Starting a mentoring relationship off on the right foot
Mentee "to dos"

1. network here
2. clarify interests + alignments
3. cultivate relationship with mentor
4. persevere + adapt
5. graduate!!
MENTORS
MY PRIORITIES

- ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE
- KEEP YOU MOVING FORWARD
Mentoring Relationships: Roles & Functions

- **Advise**
- **Clarify**
- **Develop**

**Roles & Functions**

- Ally
- Champion
- Coach
- Advisor
- Chair
- Supervisor
Mentees move forward with...

- Regular and effective communication
- Taking initiative to seek and utilize feedback
- Meeting milestones and deadlines
- Devoting appropriate amounts of time and energy
- Asking when uncertain about program requirements, normal progress, and performance expectations
- Initiating conversations, whether to find answers or plan a career
Benefits of Mentoring

**Mentor**
- Satisfaction that comes from giving back, guiding others
- Cultivate collaborators for current and future projects
- Share competencies across cohorts
- Learn from mentee’s experiences
- Support school-wide initiatives
- Share successes met by mentee
- Recognize your own expertise

**Mentee**
- Understand more about the work context
- Increase clarity and efficiency on career path
- Grow knowledge under expert guidance
- Develop and strengthen connections at Northwestern and beyond
- Build a stronger professional skill set
- Reflect with others on growing competencies as well as challenges
What do mentors look for in mentees?

- Have realistic expectations
- Be clear about what you’re asking
- Establish a track record of dependability
- Orchestrate meetings: bring your agenda
Successful Mentees:

✓ Take initiative
✓ Learn from mistakes
✓ Are trustworthy, willing, and open-minded
✓ Welcome experience
✓ ASK FOR HELP when they're struggling
✓ Remain realistic
How to be a good Protégé

**Take the relationship seriously**
- Be efficient, prompt, and prepared
- Submit your best effort toward goals

**Respect your mentor’s time**
- Receive criticism professionally
- Take responsibility
- Follow advice

**Stay curious, engaged, and communicative**
- Don’t hide when things get tough
Congratulations, you’re in TGS

1. Get a mentor
### 3 Things to Ask a Prospective Mentor

1. What are you working on right now?
2. What are your next steps?
3. What do you look for in a mentee?

### Great Ice Breakers

1. I’m looking for advice on “X.” What do you think?
2. I just read your “Y” and am fascinated by how “Y” relates to “X.”
3. I’m wondering whether “ABC” would be good next steps on my project.
Congratulations, you have a mentor

2. Learn to Communicate with this mentor
I supply a structure, clear goals, and deadlines. It’s up to students to get the work done, but with consistent feedback and reassurance I can significantly boost students’ confidence and success.

STUDENT

I set goals but I can’t keep on track…the quarter system makes me feel like I’m hanging on for dear life. This exacerbates my anxiety about not being successful in grad school and my self-confidence has taken a beating.

ADVISOR

It’s common for new grad students to lack confidence. You’ll get over it (if you deserve to).

I supply a structure, clear goals, and deadlines. It’s up to students to get the work done, but with consistent feedback and reassurance I can significantly boost students’ confidence and success.
One student described her feedback experience as similar to being a victim in a drive-by shooting — she handed over her work, it was riddled with bullets and she was left with a bloodied mess as the shooter drove off.

To be fair, e-mailing a chapter to an adviser and saying “Give me feedback” is like walking into a restaurant and saying “Give me food.”

*You need to be a bit more specific.* When handing over your work, *identify the type of feedback you are looking for.* You might say, “This is an early draft, so I just want feedback on the overall direction,” or “Please focus on the discussion on page six.” If the feedback you get isn't helpful, ask for more detail.

Bottom line: ask for what you need rather than hoping your advisor will intuit what to provide.
1) Check in: is anything urgent?
2) Set an agenda: prioritize pending items to time available
3) In discussion:
   • Ask clarifying questions
   • Establish clear and measurable goals
   • Ask for advice or resources, as needed
   • Agree on timeline
4) Wrap up
   • Clarify or reiterate each other’s follow-ups/to-dos
   • Schedule your next meeting

Source: University of Utah
My mentor doesn’t get it! There can’t possibly be enough hours in the day for me to read, teach, write grant proposals, and meet all the deadlines that are piling up. Am I a slow writer? I don’t know what to do. I’m going to crack up!!!
I’m struggling with multiple deadlines. I can’t find enough hours in the day to meet my TA responsibilities, work on the grant, and write my paper. Juggling short and medium-term priorities is challenging. I’m worried. Am I approaching this optimally?

Being goal-oriented is important. Let’s figure out what can be adjusted.

I appreciate that you’re proactive and reached out about this. Let’s analyze the problem together.
Congratulations, you’re a mentee

3. Develop as a mentee
I look for growing resilience and confidence in mentees, but it’s also up to you to build networks and your professional identity.

As a graduate student, everything I need to learn and achieve will come through my mentor. My future depends on this.

Of course! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.
Congratulations, you’re still a mentee

4. There will be conflict
Let's problem-solve this situation so we can both thrive.

#1 Work through conflict, #2 Graduate

STUDENT

I have a ‘real’ life in which *#%!* happens. Why do you make me feel like a slacker for having a personal life?

ADVISOR

Hmm… my student seems to think I’m on call 24/7.

I get it. I have a ‘real’ life in which *#%!* happens too…

Let’s problem-solve this situation so we can both thrive.
Congratulations, networking is work

5. Develop your network
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build a Mentoring Network</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversify your mentor network</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Commit to assessing, building, and adjusting the mentor network</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Develop diverse, synergistic connections</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engage in 360-degree networking</strong></td>
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| **Keep in touch with your network** | • provide updates  
• follow through on all commitments |
Excellence in Mentoring

• Tools for Success
Excellence in Mentoring

Hot off the press!

Go to the TGS Excellence in Mentoring Initiative page

Tools for Success