TUFH Mentoring Program
Guide for Mentors

The word Mentor comes from the character “Mentor” in the story of the Odyssey. A king leaving for war left his son in the care of his trusted friend Mentor to help guide and counsel him.

Today, mentoring is a process in which an experienced individual helps another person develop his or her goals and skills through a series of time-limited, confidential, one-on-one conversations and other learning activities.

Mentors also draw benefits from the mentoring relationship. As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to share your wisdom and experiences, evolve your own thinking, develop a new relationship, and deepen your skills as a mentor.

There are 4 key mentoring skills:

1. Listening Actively

Listening actively is the most basic skill you will use throughout your relationship.

Active listening not only establishes rapport but creates a positive, accepting environment that permits open communication. By listening actively, you will ascertain your mentee’s interests and needs.

- Show interest in what he or she is saying, and reflect back important aspects of what he or she has said to show that you’ve understood.
- When meeting by phone or online, reduce background noise and limit interruptions. Your mentee will feel that he or she has your undivided attention. When utilizing e-mail, answer within 24 hours if possible, and be sure your message is responsive to his or her original message.
- Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your mentee has had a chance to thoroughly explain his or her issue, question, or concern.
- Keep an open mind, do not judge or mentally criticize.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with limited affirming verbal comments such as “um-hmm,” or “yes.”
- Provide Feedback
  - Clarifying: Bringing vague material into sharper focus.
    “Let me see if I’ve got it all...”
  - Perception Checking: Request for verification of your perceptions.
    “Let me see if I’ve got this right. You said you feel the project is important, but at the same time you find it frustrating. Is that what you are saying?”
  - Validation: Acknowledge the individual’s challenges and feelings.
    “I appreciate your willingness to talk about...”
  - Summarizing: Pulling it all together, organizing and integrating the major aspects of your dialogue.
    “So it sounds to me as if...”
  - Empathy: Reflection of content and feeling.
    “Your feel (state feeling) because (state content).”
  - Remember that silence (as well as long pauses) can be golden.
2. Building Trust

Trust is built over time. You will increase trust by keeping your conversations and other communications with your mentee confidential, honoring your scheduled meetings and calls, consistently showing interest and support, and by being honest with your mentee.

3. Determining Goals and Building Capacity

As a role model, you should have your own career and personal goals and share these, when appropriate, with your mentee. It is also likely that he or she will ask you how you set and achieved your own goals. In addition, you can help your mentee identify and achieve his or her career and personal goals.

You will develop your mentee’s capacity for learning and achieving his or her goals by doing the following:

- Assisting him or her with finding resources such as people, books, articles, tools and web-based information;
- Imparting knowledge and skills by explaining, giving useful examples, demonstrating processes, and asking thought-provoking questions;
- Helping him or her gain broader perspectives of his or her responsibilities and organization; and
- Discussing actions you’ve taken in your career and explaining your rationale.

4. Encouraging and Inspiring

There are many ways to encourage your mentee.
Try some of these:

- Comment favorably on his or her accomplishments;
- Communicate your belief in his or her capacity to grow personally and professionally and reach his or her goals; and
- Respond to his or her frustrations and challenges with words of support, understanding, encouragement and praise.

You can also inspire your protégé to excel. Examples include the following:

- Share your personal vision or those of other leaders;
- Describe experiences, mistakes, and successes you or others have encountered on the road to achieving your goals;
- Talk with him or her about people and events that have inspired and motivated you; and
- Introduce him or her to your colleagues who can be additional useful contacts or inspiring models.

Reflecting on your mentoring practice, noting use of the key mentoring skills, observing progress made in the relationship, and requesting feedback from your mentee are excellent ways to assess whether you are employing these skills.
The Three C's of Mentorship

Being an effective mentor is not always about telling someone what to do. Instead, it's about playing multiple roles to help your mentee achieve career objectives. Sometimes being a mentor means sharing business knowledge, while other times it means being a support system. Below are three key roles important to the success of the mentor-mentee relationship.

**Role 1: Consultant**

This is the most obvious role for a mentor to play. Just as consultants are hired to provide specialized recommendations based on a wealth of industry knowledge; mentors are responsible for sharing personal business insights gained through years of real-world experience. Mentors are often experienced in areas that mentees are not, and insight from a mentor can save a mentee both time and resources in figuring out a problem.

**Role 2: Counselor**

Listen. Guide. But don't give away all of the answers. Although it can be easy for a mentor to simply point out mistakes, there are often valuable lessons for mentees in making those mistakes along the way. An effective mentor will be able to reflect on personal experiences to determine when the journey was more insightful than the outcome. In these instances, a mentor must play the role of counselor and provide guidance but not answers, enabling the mentee to figure out the right course of action individually.

When it comes to critical business skills, it's important that mentors play the role of counselor and let the mentee discover the answer independently. By navigating the situation individually, mentees not only uncover the answer to the immediate problem, but also learn a life-long skill.

Find out about your mentee's learning process, whether it be based in hands-on experience, informative reading or something else. Understanding this information about your mentee may help inform the ways you can best offer guidance.

**Role 3: Cheerleader**

In addition to giving constructive feedback and advice, a mentor should also provide support and enthusiasm. Starting a career or making a career pivot has many up and downs, and it can be encouraging to know that your mentor is rooting for you. Mentors should help celebrate a mentee's successes – no matter how big or small.

At the end of the day, whether you are being a consultant, counselor or cheerleader, transparency and communication are two important aspects of a successful mentor-mentee relationship.
Tips for Effective Mentors

1. Establish Expectations and Ground Rules

At your first meeting, help your mentee feel comfortable by explaining your role. Point out what you expect from your mentee (e.g. to come prepared with problems to resolve or inquiries to discuss; to show up on time; to treat this as a professional and respectful relationship, etc.). Explain what you’re prepared to do to help: coach, teach, and open relevant doors.

2. Do an Informal Needs Assessment

Learn about your mentee's priorities for mentorship. Which aspects of your career or experience seem most relevant? What knowledge is your mentee hoping to gain? In which areas is your mentee hoping to grow? Create a list.

3. Set Goals Mutually

Work with your mentee to prioritize your first focus areas. Agree on how much time you'll devote to the initial issues and what success might look like.

4. Set a Contact Schedule

How often will you and your mentee meet in person? Will you be available for phone or email/text consults anytime during the workday and evening, or only in specific timeslots on certain days? Establish clear boundaries regarding communication and time. Offer enough availability not to leave your mentee in a lurch, but not so much that the relationship becomes a burden.

5. Listen Carefully First, Then Ask and Advise

You likely possess a great deal of accumulated wisdom. Remember that mentorship is a relationship and your mentee also brings knowledge and experience. Hear what your mentee has to say before giving your opinion. Ask for a personal point of view from your mentee, who can bring insights and perspectives which you may appreciate.

6. Let Mentees Make Individual Decisions

The mentor is generally more knowledgeable and experienced than the mentee. It would be easy just to tell your mentee what to do, but an effective mentor also encourages and challenges a mentee while sharing wisdom.

7. Be Accountable To Each Other

If you promise to look into an issue or provide a resource to your mentee, do so according to the terms of your commitment. By the same token, expect your mentee to meet stated pledges to you.
8. Open Doors & Share your Connections

You likely have connections that will benefit your mentee. If your mentee is serious about learning and growing, you can encourage connections with appropriate people in your network.
Dialogue Prompts for the Mentor

➢ Tell me a couple of high points and a couple of challenges since our last meeting.
➢ Tell me about a conflict you had. How did it turn out? What did you do that was effective? What wasn’t?
➢ What have I done or said so far that have proven to be helpful for you?
➢ Have there been any surprises, unanticipated learning, challenges, positives?
➢ Have you applied anything you have learned thus far?
➢ Is learning occurring in desired competencies? If so, describe. If not, discuss how that might occur.
➢ Are there any changes you plan to make in your approach or behavior?
➢ Do you feel you are growing?
➢ What is working well for you in this relationship?
➢ Is there something we can tweak in this relationship?