

Building the Mentoring Relationship: Some Suggestions for Mentors

Every mentoring relationship is unique. In fact, there is so much to learn that there are entire books devoted to how to build a mentoring relationship. Following are a few guidelines based on feedback we have received from our mentors that we hope will help you in creating a satisfying relationship with your mentee.

Set Goals with your Mentee

Setting goals with your mentee at the beginning of the relationship is critical because it gives direction to the relationship and clarifies how to best assist your mentee.

If your mentee doesn't know his/her goals, this can be your first mentoring moment. You can ask questions such as "What made you sign up for the mentoring program?" or "What about my profile stood out to you?" or "What are your specific concerns and questions right now?" or simply "How can I help you?"

Remember, goal setting can be a process, so make a point to check in and ask the mentee if his/her priorities are changing or evolving. For more information/assistance with goal-setting, please see our resource on **SMART** goals.

Set Expectations with your Mentee

- Stick to the decision you made with your mentee on how and when you will communicate with each other. Renegotiate as needed
- If the mentee is unresponsive at any point in the relationship, feel free to initiate contact. Some students will be overwhelmed by how much they are doing and forget to contact you
- It is your mentee's responsibility to keep the relationship moving forward. If your mentee is unresponsive, please contact the IMP team at industrymentoringprogram@griffith.edu.au

Get to Know your Mentee

- Ask thoughtful questions about the mentee's interests, experiences and background
- Follow up on any important steps the student has taken, such as a job interview or a leadership experience, and ask what he/she learned
- Be an active listener by feeding back what the mentee says, avoiding interrupting and show interest in your voice and posture

Offer Options Versus Solutions

- Avoid giving quick solutions. Ask the mentee what he/she is thinking and help him/her process his/her own ideas
- Make suggestions of things the student might try, for example, "Have you looked into..." or "Something I found helpful when I was at Griffith..." versus "You should..." or "You need to..."
- Remember, often people will not do what we say, so don't get discouraged if your mentee does not heed your advice.

IMP

The Industry Mentoring Program (IMP) has matched Griffith Students with Industry professionals for career development learning and industry exposure. We support hundreds of mentoring relationships throughout the year, in a wide range of backgrounds and industries.

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Share your Story

- Telling your mentee about yourself and your experiences builds trust and rapport
- Think about how you have learned from your mistakes and how your mentee can learn from them.
- Share your lessons learned during university and beyond with your mentee.

Be a Coach!

- Encourage your mentee to take risks. They may need a little push, but it will help them in the long run.
- Remember, students have much to learn from a professional like you - everything from how to dress to being punctual.
- Don't hesitate to give your mentee feedback if he/she is not acting in a professional manner - it could make a huge difference for his/her first interview, job and other life experiences.

Coordinating Schedules

- It may be difficult to find the time to talk or meet with your mentee, so consider scheduling your next conversation at the end of each meeting.
- Keep the relationship a priority and ask your mentee to do the same.
- Consider making the most of student late-night routines and schedule a Skype or phone conversation.

How to Relate

- Ask about the mentee's Griffith experience, as you may have that in common
- Share what you might have done differently if you were a student again
- Refer to the "Suggested Mentoring Activities" on the Resources page for some ideas of what to do together or talk about