

# MAKE MENTORING MEANINGFUL: TIPS AND CHECKLIST FOR MENTORS

## WHAT IS MENTORING?

You've been asked to mentor someone at the lab. But what does that mean?

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.

## WHO IS A MENTOR? WHY ME?

The mentor is seen as a trusted colleague and advisor whose experience may help the mentee achieve their mentoring goals. By being selected as a mentor, you have been identified as someone can

- ✓ Offer sound advice
- ✓ 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?

When you mentor fellow staff you will

- ✓ Expand your own network
- ✓ Build communication skills
- ✓ Learn new things, especially in an ever-changing environment
- ✓ Contribute to strengthening the lab through increased retention and growth of staff
- ✓ Realize an increased sense of purpose and meaning from giving back



## HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Mentoring works best when there is a good fit between the mentor and mentee. In the initial stages it will be helpful to

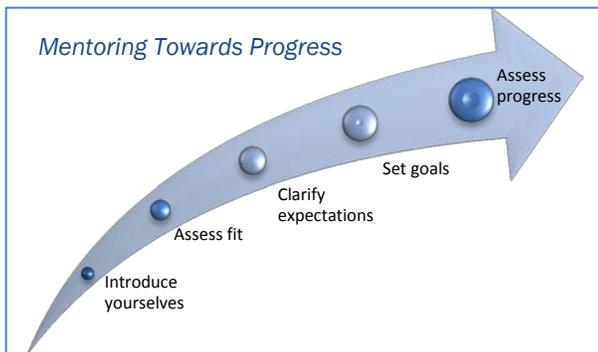
- ✓ Asses whether you have the time to commit to mentoring a colleague
- ✓ Think about what you have to offer the mentee—review your own career path and experiences
- ✓ Consider what you are willing and able to share with your mentee
- ✓ Ask the mentee for some background information about him/herself
- ✓ Discuss with the mentee what he/she hopes 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
- ✓ Share your own mentoring experiences
- ✓ Get to know your mentee
- ✓ Ask your mentee what he/she hopes to gain from mentoring
- ✓ Clarify expectations—what can you reasonably commit to and what should the mentee be responsible for
- ✓ 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 questions that will allow the mentee to be open
- ✓ Ask direct or clarifying questions to identify specific issues that should be addressed
- ✓ Ask for/listen for feedback from the mentee
- ✓ Share resources that may be helpful to the mentee
- ✓ Consider who else you or your mentee should be talking to
- ✓ Assess progress and determine when/how to bring closure to the relationship

In between meetings you may wish to

- ✓ Periodically check in on the mentee
- ✓ 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. Leading the mentee to identify potential solutions and paths forward reinforces their active role in the mentoring relationship.

Some questions that may help you 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 my knowledge and experience could be beneficial to you?
5. What are your personal and professional goals both for the mentoring relationship and your goals in general or for career development?
6. Why did you pick these goals to work on?
7. How do you think we should approach your goals?

**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](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>