



**Pace University  
Employee Mentoring  
Program  
Mentor Handbook**

## **Guidelines for Mentors**

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 Relationship**

A successful mentor-protégé relationship is founded in the development of mutual trust, respect, and the maintenance of confidentiality. The PeopleGrove online platform can be used to match mentors and protégés, based upon their interests and mentoring needs.

### **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 protégé.

*Provide feedback.* It is important that feedback is candid and delivered in a thoughtful and constructive way. Your feedback should never be judgmental or discriminatory. Help your protégé learn how to receive and respond to feedback by modeling the behavior through open discussion.

*Facilitate self-reflection and self-development.* Discuss your protégé's Professional Development Plan (PDP). Ask thought-provoking questions to help your protégé understand and articulate their motivations, accomplishments, weaknesses, etc. Employ active listening as a way to develop questions to ask your protégé. Sample reflective questions are included at the end of this mentoring guide.

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

### **Mentoring Skills**

Highlighted below are the important skills that will help you to empower your protégé to think, reflect, and take the necessary action steps to realize his or her goals. Your objective should be to provide guidance and support; you are not expected to solve problems for your protégé.

*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 protégé to do the same.
- ✓ Resist the urge to provide solutions.
- ✓ Practice!

*Ask thought-provoking questions.* Your main goal as a mentor is to provide guidance and share knowledge and experience. Use open-ended questions that provoke deeper thought and reflection. Your questions should create a space for open discussion and allow your protégé to reflect on their opinions, thoughts, and feelings. Open-ended questions encourage participation, stimulate discussion, and help you establish rapport.

Sample questions:

- ✓ What would you like to accomplish (before we meet next time)?
- ✓ What has happened since we last met?
- ✓ What did you learn (from an experience, about yourself, about others, about a situation)?

- ✓ What will you do with this knowledge?
- ✓ What steps do you plan to take to accomplish those goals? How are you going to get there?
- ✓ What resources will you need?
- ✓ What barriers or challenges to you anticipate?
- ✓ What have you done so far to address challenges/situation/issue?
- ✓ What has worked so far? What has not worked?
- ✓ What could you do (differently) to get your desired result?
- ✓ How can I help you to be successful?
- ✓ What went well? What needs work?

*Role-model behavior.* As a mentor, you are a role model and should be aware of your word choice, your demeanor, and how you react to people and situations. Keep in mind that your protégé looks to you for advice and guidance, so make sure that you practice what you preach.

Tips to practice role-modeling with your protégé:

- ✓ Use examples from your own experiences to demonstrate how to receive feedback, take ownership, build effective partnerships, etc.
- ✓ Model how to effectively receive and respond to feedback when receiving it from your protégé.
- ✓ Model active listening when your protégé is speaking.
- ✓ Be present, engaged, and on time to meetings with your protégé.
- ✓ Demonstrate accountability, trust, and good judgment.

*Provide objective feedback and guidance.*

Tips for providing feedback:

- ✓ Ask your protégé how they best receive feedback in your first meeting. When you are ready to provide feedback, check for a willingness to listen by asking for permission to deliver feedback. Make sure the other person is in the frame of mind to receive it.
- ✓ Check for understanding. Make sure that you accurately understand the situation before jumping to a conclusion. Utilize your active listening skills.
- ✓ Check for positive intent. Make sure that your intentions are to help with the other person's growth and development and not related to any personal bias or feelings that you may have about the person.
- ✓ Focus on behaviors and results. Frame your message around concrete behaviors and results of those behaviors.

*Demonstrate critical thinking.* When you provide feedback to your protégé, you model your ability to think critically about the situation. A critical thinker clearly articulates a question or problem, gathers and assesses relevant information, tests solutions against relevant criteria, has an open mind to alternative solutions, and communicates the decision effectively to others.

### **Stages of Mentoring**

In the beginning, you and your protégé 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 protégé 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 mentoring guide.

Tips to get to know your protégé:

- ✓ Discuss your personal backgrounds, career choice, and professional history.
- ✓ Share any previous experience with mentoring and lessons learned.
- ✓ Share your goals for the partnership.
- ✓ Talk about your protégé’s goals and what they want out of the 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 the protégé’s Professional Development Plan. Ask how you can assist the protégé in their development planning.

Questions to establish clearly defined expectations:

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

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

- ✓ For each session, work with the protégé to set an agenda or plan for the meeting; what to discuss/goal of the session.
- ✓ Discuss the protégé’s Professional Development Plan. Ask how you can assist in their development planning.
- ✓ Provide guidance, advice and counsel; be a “sounding board” without being directive.
- ✓ Share knowledge and experience.
- ✓ Be a good listener and communicator.
- ✓ Be open and approachable.
- ✓ Refrain from pressuring the protégé to answer or behave as you think they should.
- ✓ Seek opportunities to offer encouragement, praise, and support.
- ✓ Encourage innovative thought and creative problem solving.
- ✓ Provide honest, constructive feedback.

# **Appendix**

## **Helpful Guides**

## **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**

### **Suggested Activity**

1. Ask your protégé to develop a personal vision statement.
  - a) Think about where you want to be five years from now.
  - b) What steps may be necessary in order to get there?
  - c) What is your "personal brand"?
  - d) What is your value proposition or what sets you apart from others?
  - e) What kind of impact do you want to have on others?
2. Ask your protégé to write out the vision to discuss in the next meeting.
3. Use the vision statement to develop goals and create an action plan.

### **Review Previous Meeting**

- Review action items for 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, ground rules, and communication guidelines from partnership agreement.
- Update mentoring partnership if necessary.

### **Next Meeting**

- Determine action items for next meeting.

### **On Your Own**

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



## REFLECTIVE QUESTION EXAMPLES

- What do you want to achieve by the end of our meeting?
- What are your strengths?
- What do you find difficult or challenging?
- How do you build trust?
- Whom do you look to as a role model?
- Where do you see yourself in 6 months? A year?
- When are you happiest? Most productive?
- What are the most important characteristics you want people to notice about you (trustworthy, credible, accountable, intelligent, etc.)?
- What do you value?
- What do you dream about?
- What do you worry about?
- What are your talents?
- What do you want to achieve now and in the future?
- What is your desired goal?
- When do you realistically expect to achieve your goal?
- What intermediate steps or goals can you identify?
- How important is achieving your goal?
- What will success look like?
- So what happened? Tell me about it.
- What led up to the situation?
- What details can you provide?
- What role did you play in the situation?
- What is the challenge or obstacle?
- Who else is affected by this situation or involved?
- What have you attempted so far?
- What has prevented you from success?
- How much control do you have over the outcome?
- What resources do you need in order to move forward?
- What important facts should you consider before moving forward?
- Are there different ways to achieve your goal?
- How can you get started?
- Who could help you?
- What options have you decided to pursue?
- How much of your goal will this option achieve?
- What criteria will you use to measure success and progress?
- What is your next step and the one after that?
- What are your concerns?
- What resistance or challenges do you expect?
- How will you overcome those challenges or resistance?
- How committed are you to taking action?
- Is anything preventing you from taking action?