

Mentor Handbook



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Purpose and Structure

Dear mentors,

We would like to take this time to thank you for your involvement in mentoring students. As a mentor, you are contributing to the next generation of leaders by providing guidance to current students to excel in the academic year and beyond.

The intent is to support students in their individual and professional development, as well as to address overall challenges they may be facing at their university, particularly as it relates to their immigrant background. Mentoring focuses on the personal and professional development of students, with attention to enhancing employability through the student's increased awareness and understanding of themselves and what they can contribute to the professional arena. Furthermore, by engaging with you as a professional, the students can see themselves in your position, as you are a representation of what they can achieve in the future. We hope this eases the student's transition into professional life once they finish their studies.

Mentoring in higher education has been proven overall in research as important and effective (Baker, Pifer, & Flemion, 2013). Lunsford (2012) found that there is a positive relationship between time spent mentoring and student's productivity, further implying that an investment in mentoring is one that can be beneficial for the student's academic experience and success.

Students who register to receive mentorship are placed in a mentor group of approximately 4 students which is in turn paired with a mentor at the beginning of the academic year. Students are introduced to their mentors via email by the mentorship coordinator. Meetings are voluntary and are not meant to put extra pressure on students alongside their deadlines. Meetings are loose in their format and up to the discretion of the mentor. We do not expect the mentors to have in-depth answers to all of the students' questions and mentors are not expected to be

capable of solving all issues that may be raised; however, the mentor should be confident in being able to point students in the right direction using the resources below. If at any point in mentoring you would like advice on how to assist students, you can contact the mentorship coordinator, Nava Hinrichs, at n.hinrichs@maastrichtuniversity.nl. If any of your mentees have questions not related to the topic of the mentor sessions, please refer the student to their study advisor at their institution.

Students and mentors are invited to meet four times throughout the academic year. Mentors should have the general goal of discussing career trajectory and/or personal development (examples of questions to ask within these fields can be found below under the description of each meeting).

The goals of mentoring are to assist students in reflection of:

- their personal and professional development;
- possible ways to acquire further skills for “sustainable employability” by working on career-oriented goals;
- general personal challenges they may face in being student with an immigrant background;
- their process of searching for employment

During the mentor meetings, students are expected (and supported by the mentor) to set up goals and make effective plans for their career and personal development. These meetings should help students understand their professional skills and competencies and reflect on how to use them. Students will be placed in groups of approximately 4 people and attend mentor meetings online which is to be organized by the mentor. By having the mentorship meetings in small groups, the students will also be able to receive feedback and advice from other students in a similar position.

This document presents a guideline for meetings and a list of resources to provide to students facing different situations. This document is meant to be a helpful guide, but you are encouraged to personalize the conversations as is most beneficial to the

student within this frame. The students will be asked to prepare for each mentor meeting by reflecting on questions which the mentor emails them in advance of the meeting.

Meeting Outlines

1) Meeting One: State of Play

Time to meet

- October 2022 (2 hours)

Areas to discuss

- The mentor introduces themselves by briefly discussing their professional experience and role at their institution.
- Students share where they are in their studies and what their goals are in their career as well as in the coming year – what do they want to get out of this mentorship programme?
- Students share how they understand themselves (strengths and weaknesses, unique contributions to a working environment).

Template email:

Dear Students,

I am very happy to be your mentor during this academic year. You will have the chance to schedule four meetings with me throughout the academic year. Meetings will last 90 minutes- 2 hours and you are asked to come prepared to discuss the topic of the meeting. The information discussed during these meetings is strictly confidential.

I would like to invite you to our first meeting which will be attended by [number] students who have signed up to receive mentorship. This first meeting will last 2 hours so we can have enough time to meet each other and I can hear about your career or personal development plans. Please click on the following link to indicate your availability [doodle link]. We will meet on the agreed date at [Zoom location]. If you need to cancel the meeting, please let me know 48 hours in advance.

During the first meeting, we can approach two topics: (1) your thoughts on your career track and what you find fulfilling in a career and/or (2) your personal development track and the goals you would like to set for this year.

How to prepare for this meeting: Reflect on your career or personal development goal(s) and how having a mentor can help you in clarifying this goal and hold you accountable to attaining it throughout the year.

Looking forward to our meeting,

[_____]

To Do List

Before the meeting

Send an email with a doodle.doc including your calendar availability to schedule the first meeting.

During the meeting

Objectives to achieve

- Students and mentors should find a rhythm for discussing both the student's personal identity and career aspirations and how these two intersect.

- Student and mentors should agree on the student's desired pace of the meetings – what the student will work on between meetings to prepare for the next meeting (for example, researching career opportunities in their desired field).
- Establish the goal the student will achieve for the year that falls under personal or career development.
- The student should leave the meeting with a clearer understanding of the goals they would like to accomplish during the year with the guidance of their mentor and mentor peer group.

Questions to guide the conversation

- What goals would you like to set for the coming year?
- What are some milestones to achieve those goals?
- What support do you need in order to achieve those goals?

2) Meeting Two: Current Challenges

Time to meet

- January/February 2023 (90 minutes- 2hours)

Areas to discuss

- The mentor starts by doing a recap of the previous meeting and asking each student to give feedback on how far they have come in their journey regarding the goals they had set in the first meeting.
- The mentor asks each student to share the current challenges they are facing in their university with their studies as well as in other areas (for example: time management, career trajectory, discrimination).
- The mentor teases out feedback and suggestions from other students in the peer group and also gives tips and advice on how to tackle some of the issues. This is also an opportunity to set a specific goal/task for the student for them to practice between the second and third mentor meeting.

Template email

Dear Students,

In preparation for our second mentor meeting, I am sharing a doodle link [[doodle.doc](#)]. Please fill in your availability in the coming days so that we can finalize a time and date to meet via zoom.

Our second meeting will last 90 minutes-2 hours and we will focus on the challenges you may currently be facing during your studies both from a professional standpoint as well as other challenges you may be dealing with. Note that we will also be referring back to the goals you set in our first mentor meeting and you will be asked to share progress in relation to your goals.

How to prepare for this meeting: Reflect on your current situation and the challenges you may be facing. These challenges can relate to your studies as well as to other personal issues related to your experience at the university with your tutors, peers, or general wellbeing. Try to think of specific examples of how these challenges manifest themselves and any areas where you would like to receive further support and/or guidance.

Looking forward to our meeting,

[_____]

To Do List

Before the meeting

Send an email with a doodle.doc including your calendar availability to schedule the second meeting.

During the meeting

Objectives to achieve

- Students should be able to clearly identify the key challenges that they are facing and which they would like to focus on for the remainder of the academic year.
- Each student should receive actionable and specific tips, advice, and guidance for how to tackle and cope with their challenges – these tips should be shared by both the peer group as well as the mentor.
- Students should leave the meeting with a clear sense of steps they could try to implement to address their challenges and/or where they can turn to for further advice and support.

Questions to guide the conversation

- What are the key challenges you are currently facing during your studies (both personally and in your academic progress)?
- What steps have you taken, if any, to try to address these challenges? To what extent have they helped alleviate the situation?
- Have you sought support to try to address these challenges? If not, why not? If yes, has it helped?

3) Meeting Three: Transferable Skills

Time to meet

- April 2023 (90 minutes-2 hours)

Areas to discuss

- The mentor starts by doing a recap of the previous meeting and asking each student to give feedback on how they have gone about addressing the challenges they identified in the previous meeting.

- Where the students are and where they want to go in their career.
- How the students understand themselves (strengths and weaknesses, unique contributions to a working environment).
- Transferable skills/competencies you recommend the students focus on considering their desired career direction that will help them be more successful after graduation

The following are suggestions for the mentor on how to structure the meeting based on whether the students have chosen to focus on professional or personal development. These areas may overlap and the mentor can use suggestions from either category based on the students' interests.

Professional Development

Student sets career-oriented goals to be fulfilled during their studies

Describe to the student what shaped their professional career, including any events that were helpful or instances that led you down a new career path

Personal Development

Student and mentor discuss how the student understands him/herself - perceived strengths and weaknesses

How do the perceived strengths and weaknesses inform the type of career they are planning on having and how can they be improved during their studies (i.e. workshops, trainings, self-study)?

Template email

Dear Students,

In preparation for our third mentor meeting, I am sharing a doodle link [[doodle.doc](#)]. Please fill in your availability in the coming days so that we can finalize a time and date to meet via zoom.

Our third meeting will last 90 minutes-2 hours and we will focus on your skills and strengths and how these relate to your personal and career growth. Note that we will also be referring back to the challenges you identified in our second mentor meeting and you will be asked to share progress in relation to these challenges.

How to prepare for this meeting: Please complete the “Mapping Values” exercise ([click here](#) to register and take the test), as well as the Enneagram Personality Test ([click here](#) to take the test). These tests will help increase your understanding of yourself and influence your career goal(s) and/or personal development and how you want to grow as a person.

Looking forward to our meeting,

[_____]

Exercises to review with mentee

- “Mapping Values”
- Enneagram Personality Test

To Do List

Before the meeting

Send an email with a doodle.doc including your calendar availability to schedule the first meeting.

During the meeting

Topics to discuss

- The results of the values exercise.
- Students should discuss their career and/or personal development goal(s) and the steps they think they need to take in order to achieve

the goal(s). It is helpful if the mentor provides feedback on the feasibility of these steps and provides advice based on the steps.

Objectives to achieve

- The student should leave the meeting with a clearer understanding that their strengths, personality, and preferred area of study should be represented in the career they choose.

Questions to guide the conversation

- What did you learn about yourself and your preferred working environment by completing the values exercise? Did this bring up any questions about the work environment you would like to understand better (this is a good opportunity for mentors to share what they have learned from their work experience if desired)
- What skills would you like to develop during your studies? (Perhaps mention what skills shaped your career)

For a discussion on the tests:

- Did the personality test give you any insight about yourself?
- Were you surprised by your results?
- After reading how your personality type is described, do you think your preferred career lines up well with your personality and strengths?
- How do the test results impact your view on your current career goals and/or personal development (if at all)? Does knowing your personality type help you feel more confident about your career choices or question them more?

4) Meeting Four: Job and Career Aspirations

Time Frame

- ❖ June/July 2023 (90 minutes-2 hours)

Areas to discuss

- The mentor starts by doing a recap of the previous meeting and asking each student to give feedback.
- Guide the students to have a clearer image of themselves and their career goals/personal development than when the programme began.
- Encourage the students to articulate how they learned about themselves through the programme, including how this impacts their next career steps and goals they have for future work environments.
- The students' next steps following completion of the programme.
- What work-life balance and day-to-day schedule they might have based on the type of job they apply to (mentor shares how this has been for them)

The following are suggestions for the mentor on how to structure the meeting based on whether the student has chosen to focus on professional or personal development. These areas may overlap and the mentor can use suggestions from either category based on the students' interests.

Professional Development

That the student be able to articulate how they learned about themselves through the programme, including how this impacts their next career steps and goals they have for future work environments (Review what work environment the student wants

Personal Development

For the student to have a clearer image of themselves and their career goals and/or personal development than when the programme began. That the student be able to articulate how they learned about themselves through the programme, including how this impacts their next

to work in and what work values are important to them). steps and goals.

Exercises to review with mentee

- Mapping Values Exercise (see Appendix 2)
- Reflection (see Appendix 3)
- Organizations and Vacancies (see Appendix 4)

To Do List

❖ Before the meeting

- Send an email with a doodle.doc including your calendar availability to schedule the first meeting.

Template email:

Dear Students,

I would like to invite you to our fourth and final mentor meeting. Please reserve a spot using the following link: [doodle.doc]. We will meet on the agreed date at [Zoom location]. The meeting will last 90 minutes-2 hours. If you need to cancel the meeting, please let me know 48 hours in advance.

During this meeting, we will be reflecting on your accomplishments and additional clarity gained this year. We will review how your values informed who you are and who you want to become, the career goals and/or personal development you have, and the work environment you aim to seek when applying for jobs.

How to prepare for this meeting: There are three exercises for you to complete to allow you to fully reflect on this past year. First, complete the Reflection exercise by completing a list answering the following prompts: “I am: (list a set

of characteristics or labels you define yourself by)", "I want to: (list the type of job you want to have and what you hope to accomplish in that position or series of positions)", and "I work best: (list characteristics of the environment you work best in and what role is best for you to take in that environment)". Finally, please complete the "Organizations and Vacancies" exercise to gain clarity on the type of jobs you should be applying for.

Looking forward to our meeting,

[_____]

During the meeting

Topics to discuss

- The accomplishment of the student's career-oriented or personal development goal.
- The insights the student gained throughout the mentor process.
- Review the mandatory exercises.

Objectives to achieve

- Students can use this as a time of final reflection.
- The student should be able to summarise the key takeaways from the past meetings.
- The student should have clarity on next steps to take after the programme and be able to describe them.

Questions to guide the conversation

- As you look back on this past year and your experience in the programme, how have you changed as a person?
- Do you have more clarity on your personal development and in what job your skills are best suited?

- Do you feel you have made progress in tackling the challenges that you have been facing?

Appendix 1: A note on mentoring with a coaching mindset

With asking coaching-oriented questions, there are a couple goals:

1. Default to open-ended questions. Close-ended questions create a narrow path for the questioned to follow and usually results in a yes or no question. Open-ended questions allow the questioned individual to steer the answer as they want and invites conversation. If you ask a close-ended question, it should be for a specific purpose: “what topic have you decided on for your thesis?” After that, the information provided in the answers should be followed up by open-ended questions for exploration.
2. Observe all the modes of information that are being transmitted by the student. How is their energy level? Do they slouch and speak in a tired, monotone voice? This indicates how they feel about what they are talking about. What intonation do they use? Do they speak quickly and sit forward in their seat, using hand gestures? This indicates how they feel about the topic as well.
3. Use your intuition. If there is a question that has not been suggested in the framework above but you think will help the student better understand themselves or the situation better, ask it.

General introduction questions:

- ❖ Observe body language when asking how student is doing; ask follow-up questions as desired and appropriate (“you seem stressed; how is the workload of the programme for you?”)
- ❖ Now that you are halfway through the programme, how are you feeling?

When helping set action from the student that they will pursue outside of the meeting:

- ❖ What goal(s) would you like to set and have completed by our next meeting?
- ❖ Do you feel you have all the tools you need to complete that goal(s)?

Asking these less common questions gets a person thinking about a topic in a different way, thereby creating an environment for new insight and revelation. Even simply pursuing a topic more (ie asking several, intentional follow-up questions) allows the other person to think more deeply and reflectively on their habits and tendencies, feelings and goals, and helps them feel heard.

Appendix 2: Mapping Values

As part of this exercise, you will map how your values progressed during the programme. The following are guiding questions for students to answer and discuss during the meeting with their mentor:

- What might I value in a job?
- What are things that would make me not take a job?

Appendix 3: Reflection

Create a bullet point list answering the following prompts: “I am: (list a set of characteristics or labels you define yourself by)”, “I want to: (list the type of job you want to have and what you hope to accomplish in that position or series of positions)”, and “I work best: (list characteristics of the environment you work best in and what role is best for you to take in that environment)”. You do not need to look up specific jobs for this exercise.

Appendix 4: Organization and Vacancies

Find one organisation/company where you would be interested in working and pick out the position you would apply to. Then answer the following questions. This exercise is aimed at providing clarity for you to know what types of employers and what type of job position you prefer.

- What draws me to this organisation?
- Does the organisation's values line up with my own?
- Why did I pick this position?
- Why do I think I would be well-suited for this position?

References

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Lunsford, L. G. (2012). Doctoral advising or mentoring? Effects on student outcomes. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 20(2), 251–70.

Colophon

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