



**Pace University
Employee Mentoring
Program
Protégé Handbook**

Guidelines for Protégés

Mentoring is a learning partnership where a more experienced mentor draws upon their knowledge, skill set, and personal experience to provide guidance and feedback while facilitating the personal growth and development of a less experienced protégé. The protégé takes an active role and holds the primary responsibility for their learning and development. The mentor facilitates that growth by asking thought-provoking questions, role-modeling behavior, and offering guidance of things to consider when making decisions. The intended outcome is that the protégé gains greater insight and is better prepared to make informed strategic decisions.

Mentor Matching

A successful mentor-protégé relationship is founded in the development of mutual trust, respect, and the maintenance of confidentiality.

Meetings and Contacts

For the best results, mentors and protégés should aim to have regular substantial discussions (30 minutes or greater) in-person, by a Zoom/Skype call or by phone, in addition to correspondence via the online PeopleGrove platform. The expectation is for a minimum of one substantial discussion per month.

During the initial meetings, both parties should get to know each other and discuss goals for their partnership. A sample “First Meeting Agenda” is included in the appendix.

Expectations

Maintain regular contact. Mentors and protégés should commit to connecting a minimum of once per month through meetings or substantial phone calls (30 minutes or greater). Although PeopleGrove and email are important communication tools, it cannot be substituted for actual, real-time conversation. Conversations may occur over the phone, via Zoom or Skype (or similar software), and/or in person when possible.

Set clear and realistic goals. At the start of a mentoring partnership, mentors and protégés will articulate a goal(s) for their collaboration. Goals may include things such as improving and managing communication, understanding and navigating power, building an organizational presence, etc. A sample “First Meeting Agenda” is included at the end of this mentoring guide to help facilitate the discussion.

Be responsive. Both mentors and protégés are expected to return calls and emails in a timely manner (e.g., within two business days). If you will be away for an extended time, you should communicate this with your mentor.

Receive feedback. It is important that protégés be open to receiving feedback that is candid and delivered in a thoughtful and constructive way. If necessary, your mentor will help you learn how to receive and respond to feedback by modeling the behavior through open discussion. Actively listen to the experiences, feedback, and situations your mentor shares with you.

Participate in self-reflection and self-development. Discuss your Professional Development Plan (PDP) with your mentor. Expect thought-provoking questions designed to help you understand and articulate your motivations, accomplishments, weaknesses, etc. Mentors can assist in practicing key behaviors for success such as communication, presentation, etc.

Honor commitments. If a mentoring conversation must be cancelled, it is expected that you and your mentor will do your best to communicate in advance of the meeting and reschedule. If circumstances lead to you terminating the relationship, each party should notify their mentoring partner. For short-term mentoring partnerships, this may not be relevant.

Partnering With Your Mentor

While your mentor will not provide you with all the answers, they will facilitate self-reflection and self-development so that you are able to think critically and resolve challenges on your own. To help you achieve this, a mentor utilizes a number of skills, including:

- ✓ Active listening
- ✓ Asking thought-provoking questions
- ✓ Role-modeling behavior
- ✓ Providing objective feedback and guidance
- ✓ Demonstrating critical thinking
- ✓ Sharing experiences.

With the guidance of your mentor, you will develop a similar set of skills outlined below that will empower you to think, reflect, and take necessary steps to realize your goals.

Set goals. In order to focus your mentoring relationship, it is important to take a moment to reflect on what you want to achieve during the relationship and where you want to be at the end of the program. Once you have identified goals, you will be able to begin your mentoring relationship with the end in mind and work towards making concrete progress.

Actively listen. Active listening is a communication technique that requires the listener to paraphrase what he or she has heard the speaker say in order to confirm understanding. At the same time, the listener is also paying attention to non-verbal cues such as silence, facial expression, body language, and overall comfort. (This underscores the value in communicating in person, Zoom or Skype call, etc.)

Tips for active listening:

- ✓ Focus your attention on the speaker.
- ✓ Try to find a quiet place and avoid distractions like cell phones, email, etc.
- ✓ Do not interrupt the speaker or assume a conclusion before the speaker has finished.
- ✓ Listen for feeling and tone in speech.
- ✓ Do not react with judgment. Instead, summarize main points once the speaker is finished. Use phrases like, "What I hear you say is..." or "Let me summarize your points to make sure that I heard you correctly."
- ✓ Take notes to capture important thoughts and concepts and encourage the mentor to do the same.

Provide objective feedback and guidance. Feedback, no matter how much we ask for it, can be very difficult to receive. Even when delivered thoughtfully and candidly, it can be hard to hear how we may improve or that others' perceptions of our behavior do not match our own. However, constructive feedback can be an effective tool for personal and professional growth. So, before dismissing feedback as invalid or becoming overly defensive, take a step back and consider what is being said. Good feedback is not about your worth as a person, but about your behavior.

Tips for receiving and responding to feedback:

- ✓ Refrain from reacting and responding immediately. If the feedback is particularly difficult to hear, remove yourself from the situation until you can objectively assess the message without focusing on the delivery and how it felt. Consider saying, "Thank you for the feedback. I need some time to think about what you shared before responding."
- ✓ Ask questions for clarification and summarize in your own words what you heard before you respond. Consider saying, "I would like to be clear that I understood you correctly. What I heard you say was..."
- ✓ Reflect on your own reaction as you process feedback. Are you reacting to the content or the delivery? While it is instinct to react to the delivery, focus on the content of the message: what is really being said?
- ✓ Ask for suggestions, from your mentor or from others, on specific steps you could take to address the feedback.
- ✓ Be proactive and solicit feedback regarding ways you would like to improve.

Take initiative and ownership of your own development. In your mentoring relationship, you will be expected to own your developmental progress. You should not wait for your mentor to tell you what to do and how to do it. Your mentor should not have to seek you out. You are responsible for regularly reaching out to your mentor.

Build effective relationships. As with any new relationship, building the trust and respect that is crucial to its success will take time and is demonstrated through action. Honoring your commitments, being on time for your meetings, being respectful and open to suggestions are actions that will be crucial to building that trust with your mentor.

Reflect on key learning moments. Your mentor will ask you a lot of questions that are meant to provoke deep and critical thought, reflection, and discussion. As part of your reflection process, you should consider keeping a journal where you write down your thoughts and feelings on what was discussed and agreed upon after every meeting. Your journal does not need to be shared with your mentor but may reveal topics to explore in future meetings.

Stages of Mentoring

In the beginning, you and your mentor will get to know one another, set goals for the partnership, and agree on expectations. After you have set your goals and expectations, mentoring will be an on-going process. You and your mentor will revise goals, create action plans, take action, and reflect on outcomes. There should be sustained growth and relationship development.

The Beginning. In your first meeting, you should establish goals, ground rules, and expectations for both parties. A sample "First Meeting Agenda" is included at the back of this guide.

Tips to get to know your mentor:

- ✓ Discuss your personal backgrounds, career choice, and professional history.
- ✓ Share any previous experience with mentoring and lessons learned.
- ✓ Talk about your goals and what you want out of the mentoring partnership.

Potential areas of focus for goal setting:

- ✓ Develop professional expertise in a specific area of focus.
- ✓ Develop leadership abilities such as managing conflict, politics, and power.
- ✓ Discuss your Professional Development Plan. Consider how your mentor can assist you in your development planning.
- ✓ Explore future career paths and opportunities.

Questions to establish clearly defined expectations:

- ✓ How often will you meet and via what medium?
- ✓ Who will be responsible for making the arrangements for the meetings?
- ✓ What will be your ground rules for how the time will be spent?
- ✓ Who will run the meetings? Will you be responsible for creating an agenda for the meetings?
- ✓ What does confidentiality mean to you, and what does it mean to your mentor?
- ✓ What topics are off-limits?
- ✓ How will you respect one another's time?

Ongoing Sessions. This stage will focus on the developmental goals of the protégé.

- ✓ For each session, set an agenda or plan for the meeting; what to discuss/goal of the session.
- ✓ Discuss your Professional Development Plan. Outline how your mentor can assist you in your development planning.
- ✓ Be a good listener and communicator.
- ✓ Seek opportunities to ask for guidance.
- ✓ Employ innovative thought and creative problem solving.
- ✓ Be receptive to honest, constructive feedback.

Appendix

Helpful Guide

FIRST MEETING AGENDA (SAMPLE)

Introductions

- Exchange bios, resumes, and share a brief history of your experience.
- If comfortable, provide personal information like hobbies, passions, etc.
- Establish rapport by identifying points of connections and exchanging information

Discuss Mentoring

- What words come to mind when you think of mentoring?
- Have you ever been engaged in a mentoring partnership before? Describe the circumstances.
- What have you learned or gained from a previous mentoring experience?

Determine Goals

- What do you want to learn from this experience?
- What is your Professional Development Plan (PDP)?

Determine Expectations

- What do you want out of the mentoring partnership?
- What does a successful mentoring relationship look like?
- Who will be responsible for scheduling meetings?
- How often will you meet and for how long? Will these be by phone, Zoom, Skype, or in-person?
- Who will run the meetings? Will there be an agenda?
- Will you correspond in between meetings? How often?
- How will you manage time conflicts with scheduled meetings?

Discuss Ground Rules

- Where do you define boundaries (time availability, etc.)?
- Discuss guidelines around confidentiality. What does confidentiality mean?
- What topics are off-limits?
- What are your personal values?
- How do you define respect? How will you respect one another's time? Values? Limits?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Review Previous Meeting

- Review action items from previous meeting.
- What progress was made on those items?
- What insight or learning was gained in the process?

Current Meeting

- Define goal: What is the objective? How does this relate to the final goal?
- Define the situation: What are the facts? Context? Who is involved?
- Define options: What can you do? What are alternatives?

- Create action plans: What actions will you take? How will you overcome obstacles? When will you do this?

Meeting Debrief

- What was helpful? Why or how?
- Is there anything that should be done differently?
- What did you learn?
- What worked well?
- Revisit goals, expectations, and ground rules.

Next Meeting

- Determine action items for next meeting.

On Your Own

- Reflect on each meeting.
- Journal ideas, revelations, reflections, and insights between meetings.