



## **SOME TIPS TO GET THE MOST OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME**

### **WOULD YOU MAKE A GOOD MENTEE?**

First of all, you need to ask yourself whether you have what it takes to be mentored. As a mentee, you will have a key role in the interaction, and the success of your mentoring experience will strongly depend on you. Take the initiative and drive your mentoring partnership! (i.e. set meetings, get prepared, follow up). Your mentor is there to guide you, and is not responsible for your actions, so don't wait for him to always tell you what to do. Remember, be **PROACTIVE!**

Before taking part in the programme, take some time to answer some of the following questions. They will help both you and your mentor to work more efficiently towards a fruitful relationship that will be key to fulfil your goals.

- What are my strengths?
- What are my weak points?
- How can I work on them?
- What are my major needs?
- What are my short, medium and long term objectives?
- What are the things that the mentor can help me with?
- How can I help the mentor to help me?
- What do I want out of the mentoring relationship?
- How will I know if the mentoring is working or not working?

These define the core of the mentoring process. You might need to re-evaluate your answers to these questions as your mentoring relationship progresses, so take a step back every now and then and go through them again, to ensure you and your mentor are still on the same page. Circumstances change and your mentoring relationship, as any other kind of relationship, should be flexible enough to adjust to such changes.





## THE FIRST MEETING

This meeting will serve as the basis on which you will build your mentoring relationship. You will get to know each other and set the key points that will define the mentoring process.

**Personal relationship.** It takes some time to build a fluent relationship, and for both of you to feel more comfortable throughout the mentoring process, especially during meetings, it is very useful to be open with each other; share professional and personal stories, find similarities and differences. Do not hesitate to ask your mentor anything about their career/experience that you might find interesting. Mentors might cover the specifics on what they do at work and what their position involves within their organisation. There may also be some details they are not allowed to share with you (professional secret, patent-protected information, unpublished data). Hopefully, by the end of the first meeting you will both have a better idea of the other person's character and what you can offer each other.

**Logistics.** You will need to discuss how you plan to conduct your mentoring relationship, in terms of frequency and kind of meetings you will hold. Consider:

- Best time of day or week to get in touch. A recurring meeting time often works best.
- How will you meet? Face-to-face? Skype?
- For personal meetings, agree on a convenient place to meet.
- Decide how long to wait if someone doesn't show up for a scheduled meeting.
- Choose your preferred method to keep in touch between meetings. E-mail? Facebook? WhatsApp?
- What's expected between contacts?
- Discuss challenges or barriers to meeting such as travel or child care.

**Boundaries.** It is very important that you both discuss and seek clarity about:

- Whether it is okay to discuss emotional issues and how.
- Whether it is okay for the mentor to offer feedback on professional norms about clothing, grooming or nonverbal communication.
- Whether it is appropriate to discuss behaviours that any of you may find offensive.
- Confidentiality. Be very specific about things which you feel should stay strictly between the two of you.
- How to proceed if any of you feels awkward about the relationship.

**Setting a plan of action.** You both need to review the core questions, decide what needs to be done and how it can be done best, according to the mentee's needs and capabilities and the mentor's expertise. You should agree on what you want





to achieve together and set priorities, given the time frame and scope of your roles. Take time to thoroughly discuss your respective expectations of the mentoring programme, how the mentor can help the mentee best and what the mentee is expected to do between meetings. It would be very useful to come up with a standard plan for future meetings, e.g. review challenges and aims, define action points (APs), analyse progression, etc.

## **BEFORE THE MEETINGS**

Meetings are not something to be feared, but something to look forward to. But for them to be useful, you need to prepare in advance. Once again, bear in mind the core questions and adjust your answers if necessary. Then think about the upcoming meeting specifically, to make the most of it. Here are some points that you might want to consider:

- What action points did you agree on in the last meeting?
- Have you addressed them? How?
- Is there anything you can do differently to tackle them?
- If you haven't done anything about them, why?
- What have you accomplished since the last meeting?
- Did the action points help you achieve that?
- Are you satisfied with the result?
- Have you encountered any unexpected challenges?
- How did you deal with such eventualities?
- What challenges are you facing at the moment?
- What action points would you suggest to overcome them?
- What do you think your mentor can do to help you with them?
- How are you feeling so far about the mentoring process?
- Has your mentor proved helpful?
- Is there anything you feel uncomfortable about or something you think can be improved about your relationship?
- Is there anything about the key points from the first meeting that need adjusting?





## **AT THE MEETING**

As every mentoring couple is different, your meetings will be particular and will follow the rhythm and style you set the first time. Here are some general tips that you might want to apply:

- Share with your mentor all your reflections from before the meeting, as mentioned above. It could be useful to have them noted down so that you make sure you don't miss any.
- Ask the mentor anything where you feel you need his/her input.
- Be honest - the sessions are useless if you don't share the truth with your mentor (e.g., you haven't addressed the agreed APs). A mentor will never judge you and without the right information they won't be able to help you.
- Discuss with the mentor what you would like to accomplish before the next meeting. If you don't know what you should be doing next, ask for his/her advice.

## **AT THE END OF THE MEETING**

After a meeting, you should go away with:

- A positive feeling that the discussion was in line with your global goals and priorities.
- An action plan for your next meetings and a task, or tasks, for you to work on (and full understanding on how they contribute to achieving your goals).
- Any issues with your mentor openly discussed and (hopefully) solved.
- Next meeting booked in advance.
- Plenty of things to think about!

Feedback after sessions is very important, you might want to offer some to your mentor and ask for some yourself (it can be about the session in general, not necessarily about each other's performance). This is supposed to be contributing to your learning, professional and personal development; what was useful? what was the most helpful part? what have you learned?





**Society of  
Spanish Researchers  
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## USEFUL LINKS

Justin Smollar - What makes a good mentee - True Mentors:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wElyImN58M>

Preparing for your first mentoring meeting - a webinar with Dr Amy Iversen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CnRHZg6VWY>

Here, you have a link which explains the Qualities and skills of a Mentor:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss\\_PO5knp0Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss_PO5knp0Q)

