

LBG Career Center

Mentorship

What do we mean by mentoring?

At the LBG Career Center, we see mentoring as a dynamic, reciprocal relationship between an experienced expert (mentor) and a pre- or post-doc seeking to develop their career goals (mentee). The goal of mentoring is to promote the career development of both mentor and mentee through the sharing of experiences and imparting of advice. We recommend meetings between mentors and mentees take place approximately four times a year, last for about an hour each meeting, and can continue for as long as the mentor and mentee benefit from the mentorship.

How is mentoring different than coaching?

Mentoring	Coaching
Relationship oriented	Task oriented
Informal and unstructured	Formal and structured
Long term (6+ months)	Short term
Development driven	Performance driven
Reciprocal learning and development	One-way learning and development

Why be a mentor?

- **Helps gain perspective:** When discussing challenges your mentee is facing, your position as mentor allows you to step back and offer advice from an unbiased perspective that may be helpful when examining your own challenges. Looking at the bigger picture of an issue may remind you to take your own advice.
- **Reinforces professional skills by teaching others:** As fundamental part of learning, teaching professional skills to your mentee can serve as a refresher for yourself.
- **Offers opportunity for reciprocal learning:** Having a mentee at a different stage in their career or in another field can be a way to stay up to date on the latest research and trends or get a better understanding of another area.
- **Grows leadership capacity:** Being a leader and role model for others can develop your ability to recognize strengths and weaknesses in others, be supportive, give advice, and practice reflexive problem solving.
- **Can expand your network:** Mentoring a pre- or post-doc gives you the chance to connect with their network and could be an opportunity to find potential talent for your own team.

What can mentees ask mentors?

When starting a mentorship for the first time, mentees may be wondering what kinds of topics can be discussed with mentors. Here are four types of questions that can be asked to learn from mentors' experiences and draw out their advice:

- **Ask for stories from their career:** How did you get your current role? What led you to pursue a career in your field? Thinking back 5 years, did you envision your career as it is today? What do you wish you had known when you were in my career stage?
- **Ask about situations that you need guidance navigating:** I'm applying for funding at XY, what are your experiences with that funding body? How can I best network at conferences or other events? What are the pros and cons of staying in my career path?
- **Ask about yourself:** What do you see as my strengths? What do you see as my blind spots and how can I improve? Would I be viewed negatively if I ask my supervisor about XY? How can I better communicate my idea or goal?
- **Ask for advice or resources to develop skills:** How can I resolve a conflict with my supervisor? Do you have any methodology tips for project management? How do you deal with nervousness when presenting to large groups? What skills do I need to get a higher position?

What's the role of the LBG Career Center?

The LBG Career Center connects pre- and post-docs that request a mentorship with mentors with similar backgrounds or different areas of expertise. We support them in their search and establish first contact with the mentor. After a mentor accepts the mentorship, we put the mentees directly in contact with the mentors to schedule meetings.