share an honest account of your experience thus far
- ✓ Consider who else you should be talking to and ask your mentor for referrals
- ✓ Assess progress and determine when/how to bring closure to the relationship

In between meetings you may wish to

- ✓ Reflect on your discussions—were you and your mentee open, candid and supportive?
- ✓ Think ahead to the next meeting

MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION

Good mentoring relationships require open dialogue. Try to maintain a positive, engaging environment in which you provide feedback in an objective manner. Your mentor may help you identify potential solutions and paths forward, but it is ultimately up to the mentee to drive the relationship.

Some questions that may help you and your mentor get started on your mentoring journey include:

1. What do you enjoy the best about your work? What do you least enjoy?
2. What do you value most in your work and life?
3. What are you currently working on (professionally, personally, developmentally)?
4. How do you believe your knowledge and experience could be beneficial to me?
5. What should I be thinking about at this stage of my career?
6. How do you think we should approach working on our goals?
7. What are some strategies that have been helpful in your navigating your career?

RESOURCES

Building skills for both mentors and mentees:
<https://mentoringresources.ictr.wisc.edu/MentoringResources>

Center for Mentoring Excellence:
<http://www.centerformentoringexcellence.com/>

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>