



# DSF MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

## RESOURCE HANDBOOK FOR MENTEES



# DENVER SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION (DSF) MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

## MISSION

The DSF Alumni Advisory Committee (AAC) started the mentorship program to empower DSF Scholars and Alumni to grow professionally while inspiring them to contribute to the Denver community by providing individualized mentorship.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Expand Scholar connections and networks
- Support Scholar professional growth
- Provide opportunities for Scholars to practice interpersonal skills

## BENEFITS

- Gain experience
- Improve skill sets
- Impact future leaders
- Develop leadership qualities
- Expand connections and networks
- Increase confidence and self-awareness

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# TOP TIPS FOR BEING A GOOD MENTEE

There are a few things you should understand before and during a mentorship relationship. Preparing yourself for your time with your mentor can help ensure that you have a happy and helpful mentorship together.

## Here are the top 10 tips for being a good mentee:

### 1. Remember Your Mentor is a Volunteer

It's important to remember your mentor is a volunteer. They have more experience, and they are taking time out of their schedule to help you develop and grow, so there must be healthy boundaries and respect in your relationship. This means as a good mentee, you should be aware of and minimize time wasters that occur during your meetings. Also ensure you show gratitude for the time and advice, and never act rudely or attempt to downplay their knowledge.

### 2. Take Responsibility for Your Own Learning

It's not coaching. The biggest tip is to understand that the relationship is mentee driven, but mentor guided. This means you, as a mentee, need to decide what you want to develop on, set all appointments, track your goals and record all notes after each meeting. Your mentor cannot do everything for you, they can only give you tools and guidance. You must be willing to take charge of your learning by asking questions and actively participating in the conversations to become a good mentee.

### 3. Develop Trust

Your mentorship does not automatically establish trust between you and your mentor. It must be developed and nurtured. You will both need to work to establish trust at the beginning of the relationship. Having trust can open up a channel of communication, which is important to the success of your mentorship. The first meeting should be more about learning about each other, making sure there is some chemistry, then you need to discuss what you want to achieve out of the relationship and the ground rules. Ground rules include, how often you should meet, where to meet, confidentiality parameters, what is the process if one party can't attend the next meeting, etc.

### 4. Be Respectful of Your Mentor's Time

Your mentor has a lot of room to help you but remember that they are likely a busy person. Again, be respectful of this by cutting out time wasters in your meeting, and make sure you give them plenty of notice if you need to cancel or reschedule a session.

### 5. Set Realistic Expectations with Your Mentor

Your mentor is a guide. They are not going to do everything for you, they are going to mentor you. Expecting them to do so can lead to unsuccessful mentor matches. A successful mentee sets goals and expectations at the beginning to base the mentorship on a solid foundation.

## **6. Come to Each Meeting with a Prepared Agenda**

This ties in with respecting your mentor's time and setting realistic expectations. If you have a prepared agenda for each meeting, you are much more likely to stay on task and optimize the time you have together. However, make sure you stay consistent and set your expectations early. If your mentor says they will bring the agenda, let them.

## **7. Be Open About Your Needs and Provide Feedback to Your Mentor**

Like any other relationship, your mentorship must be suited to fit your needs. But also like in any other relationship, your mentor will not be able to read your mind, so telling them what you need from them will allow you to flourish as a good mentee. Be honest if you need something to change and let them know if you don't understand something. Also make sure you tell them when they're doing a great job and show them gratitude. They are there to help you, so they'll be excited to know what's working.

## **8. Recognize Your Mentor's Limitations**

Your mentor may be phenomenal, but they will have a limit to their knowledge and abilities. Don't get frustrated because they cannot help you but talk with them and work in areas where they can. If you need guidance beyond that which your mentor can give you, ask for their recommendations to help you find others who have the necessary skills.

## **9. Take Appropriate Risks**

Your mentorship offers the opportunity to have someone else committed to your progress. They will help you remove barriers and pull you out of your comfort zone. Don't fight them on this. Leaving your comfort zone is often where the real work happens. Try new things and allow yourself to make mistakes.

## **10. Be Flexible and Learn**

A mentorship can be an amazing and productive way to improve yourself. Take advantage of this relationship and learn as much as you can but be constantly aware of ways to better yourself and the relationship. Flexibility will help you be a better mentee in this regard.

**Source:** <https://www.insala.com/Articles/top-10-tips-for-being-a-good-mentee.asp>

# SETTING BOUNDARIES IN MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

**While it may feel strange to do at the beginning, it is important to discuss and agree on the appropriate boundaries of the mentorship relationship between you and your partner early on. When boundaries are too loose, they may be misinterpreted, and when they are too rigid, they can also incapacitate the relationship.**

If you haven't already, or have experienced misunderstanding or confusion on this issue, please take the time to cover these bases with each other in your next session.

Everyone has different boundaries, from the degree to which one is comfortable with physical proximity, to talking about personal and confidential issues, to the amount of time one wants to spend time with a mentor or mentee. As for time, DSF mentors of the DSF Mentorship Program are required to spend one hour per month with a mentee to discuss growth and development one-on-one. We also recommend spending some time attending a lecture or training together, participating in a shadowing activity, or other activities.

Do take the time to talk frankly about what each of you expect to give and take in terms of time, as it will vary from relationship to relationship. Also, make sure that you are on the same page about how you prefer to interact. Questions below can help guide you.

## Both

- Talk about your responsibilities, what you can and can't do.
- Agree on frequency, duration and intervals of meetings/communications and how this will occur.
- Beyond agreeing to confidentiality, discuss what confidentiality actually means to each of you in various scenarios.

## Mentors

- What kind of access does the mentee have to you? What is the limit?
- Does communicating require an appointment?
- Personal problems can crop up; only discuss those issues you are comfortable with and refer to the appropriate program staff.

## Mentees

- Avoid unhealthy dependence. For example, mentors are not expected to have definitive answers or be available 24/7.
- Consider "what would I do if..." in assessing your own boundaries.
- Prioritize how you wish to best utilize your mentor's time and expertise.

**Source:**

<https://hr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/training-center/programs/pdf/mentor-mentee-boundaries.pdf>

# BUILDING A PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP

## The Four Pillars

A productive mentoring relationship is supported by four pillars: trust, confidentiality, communication and courage.

### Trust

- **How to Build**
  - Use plain-speaking, straight talk
  - Be honest and open
  - Demonstrate respect in all interactions
  - Practice accountability; do not blame others when something does not happen as discussed
  - Be transparent and consistent; “what you see is what you get”
  - Be flexible and accessible
  - Keep commitments, as commitments build hope; delivering on hope builds trust
  - Base feedback on first-hand observation, whenever possible
  
- **Specific Actions You Can Take**
  - Be open to discussing the following with your mentor at the onset of the relationship:
    - Personal and professional background
    - Thoughts about the mentorship initiative
    - Confirm expectations/measures of success
  - Collaboratively develop the mentorship agreement
  - Use self-disclosure; share your personal thoughts:
    - “I personally feel...”
    - “What I don’t like ...”

## Confidentiality

- **How to Build**
  - Agree on boundaries and do not cross them
  - Before agreeing to be in a mentorship relationship, be candid about confidentiality principles and boundaries
  - Clarify program expectations about topics that should be reported
  - Be open to sharing and discussion that isn't directly tied to your goals
  - Demonstrate your belief in confidentiality by acting with integrity with all information that is confidential, regardless of the relationship
- **Specific Actions You Can Take**
  - Demonstrate your understanding of what is confidential by clarifying what "is and is off the record" at the conclusion of mentorship sessions
  - Seek your mentor's approval to share information with others
  - Immediately share if confidentiality has been inadvertently broken
  - Clarify when a topic seems to be headed in a direction where confidentiality may not be able to be protected
  - During conversations, ask for permission before taking notes

## Communication

- **How to Build**
  - Be present and attentive to your mentor/mentee
  - Be timely with your questions, thoughts, and opinions
  - Look for the unspoken message
  - Use non-verbal signals to invite dialogue and demonstrate that you are listening and understand (e.g., sitting forward, eye contact, nodding head)
  - Provide thoughtful responses to your mentor's questions; avoid "yes/no" responses that close the door
- **Specific Actions You Can Take**
  - Prepare for one-on-one meetings:
    - Identify two to three key discussion topics
    - Review agreements from prior meetings
  - Apply active listening skills:
    - Repeat back (paraphrase) what you heard
    - Ask follow-up questions
    - Share your point of view
    - Ask for clarification/confirmation
  - Empathize with your mentor/mentee:
    - Listen to understand versus protecting your position/opinion
    - Express appreciation for meeting with you

# Courage

- **How to Build**

- Mentees ask clarifying questions to understand your mentor's advice, suggestions, etc.
- Seek permission to provide feedback, remember that feedback is a gift and your mentor seeks development from this relationship too
- Provide specific, actionable feedback to your mentor/mentee around the relationship, your needs, etc.

- **Specific Actions You Can Take**

- When faced with tough issues or challenges, ask yourself the following questions to ensure you face the situations with courage:
  - "What could be a great outcome?"
  - "What results do I hope to achieve?"
  - "What is likely to happen if I do not address this issue?"
  - "What makes this a difficult issue for me to address?"
  - "Is the value of change greater than the pain of remaining the same?"
  - "What would the most courageous leader do to resolve this issue?"
- Learn the **STOP-START-CONTINUE** framework as a way to share observations and facts with your mentor/mentee or others in a non-threatening manner.
  - **STOP-START-CONTINUE:** Identify the area in which you want to provide feedback and then clearly state your thoughts:
    - "I would like you to do less \_\_\_\_\_ because it \_\_\_\_\_."
    - "I would like you to do more \_\_\_\_\_ because it \_\_\_\_\_."
    - "I would like you to keep doing \_\_\_\_\_ because it \_\_\_\_\_."

**Source:**

<https://www.qualcomm.com/media/documents/files/mentorship-program-guidelines-for-nominations.pdf>

# DELIVERING FEEDBACK

## Being Heard:

Feedback is less about what is said and more about what is heard. Mentorship is not a one-way street. Delivering feedback goes both ways. Your feedback will only be heard if you have built adequate trust with your mentor/mentee over time and if you find the right developmental moment. See *'Building a Productive Relationship'* on page 7 for more tips on building trust. Information around developmental moments is discussed below.

## Testing for developmental moments:

- Ask your mentor/mentee what they think or thought about a situation, conversation, etc.
- Ask directly: "Do you mind if I share with you some feedback?"

## Signs that it is probably not a developmental moment:

- Defensive body language (e.g., arms folded, no eye contact)
- Expressions of anger, disgust or exasperation
- Preoccupation with some other activity
- Indications of impatience or a need to move on to some activity (i.e., getting on the phone, preparing to leave)

## The Feedback Framework<sup>©</sup>

Delivering effective feedback messages is a learned skill that takes time and practice to perfect. Use the four-step feedback framework to structure your feedback messages with your mentor, regardless of whether you are delivering a positive or constructive message.

### Expectations: Expected results and required behaviors

- Explain what performance should "look like"
- Identify the expected results and required behaviors of an individual's performance
- Can be explicit or implicit:
  - Explicit expectations are stated goals, competencies, performance standards, etc.
  - Implicit expectations are the "assumed" expectations (e.g., you will show up to meetings)

### **Observations: Neutral facts or occurrences**

- Based on what you have seen someone do or have heard other people describe that they have done
- Should be similar for everyone viewing the situation—the plain facts, unfiltered by personal experience or assessment
- Should be specific and fact-based, not generalities

### **Assessments: Personal interpretations or evaluations of a set of observations**

- Personal judgments about an individual's observed performance
- Not the "truth" (observable facts), but are always shaped by personal background and expectations —personal perspective
- Focus on the individual's performance (the "what" and the "how") - not on who they are or their worth as an individual

### **Consequences: Known or possible effects of continued performance**

- Known or possible effects of continuing to perform with no change in behavior or outcomes
- Can be positive or negative and should focus on the impact on the program and on others

**Source:**

<https://www.qualcomm.com/media/documents/files/mentorship-program-guidelines-for-nominations.pdf>

# COMMON MENTORSHIP PITFALLS

**It is natural and expected for mentorship relationships to experience set-backs from time to time. Do your best to avoid or minimize these setbacks by being aware of the common mentorship pitfalls.**

**Having unrealistic expectations for the relationship and focusing on too much, too soon.** Be realistic about what the relationship can accomplish in seven months. Make sure that you clarify goals and expectations at the onset of the relationship and capture your thinking in the mentorship agreement.

**Getting sidetracked by personal stuff.** The primary focus of your mentorship relationship is for you to develop your professional self. With that said, discussing personal information is not completely off limits. Asking your mentor/mentee about their weekend or a recent vacation or sharing similar information about yourself can be an effective step towards building rapport. Use your judgment – if you think that your conversations are veering down the wrong track, quickly refocus the conversation back to development areas.

**Expecting a mentor to provide you with all of the answers.** Good mentors ask the right questions to help their mentee’s uncover solutions and approaches that work for them.

**Being too nice or patient to the point that you are not saying what needs to be said.** One of the four pillars to productive mentoring relationships is the ability to act with courage when necessary. Failing to act with courage and deliver needed feedback to your mentor/mentee has the potential to damage your relationship. Remember, mentoring is a two-way street; each mentor has agreed to participate in this program because they are looking for development, too. Review the *‘Feedback Framework©’* on page 10 to help you organize your thoughts and summon your courage to deliver necessary feedback messages.

**Wanting to move too quickly through trust building.** Trust is one of the four “pillars” to building an effective and productive mentoring relationship. Don’t let the pressure to move quickly into tackling development areas cause you to bypass this critical step. See *‘Building a Productive Relationship’* on page 7 for steps you can take to build a trusting relationship with one another.

**Allowing yourself to get overly frustrated over the lack of progress made.** Mentorship is an on-going development process for both the mentee and mentor. There will be periods of significant progress and periods where development

stalls. Avoid feelings of frustration by scheduling regular “check-ins”: Let one another know how the relationship is going. Seek feedback about how the relationship is going. Refer back to the mentorship agreement and make changes, as needed.

**Being friends with your mentor/mentee at the expense of true development.** The strongest mentoring relationships occur when two people have a rapport and respect for one another. From this rapport and respect, friendships develop and mentoring relationships grow stronger. Be careful not to let the friendship get in the way of your ability to appreciate one another’s objective and direct developmental feedback and advice.

**Source:**

<https://www.qualcomm.com/media/documents/files/mentorship-program-guidelines-for-nominations.pdf>

# THE FIRST MEETING: TIPS FOR MENTEES

## Ensuring Success

The first meeting with your mentor is your chance to share your excitement and expectations around the possibilities of your relationship. Adequate preparation before and thoughtful self-reflection after your first meeting will ensure that the relationship gets off to the right start.

## Prepare for the conversation

- Develop your “getting to know you” questions
  - What else would I like to know about my mentor?
  - What else am I prepared to share about myself to build trust and rapport?
  - Did my mentor mention something at the kickoff that deserves a follow-up?
- Start to think about your “MY” development areas (on the next page)
  - What consistent feedback have I received in the last year (strengths & areas of growth)?
  - What assignments/projects have I liked the most? Found to be the most developmental?
  - What are the 2 to 3 things I want to accomplish this year? Longer-term?
  - How might volunteering help me grow professionally?

## Self-reflect on outcomes

- Are you comfortable with the quality of your first conversation with your mentor? If not, what can you do to change this the next time you meet?
- What commitments have you made to your mentor? Yourself?
- What steps do you need to take to fulfill those? By when?
- What information should you share with your mentor?
- What support do you need from your mentor?
- What would you like to cover at your next meeting?

## Remember, the focus of your first meeting is for you and your mentor to get to know one another better.

While you should come prepared to discuss potential development areas, you should not feel pressure to go there at the expense of rapport and trust building.

### Source:

<https://www.qualcomm.com/media/documents/files/mentorship-program-guidelines-for-nominations.pdf>

# THE FIVE “MYS”

One-on-one mentoring focuses on helping mentees manage the five aspects or “MYs” of their professional and personal lives: “My Style”, “My Career”, “My Craft”, “My Life”, “My World.”

## “MY STYLE”

- Assessing personal presentation
- Communicating effectively
- Influencing others

## “MY CAREER”

- Planning career growth
- Navigating goals and strategies
- Honing career savviness

## “MY CRAFT”

- Developing functional/technical skills
- Innovating and achieving excellence

## “MY LIFE”

- Maintaining work/life balance
- Managing life changes
- Dealing with competing demands

## “MY WORLD”

- Developing awareness
- Getting involved
- Sustaining commitment

**Source:**

<https://www.qualcomm.com/media/documents/files/mentorship-program-guidelines-for-nominations.pdf>

# SUCCESSFUL GOAL-SETTING: A 6-STEP GUIDE FOR MENTEES

**Establishing clear goals is key for helping you discover what you want to achieve out of your new mentoring relationship. It's a critical step in defining your work with your new mentor and mapping out your efforts moving forward. To help you get started, here are six suggestions designed to focus your thinking so you're prepared for your initial goal-setting conversations.**

## **1. Clarify what you want to accomplish.**

Ask yourself: what barrier is stopping you from accomplishing your goal? The answer to this question will illuminate your core challenge, providing a critical piece of information that you and mentor can use to build your future goals around.

You may start with a simple answer, like "I don't have enough time to work on my goal," but that only speaks to the broad issue and not the root cause. Push your thinking a little further to arrive at a more specific answer, like "I'm not prioritizing my time."

A focused answer like this clearly articulates your objectives and makes it easier for you and your mentor to identify the appropriate goals—in this case, prioritizing your time to accomplish your goal.

## **2. Make sure your goals align with reality.**

Next, it's important to assess whether or not your goals are feasible given your circumstances. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have the time and resources available to meet this goal?
- Are you fully dedicated to achieving this goal?
- Are you aware of the sacrifices this goal will require and are you willing to make them?

Based on these answers, think critically about whether or not your goal is realistic. This is a great conversation for you to have with your mentor, as their experience can provide thoughtful insights to help you gauge the feasibility of your goal.

## **3. Determine your benchmarks for success.**

Now that you've set your goals, it's important to define what success would look like to you. Think about the specific items that would indicate success to you. Consider what these metrics have looked like up to now and share this information with your

mentor. Setting these benchmarks early provides a great way to track your progress, telling you exactly how you're doing at a glance.

#### **4. Set a realistic timeline.**

Now that you've worked with your mentor to define your goals, key metrics, and benchmarks, it's time to set a schedule for achieving them. You may already have a deadline in mind, but you should work with your mentor to make sure your timeline is realistic. Start by asking yourself the following questions:

- When are you prepared to start this project?
- How much time can you commit to your goal each day, week, and month?

Based on these answers, work with your mentor to assign a date to the benchmarks you've established. Make sure you set a timeline that's long enough for the goal to be realistic, but short enough for you to stay motivated.

#### **5. Define strategies and map out the path to success.**

At this point, you have a target and deadline in place, so now it's time to work with your mentor to define the actionable steps that will help you reach the goal. This is an area where your mentor's advice will be invaluable, as they may have ideas you hadn't considered. Work as a team to determine your overall strategy.

Once you and your mentor have agreed on the overall strategy, map out individual tasks in a calendar. Set specific "mini-goals" by day, week, or month. These mini-goals help keep momentum going to ensure that you can stay on track with your timeline.

#### **6. Track your progress frequently.**

Once you've put your plan in place, be sure to track your progress using the benchmarks you established with your mentor. When you can see how close or far away you are from hitting a target, it can be extremely motivating and encouraging. This will keep you on the path toward achieving your goals.

**Your first goal-setting meeting can seem daunting, but by following these best practices, you'll ensure a productive, focused meeting with your new mentor. Spend time working through these exercises in advance, so you can come to the table prepared and get the greatest benefit from your mentor's time. Your mentorship partnership will be unique, so feel free to use these suggestions as a guide for developing a goal-setting process that makes the most sense for you.**

**Source:** <https://www.micromentor.org/blog/successful-goal-setting-a-6-step-guide-for-mentees/>

# SMART GOAL TEMPLATE

A SMART goal meets the criteria of the terms of the acronym SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION	DEVELOPING SMART GOALS
<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>	<p>Goals are clear, detailed and unambiguous. A specific goal will usually answer the five "W" questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What: What do I want to accomplish?</li> <li>• Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.</li> <li>• Who: Who is involved?</li> <li>• Where: Identify a location.</li> <li>• Which: Identify requirements and constraints.</li> </ul>
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	<p>This term stresses the need for concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal. If a goal is not measurable, it is not possible to know whether progress toward successful completion is being made. A measurable goal will usually answer questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much?</li> <li>• How many?</li> <li>• How will I know when it is accomplished?</li> </ul>
<b>A</b>	<b>Attainable</b>	<p>This term stresses the importance of goals that are realistic and attainable. While an attainable goal may stretch the goal-setter in order to achieve it, the goal is not extreme. An attainable goal may cause goal-setters to identify previously overlooked opportunities to bring themselves closer to the achievement of their goals. An attainable goal will usually answer the question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How: How can the goal be accomplished?</li> </ul>
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant</b>	<p>A relevant goal must represent an objective that the goal-setter is willing and able to work towards. A relevant goal will usually answer the question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this seem worthwhile?</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center; color: orange; font-size: 2em;"><b>T</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time Bound</b></p>	<p>The fifth term stresses the importance of giving goals a target date. A commitment to a deadline helps focus efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date. Timeliness is intended to prevent goals from being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise in an organization. A timely goal will usually answer the question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When?</li> <li>● What can I do 6 months from now?</li> <li>● What can I do 6 weeks from now?</li> <li>● What can I do today?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center; color: orange; font-size: 2em;"><b>R</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reevaluate Reward</b></p>	<p>As goals are being developed and phases of different goals are being accomplished, reevaluate each goal to make sure they are still relevant and attainable. Once goals have been accomplished, celebrate their accomplishments and start developing new SMART goals.</p>

**Source:** UTHealth The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

## Writing SMART Goals -- Template

The following template will help in the writing of a **SMART Goal**:

(I or accountable party) **will** (action word/s) (object of the goal) **by** (time) **for the purpose of** (relevance/results).

## Examples of a SMART Goal Using the Template Format

**I will complete two Skillsoft courses on Communication by February 1, 2013, in order to develop my skills for my conference presentation in March, 2013.**

**My department will submit a FY2014 projected budget outlining the needs of the department by March 31, 2013, in order to have it approved by June 31, 2013.**

**My team will develop a new process to decrease customer service dissatisfaction and increase customer satisfaction by October 31 in order to support the department's mission of great customer service.**

**Source:** <https://www.centerformentoring.com/your-mentoring-year-tip-6-setting-smart-goals>

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Title:** Active Listening - Improve Your Ability to Listen and Lead

**Author:** Michael Hoppe

**Category:** Communication

**Title:** Now, Discover Your Strengths

**Author:** Marcus Buckingham

**Category:** Five "MYs"

**Title:** Emotional Intelligence 2.0

**Author:** Travis Bradbury & Jean Greaves

**Category:** Emotional Intelligence

# PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION



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