A mentorship is a two-way relationship between a mentor and mentee that can be formal or informal. Mentors generally have a higher level of experience and can support and guide mentees. Mentorship is an opportunity for professional exploration and development. The benefit of a mentorship is that it can help with future involvement and employment by connecting a mentee with individuals, opportunities, and resources in their field of interest. Both the mentor and mentee should gain value from the relationship. The mentee can help achieve this by seeking opportunities to share their experiences and insights gained with their mentor. Mentees are not alone, as mentors are part of their support team.

**HEALTHY MENTORSHIPS**
- Set clear expectations
- Establish trust and support
- Gives constructive feedback
- Maintain open communication
- Provide reciprocal support and help you make the best decisions for you

**WHO ARE MENTORS?**
Mentors are individuals that provide support to mentees and help them make connections.
Potential mentors include:
- Professors, research, coaches, sponsors, alumni
- Family, friends, family friends, peers, resident assistants
- Advisors, career coaches, supervisors, department chairs

**COMPETENCIES DEVELOPED THROUGH MENTORSHIP**
Competencies are knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that prepare students for a successful transition into the workplace. Mentorship experience can help you identify and develop your competencies.

**COMMUNICATION**
- Asking strategic questions
- Networking with other mentees
- Exchange of thoughts and needs either through listening, speaking, writing, or body-language

**SENSE OF SELF**
- Learn more about yourself through networking events
- Understand your strengths and limitations
- Become a self advocate
- Identify ideal role model attributes

**TEAMWORK**
- Trust-building by following through on promises and taking responsibility
- Cross-encouragement
- Feel more confident in your own decision making skills

**CRITICAL THINKING**
- Problem-solving
- Goal-setting
- Utilization of recommended resources (networking tools, websites, etc.)
- Identify and manage risks
To initiate the mentorship search, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What type of mentorship am I seeking (e.g. formal, informal)?
2. What qualities do I look for in a mentor (e.g. values)?
3. What time commitment do I expect from my mentor?
4. What do I hope to gain out of the mentorship?
5. Which competencies are essential for me to develop?
6. What goals do I have, and how do I foresee my mentor helping me achieve them (e.g. recommendation letters)?

You are ready to go ahead and start your search once you have answered the above questions.

**SEARCHING FOR MENTORSHIPS**

- Make sure to check emails frequently.
- Opportunities for mentorships can be sent out to students in listservs and through Gator Times.
- Visit GatorConnect to find a listing of potential organizations that offer mentorships.
- Check within your college/departments.
- Connect with faculty/staff who are working in areas of interest.
- Reflect on individuals in your network.
- Reach out/email prospective mentors.
- Begin following influences or people of interest on LinkedIn.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Reflect on the mentorships you already have, both formal and informal.
- Write down your goals (personal, academic, professional) and which mentorships may help you accomplish them.
- Meet with a Career Connections Center staff member to help you narrow your mentorship search.
- Apply to programs that have mentorships and meet with your potential mentor.

**POTENTIAL AREAS TO FIND MENTORSHIPS (NON-INCLUSIVE LISTS):**

**Organizations:** Hispanic Student Association, Black Student Union, Pride Association, Sororities/Fraternities.

**Multicultural and Diversity Affairs:** University Minority Mentor Program, Lead, Educate, Advocate Philanthropy (LEAP), PLEDging to Advance Academic Capacity Together (PAACT), Gatorship.

**College Specific:** Alumni Mentor Program, Business Undergraduate Mentorship Program, Situational Environmental Circumstances Mentoring Program, CLAS Transfer Student Peer Mentoring Program.

**Major Specific:** Minority Health Professional Mentorship Program.

**Program Specific:** AIM Academic Advisor, OAS Peer Mentor, Hume Mentoring, NaviGator Program.

**Networking:** LinkedIn, Virtual Career Fairs, Employment, Social Media.
Be Ready to Work at The Relationship
Good relationships don’t just happen; they take work. This applies to relationships with family, friends, colleagues and your mentor. It takes time and effort to get to know each other and build trust. Establishing and maintaining trust is essential to a good mentoring relationship.

Be Open-Minded and Willing to Learn
No matter who your mentor is, they have experience and expertise to share with you. You and your mentor may have a lot in common, or very little. Regardless, if you remain open-minded and want to learn, you will learn and become a better professional as a result.

Be Honest and Real
Your mentor will be better able to help you if you are open and honest about who you are and what you want professionally and personally from your life. Talk about your background, current state, hopes, fears, and goals for the future. Don’t hesitate to tell your mentor how they can be most helpful to you.

Be Proactive and Take Initiative
Mentoring should be an active and engaging experience for both mentee and mentor. In order to sustain the mentoring relationship, touch base with your mentor frequently - don’t just wait for them to initiate contact. Let them know when you need help. Ask questions. Follow-through on items the two of you discuss. Demonstrate a good work ethic.

Be Prepared for Your Meetings With Your Mentor
Think about the topics you would like to discuss with your mentor ahead of time, write them down and possibly even email them to your mentor in advance of your meeting. The more you prepare, the more you will get out of your meetings with your mentor.

Be a Good Listener
It is your mentor’s job to give you honest feedback and advice, some of which will be positive and some of which will be constructive. Rather than ignoring your mentor’s criticism or constructive feedback, or letting it make you feel bad, listen to what your mentor has to say and consider how you can use that information to improve yourself. Regardless of whether you choose to take your mentor’s advice, listening to what your mentor can share with you is important.

Be Reflective
After each meeting with your mentor, reflect on the insights and advice you received. You can journal to process your key takeaways and develop a plan to implement them. Continually check in with yourself to see the progress you’ve made and identify areas you still would like to grow in so you can set clear goals.
Mentoring Relationship
- What do you hope that I will get out of this relationship?
- What are your goals for our mentoring relationship?
- Why did you decide to be a mentor?
- Who has mentored you? And what impact has that had on you?

Past and/or Current Experiences
- What was the biggest lesson you learned during college?
- What are some mistakes that you made during your college years and what did you learn from them?
- How do you go about building/maintaining your professional network?
- How did you get involved as a student?
- What is the most helpful piece of advice you’ve ever received?
- If you were starting college all over again, what would you do differently and why?
- What are you most proud of?
- If time and money did not matter, how would you spend your time and money?

Career and Professional Experiences
- What was your major in college? Does it relate to your current work? If so, how?
- What professional experiences did you have that led you to your current position?
- How did you figure out what you wanted to do with your life in terms of career?
- What does work/life balance look like for you?
- What does the future of work look like for your profession?
- What is a typical day like in your job?
- What was a key lesson you learned early on as a young professional?
- Are there certain things I should be doing now to prepare myself for the world of work?

Personal Feedback
- What are 2-3 things that I do well?
- What are 1-2 things that I could do better or differently?
- I’m preparing to have a difficult conversation with ________. Any thoughts on how I could go about that?
- What personal or professional skills do you think I should work on developing? And what experiences might help me do that?
ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH YOUR MENTOR

- Take turns teaching each other something you are knowledgeable about. This could be a hobby, a particular skill you have mastered, or anything else you can think of.
- Make a list of 25, 50, 75, or 100 things you want to do or accomplish during your lifetime and share your lists with one another.
- You and your mentor can both bring in photos or items that are important to you. Talk about the significance of the photos or items.
- Make a timeline of your life for the next 5-10 years. Include what you want to accomplish in the years ahead.
- Get help developing your own personal objective or mission statement including your skills, interests, passions, and education.
- Play a game with one another outside your normal meeting setting. This could be a card game, pool, a board game, sport, and/or any other kind of friendly competition.
- Find a book or some article(s) that interest both of you and assign readings between meetings. Come back together each meeting to discuss your thoughts on what you read.
- If either of you have not taken a certain personality assessment (Strengths Finder, Holland’s Code, the Archetype Indicator, etc.) before, complete one and discuss the findings. (UF students and alumni can utilize CHOMP to discover your work interests, skills, personality, values and leisure interests).
- Ask your mentor to help you find a few professional development opportunities and/or resources that are conducive to your goals. Discuss the steps needed to be taken to utilize these resources.

HOW TO CONCLUDE A MENTORSHIP

After the end of a formal mentorship program, or if you are ready to wrap up an informal mentoring relationship, it’s important to communicate clearly and tactfully with your mentor. To best conclude a mentorship, express sincere gratitude for the mentor's guidance, share specific ways their guidance has impacted you, and discuss your plans for applying your newfound knowledge in the future. Additionally, inquire about the possibility of maintaining a professional connection, such as periodic check-ins. Connecting on LinkedIn and Gator Network with your mentor is a great way to stay updated on your mentor’s professional life, and keep them updated on yours.