



Mentorship and Career Development

Having a mentor can be a helpful tool as part of your career journey. They can provide career guidance, help answer specific industry questions, and can even introduce you to contacts for your career journey. Finding a mentor is more than just being matched with a like-minded person. Here are some tips to keep in mind when looking for a mentor.

Prepare for a mentor

- What are your short and long term career and education goals? What skills, knowledge, and experience do I need to reach those goals? Having the answer to these questions can help you understand what areas you might need assistance with, and help you think of meaningful questions to bring to a potential mentor
 - Tip: Mentors are there to provide a feedback loop. How have you handled feedback/criticism in the past? What will you do with the feedback provided? Start thinking of ways that you will utilize the feedback provided to gain the most value out of your mentors' time.
-

Finding a mentor

- Mentors can be found in unlikely places – fitness classes, community groups, or even mutual friends. If you're not sure where to start to find a mentor, think about some of these options:
 - Reaching out to a former supervisor or employer
 - A member of a community group you are/have been a part of
 - If you're employed, mentors can be found in the workplace. Find out if your workplace offers a formal mentorship program. If not, connect with your supervisor about this idea to see if they can offer feedback or suggestions.
 - LinkedIn/social media
 - Virtual mentoring platforms, like [Canada InfoNet](#) or [Canadian Mentoring Partnership](#)
 - Check to see if your specific college offers a mentorship program, like [10,000 Coffees](#)
-

What to look for in a good mentor

- A good mentor can provide you with direction towards your goals. Who do you want to be in the workplace? Try to find someone whose skills you want to emulate. Some of those qualities might be:
 - An empathetic listener
 - Knowledgeable
 - Highly skilled
 - Respected in their community
 - Trustworthy
- If you have someone in mind, try to find out information about their background through sites like LinkedIn. Does this person have published articles/work? Look at company reports or newsletters to learn more.

Approaching a mentor

- Once you have a mentor in mind, it's time to reach out! Keep these 4 tips in mind to craft the perfect message:
 1. **Make the subject line short yet eye-catching.** Consider referencing a recent piece of their work or an online post (Eg. Mentorship and Your Research/Post on X). If you received their contact from someone you know, reference that person in the subject line (Eg. Hello from Jane Smith's Colleague).
 2. **Be specific and concise.** You want to discuss why you're interested in their work and them as a mentor specifically, connecting why that is important to you and also how it can be beneficial to your goals. Also be sure to mention your specific career/project goals so they can provide advice on if they would be the best person to provide support.
 3. **Make your ask.** If you're looking for help with a specific problem or project, mention that and your time frame you think that might look like. Example: *I am looking for a mentor to help provide guidance with a React Native project that I am creating and would be grateful if you could connect with me briefly once a month. However, I know you are incredibly busy, so if this is not possible, would you be willing to answer some questions over the phone?*
 4. **Say thanks!** You would be surprised how few folks end their email thanking the recipient for their time.

- Tip: If you don't hear back after 1 week, feel free to reach out to them one more time, reiterating your ask and why you want them to be your mentor. Don't hear back after that? Don't take it personally! Mentors are often incredibly busy and may not have the bandwidth to take on any additional mentees.