

BEST PRACTICES FOR MENTEES*

Mentoring relationships are flexible and diverse by nature; no two relationships will be exactly the same. Throughout the relationship, as a mentee you will be engaging in collaborative, honest dialogues with your mentor as they assist you in growing towards your goals. Consider the best practices below as tools to help you navigate this mutual process.

1. Focus On Achieving Learning Goals

Mentoring is meant to help you, as the mentee, learn more about your areas of interest. Creating, tracking, and evaluating learning goals with your mentor will help your growth stay focused.

2. Expect To Drive The Mentoring Relationship

Be prepared to ask for what you need, when (or even before) you need it. Mentors are meant to help you, so don't be afraid to ask for support.

3. Create SMART Goals That Will Contribute To Your Development

Clear goals lead to clear outcomes. Communicate about your goals openly with your mentor so that they can assist you in reaching them. Together, make sure your goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

- [Creating SMART Goals](#)

4. Be Authentic, Open, And Honest

In order to grow and develop, you have to be vulnerable and admit when something isn't going exactly right. You will miss learning opportunities and chances for the mentoring relationship to deepen if you pretend everything is perfect all of the time.

5. Prepare For All Mentoring Meetings

Having relevant notes, materials, and questions prepared for mentoring sessions will increase efficient communication and result in more meaningful learning.

6. Stay Connected And In Communication With Your Mentor

Talk to your mentor and decide which communication methods (email, face-to-face, video calls, telephone calls, etc.) work best for the both of you. Pick at least two to stay in consistent contact with each other.

7. Be Willing To Stretch And Step Out Of Your Comfort Zone

Your mentor will challenge you with learning opportunities, discussions, and questions that may take you outside your comfort zone. While possibly uncomfortable at first, these stretches will maximize your growth and learning.

8. Ask For (And Give!) Specific Feedback

Exchanging honest, regular feedback with your mentor will help you become more self-aware and advance towards your goals, while also allowing them opportunities to grow. Practice asking for specific feedback, receiving constructive criticism, and acting on what you hear.

- [Establishing Shared Expectations](#)
- [Practicing Feedback](#)

9. Focus On The Future

Mentoring creates momentum towards your future development and provides a foundation for your growth. With your mentor, clearly articulate your self-vision so that as a team, you can create strategies for future success.

10. Keep A Journal (Or Consider Other Reflective Practices)

In writing down conversation notes and mentoring progress, you will be able to track your goals, reflect on your learning, record insights, and better prepare for mentoring meetings. Pick a digital document or application or a paper journal, then commit to using it.

→ [MENTOR.UIOWA.EDU](https://mentor.uiowa.edu)

*Adapted from The Center for Mentoring