Initiating Mentoring Relationships

Tips for mentors and mentees:
Mentoring is a relationship entailing formal or informal processes whereby a mentor provides intentional guidance, motivation, and encouragement. Mentors also share knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to empower the mentee in the advancement of specific goals that improve their lives and careers. Mentorship allows both mentor and mentee to build networks of resources, develop best practices, and sustain connections for lifelong learning.

There are three stages in formal mentoring relationships. The first stage is **initiation**, where mentors and mentees work to establish rapport and focus on desired goals and expectations. The **cultivation** stage continues to strengthen the relationship by creating and executing an action plan to accomplish goals. Finally, during the **culmination** stage, the nature of the relationship shifts to one of a colleague or equal peer.

More information on Graduate College Mentor Network and stages of mentoring: [graduate.asu.edu/mentoring](http://graduate.asu.edu/mentoring)

Information for mentors

**Share information about yourself**
Talk about your experiences, skills, and strengths. Share your challenges and interests within the context of your mentoring scope. What is mentorship to you, and why is it important?

**Talk about your goals and expectations**
Share your thoughts on what mentoring means to you, what your expectations are, and how you can best support your mentee.

**Take the initiative**
Especially in the first meetings, your mentee might be tentative, hesitant or unsure how to engage. Gently steer the conversation, asking questions to engage your mentee and learn who they are.

Information for mentees

**Know (and manage) expectations**
Discuss the purpose of your mentoring relationship. Are you looking for academic or professional guidance, support or encouragement in navigating student life or work/life balance, or another specific mentoring outcome?

**Be goal-oriented**
At each meeting, discuss desired mentoring outcomes, use or create a mentoring goals worksheet to solidify and prioritize outcomes.

**Sign a mentoring agreement**
Once you have discussed mentoring expectations, defined mentoring goals and established the logistics of the mentorship, record these details in a mentoring agreement or mentee development plan. Periodically review and assess the progress of your mentorship, adjusting as necessary.