

A Navigation Guide for Mentees

This guide is intended to give you tools to develop mentorships and make the most out of them. Mentoring relationships can take many forms, including formal structured programs or a casual conversation.

The mentee should drive the mentoring relationship by setting goals, scheduling meetings, creating agendas, and tracking process. The mentor acts as a facilitator who empowers the mentee to problem solve and make decisions. But mentorship is a reciprocal relationship where both mentor and mentee can learn from each other. Duke Human Resources is here to support you in this work.



What is Mentoring?

MENTORING IS A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING RELATIONSHIP THAT:

- ★ focuses on facilitating personal growth and development.
- ★ plays a major role in the mentee's career decision making by providing guidance, encouragement and empowering them with the knowledge, confidence and skills necessary to succeed.
- ★ provides an opportunity to remind mentees that life and career are a journey and they have time to figure things out.
- ★ builds on a foundation of mutual effort, respect, trust and the courage to communicate openly.

MENTORING IS A PROCESS:

- ★ of engaging in intentional conversations between mentee and mentor.
- ★ that can last a few weeks, months or even years.

What Does Mentoring Require from Mentees?

1. Meet with your mentor regularly (at least once a month).
2. Establish goals for your mentoring experience based on competencies you want to develop.
3. Ask thought-provoking and challenging questions to guide decision making and problem solving.
4. Engage in active listening in regular and meaningful conversations.
5. Facilitate and engage in self-reflection and self-development.
6. Collaborate with your mentor on plans and ideas to support your goals.
7. Commit time, attention and effort.
8. Periodically assess and celebrate success.
9. Ensure confidentiality of discussions.

How to Proactively Manage Your Mentorship

THINK ABOUT AND SET EXPECTATIONS WITH YOUR MENTOR.

Successful relationships happen when partners have thought through their expectations for mentoring. As you enter into your mentoring relationship, be sure to establish clear and reasonable expectations.

DEFINE AND COMMUNICATE YOUR NEEDS AND GOALS TO YOUR MENTOR.

Be prepared to talk with your mentor about what your needs are. Articulate your goals, concerns, and questions. Plan the topics or questions you would like to discuss with your mentor for each session. Goals will guide the relationship and your conversations.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR MENTOR'S CAREER JOURNEY.

Be curious about your mentor's experiences. Hearing about others' experiences can be a powerful way to gain new perspectives. Ask your mentor questions about how they managed challenges along the way.

TALK TO YOUR MENTOR ABOUT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES.

Connecting with others can be incredibly valuable in exploring options and learning more about organizational culture and people who can help you along your journey. The ability to network professionally and build relationships is a critical skill to develop. Your mentor may have some ideas and contacts for you to continue to explore and learn.

GAIN ASSISTANCE IN THINKING ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DECISIONS.

Talk with your mentor about key decisions they have made on their own career path and what they used to inform their decision-making process. Discuss how you might apply their advice to your own career.

ASK FOR AND BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK.

Your mentor is a source of information for you. Think about the feedback they are giving you and how you might incorporate it into your thinking and actions. Strive to be open to new ideas, knowing that constructive feedback is essential to continuous professional development.

ENGAGE IN REFLECTION WITH YOUR MENTOR.

Reflect on the achievement of your goals, or any failures or challenges you've experienced, and talk through potential changes you might make as a result.

LEARN ABOUT JOB SHADOWING.

Shadowing professionals is a good way to observe a "day in the life" as you explore opportunities and is an option to consider at every stage of your career. Talk with your mentor about the value of shadowing professionals, and whether this may be done remotely.

Key To-Dos for Mentees Early in the Relationship



BE PROFESSIONAL AND AUTHENTIC

Let your mentor know who you are and what is important to you. **BE PROACTIVE.** Plan what you would like to discuss ahead of time to ensure a more productive meeting. Send your mentor topics you would like to discuss.



SHARE WHAT DRIVES YOU

Share likes/dislikes, interests and values as appropriate. Talk about your education, your involvement outside of work, your short-term and long-term goals, and any uncertainties you may have. The more your mentor knows about you the better they will be able to facilitate your development.



SHOW GRATITUDE

Send thank you notes and let your mentor know the impact they've had.

Setting Expectations

- ★ Decide together with your mentor how often you would like to communicate and in what format (i.e. once per month, in-person or Zoom/Teams, etc.).
- ★ Determine if there are any challenges or uncertainties that are important for you to share with your mentor early in the process.
- ★ Tell your mentor what you want to learn from this experience and/or the mentor's field of work. What are your goals? Consider setting goals for each conversation, as well as more long-term goals.
- ★ Consider sharing your hopes for the mentor/mentee relationship – this can also change over time.

Introducing Yourself to Your Mentor

In your initial communications with your mentor, consider sharing:

- ★ Your current professional role.
- ★ Your hobbies and interests.
- ★ What excites you.
- ★ Your future professional pursuits and goals.

As your conversations progress, you may want to discuss:

- ★ What drives you.
- ★ A time when you were set back and how you dealt with that.
- ★ Questions you have about your role or career path.
- ★ Skills and strengths, as well as areas you'd like to develop.

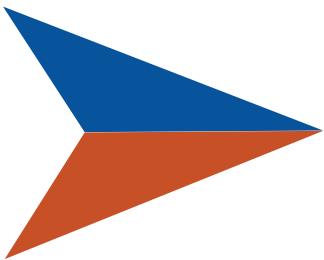
A Note about the Mentoring Relationship

The Duke community is an ideal place to seek out potential mentors who share important things in common with you and are invested in your success and well-being. Your mentorship should be a trusted and safe relationship where you are free to learn and ask questions. However, if the match is not a good fit or you experience any behavior that makes you uncomfortable, please contact Duke Human Resources.

Final Words of Advice

To ensure the most productive mentoring process, you (the mentee) should direct the relationship and the mentor should act as a facilitator. As the director, you set the course and lead the process of developing goals and putting into motion action steps for achieving these goals.

You take ownership and an active role in the work you and your mentor take on. As the facilitator, your mentor will listen and then respond to the direction you set by asking thought provoking questions, sharing perspectives and suggesting ideas. The mentor acts in a supporting role and empowers you to problem solve and make decisions. Ultimately, a successful mentoring relationship helps you make decisions, reach goals and pursue professional and personal paths.



Questions for Mentees to Consider

As a new supervisor or manager, understanding how to effectively lead and manage people is crucial. Here are some targeted questions you can ask your mentor to enhance your skills in this area:

- ★ **What was one of your biggest failures as a manager? What have you learned from it?**
Most valuable lessons often come from failures or difficult situations. Creating a safe place for people to fail is also a critical aspect of creating strong work culture and collaboration.
- ★ **How do you build trust and rapport with your team members?**
Trust is the foundation of successful leadership. Learning strategies to establish trust can positively impact team dynamics.
- ★ **What communication techniques do you find most effective when providing feedback?**
Effective feedback is essential for growth. Understanding how to deliver constructive feedback helps foster improvement.
- ★ **How do you handle conflicts within your team?**
Conflict resolution skills are vital. Learning approaches to address disagreements and maintain a positive work environment is valuable.
- ★ **What strategies do you use to motivate and inspire your team?**
Motivation plays a key role in productivity. Discovering techniques to keep your team engaged and enthusiastic is essential.
- ★ **How do you balance being approachable with maintaining authority?**
Striking the right balance between approachability and authority ensures effective leadership.
- ★ **What steps do you take to develop your team members' skills and career paths?**
Supporting professional growth contributes to team success. Learning about mentorship and skill development is crucial.
- ★ **How do you handle performance evaluations and goal-setting with your team?**
Performance management is a critical aspect of leadership. Understanding evaluation processes and goal alignment is important.
- ★ **What strategies can I use to delegate tasks effectively?**
Delegation allows you to focus on strategic aspects. Learning how to assign tasks efficiently benefits both you and your team.
- ★ **How do you create a positive work culture and promote employee well-being?**
A healthy work environment enhances productivity. Exploring ways to foster well-being and morale is essential.
- ★ **What leadership books or resources do you recommend for further development?**
Seeking additional knowledge through books, podcasts, or workshops can accelerate your growth as a supervisor.

Remember, effective leadership involves continuous learning and adaptation. Be open to feedback and committed to your own development.