



Mentoring Guidelines and Contract

An important component of the FLA is connecting members of the cohort with an individual that can serve as a mentor during the nine months of the Academy, and hopefully long after as well.

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) supports and encourages another (a protégé or “mentee”) to develop specific skills and knowledge that will maximize their business potential and improve their performance. Mentors can act in various, changing roles depending upon the situation – teacher, guidance counselor, sounding board, friend, coach, devil’s advocate, etc.

Steps for a successful mentoring relationship.

1. The mentee should determine one or two specific focus areas in which they would like to develop additional capability. “Leadership” is perhaps too broad an area. “Interpersonal business communication” or “public speaking” or “assertiveness” or “patience” might be more suitable scopes to focus on. Discussing potential objectives with whoever is sponsoring the mentee (e.g., a supervisor or manager) might be helpful to pinpoint worthwhile development areas.
2. After a mentee identifies a focus area(s), they can select a mentor that has the “right” skill set to help the mentee develop in that area(s). Over time, it actually makes sense for a mentee to have a “board” of mentors, each with their own distinct skill set. One mentor might be good at public speaking but less adept in handling business politics. For the purposes of the FLA, cohort mentees should stick with a single mentor for the moment. Fay-Penn and Penn State can assist in identifying appropriate mentors if desired. Check with the Fay-Penn or Penn State FLA staff.
3. Set a goal for the capability a mentee desires to achieve. Develop a schedule and intermittent milestones that create an incremental pathway to that goal. For example, the ultimate goal might be “Developing the capability to present a 30 minute briefing in front of an audience of 20 or more without breaking into a cold sweat.” The first step in reaching that goal, however, might be for the mentee to simply introduce themselves in front of a mirror and pay particular attention to their body language so they can work on appearing confident from the beginning.
4. Set a protocol for communication. Mentoring relationships with no communication typically don’t work well. Face to face is always best, but not always practical. Use whatever means works for the relationship, even if it’s mostly texts. Recommended communication frequency should be at least once per month. It will probably require more early on when the mentor and mentee are learning about one another and creating the foundation of a good mentorship. FLA mentees are expected to provide mentorship interaction progress reports at each session.
5. Continuously monitor progress toward the stated goal. Celebrate successes. Identify areas of concern and address them. Stay focused and on schedule.

What makes a good mentor?

1. A strong desire to help others to grow and develop. You may in the past have been referred to as a “gardener manager.” Ideally, you will have a track record in developing others.



Mentoring Guidelines and Contract

2. A strong understanding of how organizations work (formally and informally).
3. Strong listening skills.
4. Able to understand and be sensitive to age, gender, cultural, etc. differences.
5. Passion. If this is not something that sparks you, then do not take on a mentee – it will not be fair on the mentee, or on yourself.
6. Availability and accessibility to your mentee. Where you have contracted to meet every so often, be sure to honor that commitment.
7. Ability to provide some initial structure to the business mentoring relationship, particularly if the mentee is relatively inexperienced.
8. Ability to follow through on any action items you pick up in your meetings, demonstrating to the mentee your commitment and your professionalism. "Do as I do" is a good motto for the business mentor.

Being a business mentor requires you to be highly skilled in listening, coaching, giving feedback and, where appropriate, pushing the mentee along faster than they think they can go. Furthermore, you will need to adjust your style as the mentoring relationship develops and according to the issue you are addressing at any one time.

What does a good mentee/protégé need to do?

1. Be prepared to receive feedback, both good and bad.
2. Own the relationship. Be proactive. Take the initiative and set – with the agreement of the mentor – the objectives and the agenda/plan. If the mentee does not work out what it is they want to do, they are in effect handing it over to others to determine their direction. No one has more interest in, or more to gain from, the progression of the mentee's career than the mentee.
3. Discuss objectives with the mentor and reach agreement on an agenda/plan.
4. Manage the plan and relationship to ensure the milestones are achieved on schedule.
5. Make the business mentorship action-oriented, and always follow through on those actions they agreed to.

A nominal outline for the mentor/mentee to get started.

1. The first meeting. The first meeting between business mentor and mentee serves four purposes:
 - A. To get to know each other better. This can start with some introductions, followed by a brief run through what the business mentor and mentee have done in the past.
 - B. To articulate and agree to expectations. Different or unrealistic expectations can be the cause of business mentoring relationships not working. Unrealistic expectations include:
 - i. The mentee expecting the business mentor to sort out their job.
 - ii. The mentee expecting the mentor to make their own personal network of contacts available to them. (Although sharing of some, appropriate contacts is encouraged.)



Mentoring Guidelines and Contract

- iii. The mentee expecting the mentor to tell them what to do – or, worse, to do it for them.
 - iv. The mentor expecting the mentee to do exactly what they tell them.
 - C. To set and agree to ground rules. Ground rules are things such as frequency and length of meetings.
 - D. To discuss and finalize objectives and an agenda/plan. (The mentee should come to the meeting with some draft objectives covering what outcomes they would like to achieve through the mentoring.)
2. The business mentoring contract. By the end of the first meeting, the mentee to should draw up a mentorship contract. It also provides structure and ensures that mentor and mentee have a common understanding of how they will work together. The contract should include some important principles, such as:
 - A. Overall goals/objectives.
 - B. Scope of the mentoring – it is usually best to be explicit about what is and is not included.
 - C. Schedule of meetings.
 - D. Mechanisms for communicating during and between meetings (for example, email or phone).
 - E. How progress will be measured, e.g., a checklist of the milestones to be achieved.
 - F. Final review and closure meeting and date, although the mentor and mentee may decide to continue beyond the FLA formal closure.
3. The ongoing business mentoring relationship. As indicated previously, both the mentor and the mentee have a role to play in managing the ongoing business mentoring relationship.
 - A. The mentor:
 - i. Achieving agreed objectives and reviewing outcomes.
 - ii. Attending the agreed to meetings and not rescheduling.
 - iii. Following through on any actions agreed to.
 - iv. Respecting confidentiality.
 - v. Exercising skills such as listening and giving feedback.
 - vi. As the mentee and the relationship progress, stepping back and adapting your style to fit the new circumstances.
 - B. The mentee:
 - i. Proactivity, ensuring that the terms of the mentoring contract are adhered to and that scheduled meetings take place.
 - ii. Ensuring that the objectives jointly agreed to at the first meeting are being worked on and the outcomes tracked thereafter.
 - iii. As they grow in confidence and experience, taking the lead and lessening any dependency they may have on the business mentor.
 - iv. Moving towards closure on the formal business mentoring relationship.
 - v. Thinking about what they can do to make a contribution back to their mentor.



Mentoring Guidelines and Contract

Mentorship Contract. (To be drafted by the mentee after the first meeting with their mentor. Use the free form space below to create a simple contract outlining the mentor/mentee relationship for the duration of the FLA. Consider the suggestions provided in the FLA Mentoring Guidelines. It is recommended that the Guidelines be attached to this Contract so they can be constantly used as a reference.)

A. Overall goals/objectives:

B. Scope of the mentoring:

C. Schedule of meetings:

D. Mechanisms for communicating:

E. Checklist of the milestones to be achieved:

F. Final review and closure meeting and date, although the mentor and mentee may decide to continue beyond the FLA formal closure:



Mentoring Guidelines and Contract

Mentor Signature: _____

Mentor Printed Name: _____

Mentor Mailing Address: _____

Mentor Email Address: _____

Mentor Phone: _____

Date: _____

Mentee Signature: _____

Mentee Printed Name: _____

Date: _____