

INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS MENTORING PROGRAM

A strong mentoring partnership can help a student create a lasting professional network, gain access to an insider's perspective on navigating a future career and develop important critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Following basic guidelines will help ensure a positive and valuable experience for both the student and mentor.

Maintain regular contact

You and your partner should commit to being in contact a minimum of twice a month during the program. Email is one way to connect, but it's not a substitute for real-time conversations. Try to connect in person, on the phone or over a video chat as much as possible. Scheduling a regular meeting day and time that works for both parties can be a great way to build a strong connection.

You are both expected to return calls and emails in a timely manner to each other. We understand life, work and school can get busy, so you might want to set a reminder to check your email or block off time each week devoted to working on your mentoring relationship.

Set your SMART Goals

A mentoring partnership only works if both the student and mentor are on the same page about their goals and expectations. Work with your partner to complete the SMART Goals Agreement and evaluate your progress regularly.

Active listening and feedback

Listen actively to each other's perspectives and experiences and provide constructive feedback that is specific, actionable and supportive. Encourage an open dialogue where both parties feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas.

Receiving feedback that is candid and delivered in a thoughtful and constructive way is a skill that can be hard to learn. It's important that students be open to receiving feedback and mentors model good behavior through open discussion.

Celebrate achievements and milestones

Acknowledge and celebrate progress and accomplishments and reflect on milestones and lessons learned throughout the mentorship. Use these achievements as motivation for further development and setting new goals.

Continuous learning and adaptability

Encourage a mindset of continuous learning and growth. Be open to adjusting the mentorship plan as goals evolve and new opportunities arise.

Honor commitments

Occasionally, you or your partner may need to cancel a meeting or conversation. It is expected that you and your partner will do your best to communicate in advance of the cancellation and reschedule your conversation.

Evaluate

In order to ensure that we continue to build a strong program that is beneficial to both students and mentors, we require that participants complete an evaluation survey at the end of the program.

INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM TIMELINE

First Meeting

Once you've received your match, mentor pairs should connect and schedule their first meeting. Take the opportunity of this first meeting—either at the kickoff event or on your own—to get to know more about your partner, share what you're looking for out of the partnership and come to an agreement on how your partnership will function. Establish some goals for the year and create initial action steps to meet those goals. Once your SMART Goal Agreement is complete, upload it to the Industry Connections website.

December and January

You should connect with your partner at least four times to work on your SMART goals and accomplish your action steps. Connecting can mean meeting in person, meeting virtually, emailing or having phone calls with your partner.

It can be hard to get back into the swing of things after winter break, so be sure to put a reminder on your calendar to reach out to your partner.

February and March

Remember, you should be connecting with your partner at least twice a month. Spring semester is also a time to review your goals, begin to reflect on your partnership and acknowledge the successes and accomplishments achieved.

April

As we come to the end of the program, make plans to attend our Industry Connections Celebration, the official end of the program. This is also the time to thank your partner for their time over the year and to redefine your partnership and set new ground rules and boundaries for future interactions. Some mentoring relationships continue long after the formal program ends, but others do not. Do what makes sense for you and your partner.

SMART GOALS

Goal setting is an important part of the mentorship process because it will help you focus on what you want to get out of the partnership. Goal setting might also be new to you, and that's OK. One way to create a good goal is to make it SMART:

Specific: The goal statement should be concrete and action-oriented. What specifically are you trying to accomplish?

Measurable: How will you know when you have achieved the goal? How will you track and measure progress? How is success defined?

Achievable: The goal should require work, but be attainable. Is the goal too big or too small?

Realistic: Do you have the ability and commitment to reach the goal? What additional resources of time, money or capability will be needed to reach the goal?

Timely: There should be a specific time frame for achieving the goal.

SMART Goal examples

1. Enhance professional network

- Specific: Expand my professional network by connecting with at least five industry professionals through my mentor's contacts.
- Measurable: Achieve at least one meaningful connection or conversation each month over the next five months.
- Achievable: Use my mentor's introductions and LinkedIn to reach out and schedule informational interviews or attend industry events.
- Relevant: Build a strong professional network for career development and gain insights into the industry.
- Time-Bound: Complete these connections within the next five months.

2. Career path planning

- Specific: Create a detailed career development plan with actionable steps and milestones, guided by my mentor's insights and experience.
- Measurable: Outline at least three career goals and the steps needed to achieve them, including necessary skills, experiences and networking.
- Achievable: Attend regular meetings with my mentor to review progress and adjust the plan as needed.
- Relevant: Have a clear career plan to provide direction and motivation, ensuring focus on long-term objectives.
- Time-Bound: Finalize the career development plan within the next three months and begin executing the outlined steps.

3. Secure an Industry-relevant internship

- Specific: Obtain a summer internship in a company within my field of study that aligns with my career goals.
- Measurable: Apply to at least 10 internships, secure at least five interviews and receive at least one offer.
- Achievable: Leverage my mentor's network for referrals, attend career fairs, utilize university career services and tailor my resume and cover letters for each application.
- Relevant: Gain practical experience through an internship to enhance my skills, provide industry exposure and improve my employability after graduation.
- Time-Bound: Secure the internship by the end of the current academic year.