

FACULTY TIPSHEET

How to be a Successful Mentee

Being mentored as a student is very different from being mentored by a colleague, especially when that colleague may vote on your tenure or promotion. We want to forge the best relationship possible so we can get the guidance, support, advocacy, and expertise we need. Here are some tips and guidelines to help you, the mentee, create a successful mentoring relationship with your faculty colleagues.

- 1. Remember your mentor is a volunteer.** Your mentor is taking time out of their schedule to help you develop and grow. Show your mentor you appreciate their time by preparing for your meetings, and come with questions, comments or articles to share. Ask yourself, what do I need from this meeting? Define goals for meetings ahead of time by knowing what you want to discuss and accomplish during your meeting. When requesting feedback, give your mentor enough time to review your work. Remember, we are all busy.
- 2. Be open about your needs and communicate them.** Tell your mentor exactly what you need from them. Be honest if you need something to change and let them know if you don't understand something. Give them a specific goal that you need help to accomplish.
- 3. Take action.** Put the new skills you've worked on with them to use in your everyday work. If you've asked for help writing a document, have a draft ready for them to look over. If they've given you something to work on, make sure you do that in time for your next session. If they've opened doors for you, make sure you walk through them!
- 4. Ask questions.** Ask thought provoking questions that lead to discussions, questions that only your mentor can answer about their careers and experiences at the university.
- 5. Be open to receiving feedback.** Your mentor is there to help you, and it is their job to provide honest, sometimes critical feedback. Be ready to receive their feedback, and then decide whether or not you want to take it. If you disagree with them, examine your attitude. Your reluctance may have more to do with a fear of leaving your comfort zone or an unwillingness to change than the quality of their advice. If their suggestions don't fit your larger goal, let them know.

RESOURCES

- Forbes: “How To Be A Great Mentee” [go.unl.edu/greatmentee](https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbes/2016/05/11/how-to-be-a-great-mentee/)
- Harvard Business Review: “What Mentors Wish Their Mentees Knew” [go.unl.edu/mentorswish](https://hbr.org/2016/05/what-mentors-wish-their-mentees-knew/)
- Inc.: “12 Keys to Being a SuperMentee (the Kind of Mentee Every Mentor Loves)” [go.unl.edu/supermentee](https://www.inc.com/2016/05/11/12-keys-to-being-a-supermentee-the-kind-of-mentee-every-mentor-loves/)
- TED: “Are you mentorable?” [go.unl.edu/mentorable](https://www.ted.com/talks/eric_rasmussen_are_you_mentorable/)
- TEDx Talks: “No One is Talking to the Mentees” [go.unl.edu/mentorability](https://www.tedx.com/talks/no-one-is-talking-to-the-mentees/)
- NCFDD: “Dear Kerry Ann: Why Is It So Hard To Find Mentors?” [go.unl.edu/findmentors](https://www.ncfdd.com/dear-kerry-ann-why-is-it-so-hard-to-find-mentors/)