



Talent
MATCH

How to Be a Good Mentee

So you've landed a student work placement! When employers make the decision to hire students, they agree to become active participants in a student's learning process, taking on mentoring responsibilities for the duration of a work-integrated learning (WIL) placement, but what does mentorship look like from the student perspective? Mentorship can be a powerful tool for your growth in your new job and offer a wider perspective of the career trajectory that lies ahead of you.

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Supervision vs. Mentorship

Your new supervisor is someone you will likely look to for mentorship during your work placement. One of the major differences between supervision and mentorship is that the former is concerned with your performance on the job and the latter is more focused on your long-term development. Understanding this distinction can help clarify your expectations and responsibilities as you cultivate this new relationship.

Supervision

As a new employee, you can expect your *supervisor* to:

- Check in about progress in assigned projects and tasks
- Assist in accessing training about the processes and procedures of your new organization
- Address any questions or issues associated with job-related tasks

Mentorship

As a mentee, you might look to a *mentor* for:

- Help adapting to your organization's work culture
- Wisdom and insight about the sector
- Sharing knowledge about their own career progression
- Assist you in setting career goals

Mentorship is a Two-Way Street

Like any important relationship, the mentee/mentor relationship is a reciprocal one. Both parties have responsibilities towards each other and expectations about what this connection looks like. You will work together to navigate the parameters of this relationship to find a way of working that suits you both. A few key things to keep in mind as you develop your connection with each other:

Respect your commitment. Your mentor probably has a very demanding job and has volunteered to take on the added responsibility of mentoring a student. Be appreciative of your mentor's time and investment by responding in a timely manner to questions and comments, and being prepared for meetings and check-ins.

Expect support, not hand-holding. You can expect a certain level of support and advice from a mentor, but they can't solve your problems for you. Perhaps the greatest gift a mentor can offer a mentee is an alternative point of view. They can put a situation in perspective, offer feedback, and serve as a sounding board. They can also help connect you to other professionals and resources to support your goals.

Be teachable. Be willing to learn new things, open to different perspectives and be responsive to suggestions and constructive criticism.

Effective Communication is Important

Good communication is fundamental for developing a positive working relationship between a mentor and mentee. It helps both parties feel respected and understood, and be motivated to learn from each other. Consider the following tips to get the most out of your conversations with your mentor:

Help your mentor help you

Tell your mentor how and when you best like to receive feedback.

Set the agenda

Let your mentor know what is most on your mind and what would be most helpful to talk about.

Initiate contact

Reach out to your mentor if you have questions or would like to discuss something.

Look ahead

Are there any days you know that you'll be ultra-busy or need extra support? Let your mentor know.

Be curious

Don't be shy about asking your mentor questions. For example "Can you tell me more about your career path?" or "What do you know in hindsight that has contributed to your professional success?" can help focus your mentoring sessions and spur conversations.



Connecting with a mentor during your WIL placement can lead to unexpected opportunities for learning and growth. By being an active participant in the relationship, and communicating effectively with your mentor, you can open up to new lessons to take with you beyond your placement and into your career.