



Women in Science & Engineering

Women in Science and Engineering Mentoring Program
The Okanagan Campus of
The University of British Columbia



Mentor Orientation Guide

CONTENTS

	Page
Message from the WiSE Mentoring Program Committee	3
Goals of the Mentoring Program	3
Background	4
Program Overview	4
Schedule of activities for mentors.	4
Benefits of Mentoring	5
Mentoring Roles	5
Industry Mentor	5
Senior Undergraduate /Graduate Student Mentor/Mentee	6
Junior Undergraduate Student Mentee	6
WiSE Mentor Liaison	6
WiSE Mentoring Program Coordinators	6
WiSE Mentoring Program Committee	7
Tips for Successful Mentoring	7
Asking questions	7
Offering Advice and Suggestions	7
Professionalism	9
Challenges in the Mentoring Relationship	9
Other Resources for your Mentee	9
Activities to set Expectations and Goals	10
The Career-Development Continuum	10
Activities to Help your Mentee Transition to a Career	12
1. Which types of work are right for me?	12
2. What can I do with a degree in...?	13
3. How do I gain career-related experiences and find job openings?	13
4. How do I improve my resumé and cover letter?	13
5. How do I improve my job interview skills?	14
6. What will employers expect from me once I'm hired?	14
Code of Conduct: Guidelines for Mentoring Relationships	15
Program Evaluation	16

(Much of the content in this manual is based on UBC's Vancouver Campus
Tri-Mentoring Program Handbook)

MESSAGE FROM THE WiSE MENTORING PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Welcome to the Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) Mentoring Program at the Okanagan Campus of the University of British Columbia! Your participation in the mentoring program is a great opportunity for you to achieve your academic goals and prepare for your transition to professional careers. This handbook will help you to develop your relationship with your mentor to help you obtain the most from your participation in the mentoring program. We look forward to working with you this year!

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GOALS OF THE MENTORING PROGRAM

1. To raise students' awareness about the issues faced by women with careers in science and engineering.
2. To provide students with tools and strategies to enable them to succeed in their future careers in science and engineering.

BACKGROUND

The Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) Mentoring Program at the Okanagan Campus of The University of British Columbia was launched in September 2011. The WiSE Mentoring Program emerged from the Women in Science Workshops held annually at UBCO since 2005. In February 2011, we received funding from Westcoast Women in Engineering, Science and Technology (WWEST) to develop a Mentoring Program during the summer of 2011. In addition to the mentoring program, we also scientifically evaluate the usefulness of the mentoring program by involving all mentors and mentees in a longitudinal study that examines how the formal mentoring program contributes to young women's academic success and their transition into professional careers or graduate studies.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) Mentoring Program connects industry mentors with female students in the Faculties of Engineering and the Irving K Barber School of Arts and Sciences. These links help students build satisfying and successful careers. They also enable mentors to promote their industries, network with other mentors, develop new skills, and maintain a connection with the UBC community.

The mentoring structure includes an industry mentor, a senior undergraduate or a graduate student, and a junior undergraduate student. This structure means that the senior student will in turn gain experience mentoring a junior student.

Schedule of activities for mentors

Schedule is listed on wise.ok.ubc.ca—there are several mandatory on-campus events. Dinner is provided at all events.

The rest is up to you and your students! Ideas are here as well.

Sharing is also possible via our facebook page: [wisementoring](https://www.facebook.com/wisementoring) or Women in Science & Engineering UBC Okanagan Campus

BENEFITS OF MENTORING

The WiSE Mentoring Program at the Okanagan Campus of The University of British Columbia was developed to support students as they start to build their careers. Students find the mentoring invaluable, but mentors also experience rich and sometimes unexpected benefits.

Top Five Benefits for Mentors:

1. Give back some of the support and inspiration you have received throughout your career.
2. Make contacts within your industry and build your professional network.
3. Improve your communication and leadership skills.
4. Develop or maintain connections to UBC and contribute to efforts to build a stronger industry and community.
5. Contribute to the future of your field or industry by assisting the next generation of leaders.

Top Five Benefits for Students:

1. Share life experiences and learn from a mentor's challenges and achievements
2. Start building a professional network.
3. Get specific career-building advice, including tips on resumés and interviews, ways to track industry trends, and how to make a successful transition to professional life.
4. Improve communication skills.
5. Gain clarity on career, academic, and personal plans.

MENTORING ROLES

The WiSE Mentoring Program model includes three types of participants:

- Industry mentor
- Senior undergraduate student/graduate student mentor/mentee, who serves both as a mentee with the industry professional and as a mentor to the junior student
- Junior student mentee

You will also receive support from the WiSE Mentoring Program Committee.

Industry Mentor

Industry mentors support the career development of a student. Mentors generally commit to the program for one academic year (eight months), from September to April. Mentors assist students in three key areas:

1. Build a supportive and encouraging relationship.
 - Encourage your mentee to ask questions, voice opinions, and be clear about their program goals and expectations
 - Share professional anecdotes and wisdom gained from experience
2. Provide a career focus.

- Provide guidance on career, education, and related issues
 - Model professional behaviour
 - Provide job search advice and other networking opportunities
 - Attend industry events and other networking opportunities
 - Provide referrals to other professionals when appropriate
3. Actively participate in the WiSE Mentoring Program
- Attend program events
 - Meet with your mentees and communicate via phone and e-mail
 - Communicate problems or issues to your WiSE Mentoring Program Coordinator so that they can be resolved quickly
 - Complete an exit survey and share feedback to contribute to the ongoing development of mentoring programs at UBC and across Canada

Senior Undergraduate /Graduate Student

Senior undergraduate/graduate students are both mentors and mentees:

- As mentors, their role is to help junior student mentees obtain the most out of their experience at UBC
- As mentees, they initiate activities and discussions with their industry mentor to help build their careers

You will find that your senior student mentee learns how to mentor from you, and applies this knowledge to their relationship with their junior student mentee. Your student may ask you for advice and guidance on how to be a mentor, or they may simply learn professional behaviour and mentoring techniques by watching you model them.

Junior Undergraduate Student Mentee

Junior students talk with their senior student mentor about academics and campus life. Typically, the junior student deals primarily with the senior student, and has contact with the industry mentor at the start- and end-of-year events. The junior student is welcome to participate in additional meetings if the group wishes.

An important goal of the WiSE Mentoring Program is to build community at UBC by having junior students continue in the program as senior students, and, eventually, as industry mentors.

WiSE Mentor Liaisons

You will receive support from the *WiSE Mentor Liaison* (Robin Whittall), and the WiSE Committee.

WiSE Mentoring Program Committee

The WiSE Mentoring Program is administered by the WiSE Mentoring Program Committee, which includes students and staff in the School of Engineering, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students from the I.K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, and staff from Student Affairs and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The committee recruits mentors, matches them with mentees, organizes events, monitors participant progress, and assists with program evaluation.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

As a professional, you use important communication skills every day: networking, providing feedback, evaluating ideas, asking questions, brainstorming, and leading discussions. These same skills are an important part of a successful mentor-mentee relationship. The following tips and ideas will help you use your existing communication skills in your role as a mentor.

Asking Questions

As with all new relationships, you may find communication with your mentee flows freely from the start, or you may find it needs to be coaxed along until you find common ground. The best way to start is to ask questions about career plans, education and work experience, perspectives on work, interests, career values, skills, or talents. Questions include:

- What courses are you taking this semester?
- Which course(s) do you enjoy most?
- What work experience do you have so far?
- Are you taking part in a co-op or other work-experience program?
- What are your career goals?
- What are your non-academic interests?

Offering Advice and Suggestions

It helps to be clear about your goal in providing feedback – how do you mean for your mentee to act on your advice? For example, your goal in offering a specific suggestion may be to:

- Encourage a new activity, approach, or attitude
- Help your mentee change a behaviour
- Persuade your mentee to consider a problem or issue
- Encourage your mentee to see a new perspective on a specific issue

Once you have determined why you are offering a suggestion, you can use several techniques to help your mentee take action.

(a) Break suggestions down into concrete steps

When suggesting a specific course of action, it is helpful to work with your mentee on identifying steps to make it happen; for example, if you suggest that your mentee volunteer at an upcoming industry event, your mentee may have to:

1. Call and talk to the volunteer organizer.
2. Complete an application and/or submit a resumé and cover letter.
3. Attend an orientation session.
4. Commit to a specific task and organize her schedule to be available for the event.
5. Follow through on the commitment.

(b) Provide enough information

For many mentors, professional etiquette comes so naturally that they take it for granted. For students who haven't had the opportunity to observe how things are done on the job, contacting someone or attending a meeting may present daunting hurdles. This is why it is important to provide your mentee with enough information to act on your advice; for example, if you suggest that they contact a specific person, you may also want to give your mentee the e-mail address, phone number, and/or websites they will need.

(c) Consider "what if..."

Another useful way to offer advice is to ask, "What if..." questions. Questions such as, "What if you approached the situation like this..." or, "What might happen if you volunteered for..." can open a dialogue that helps mentees arrive at conclusions themselves. When mentees make realizations on their own, they are more likely to act on them. Other effective phrases include:

- What would happen if...
- How would you feel if...
- What would be another approach to...
- What other ways could you...

(d) Ask questions to spark action

Assist your mentee in moving toward action by asking questions such as, "Where do you think you could find this information?" and, "When will you complete this task?"

(e) Offer constructive feedback

To avoid making your mentee feel defensive, offer some positive feedback first, then discuss the areas that require more work, and conclude with some additional positive feedback.

(f) Follow-up and debrief

The next time you are in contact with your mentee, follow up by asking how she has acted on your advice. If she has not taken action, talk about it. Discuss your relationship to find out what works and what doesn't. When you do this, try to accept your mentee's feedback in the same, non-defensive way you would like your own feedback to be accepted.

Professionalism

One of the most important ways students learn from mentors is simply by observation. This is one of the strengths of the WiSE Mentoring Program as it gives senior undergraduate student/graduate student mentor/mentees an opportunity to learn from their mentor's example and then use those professional and leadership skills in their interactions with their junior student mentees.

Professional skills that you can assist your mentee to develop and understand include:

- Time management
- Diplomacy
- Networking
- Business etiquette and more general aspects of professional and ethical behaviour

Challenges in the Mentoring Relationship

Occasionally problems arise in the mentoring relationship: communication breaks down, disagreements occur, or one participant is unable to keep their commitments to the mentoring program. It is important to recognize that in a good mentoring match, mentors and mentees don't always get along perfectly or agree on every point. Sometimes mentors and mentees feel that their match is not working because the mentee's career goal does not match the mentor's occupation or industry; however, mentors and mentees do not have to be on the same path to connect and benefit from each other's experiences. Some of the most successful mentoring matches are based on sharing general information, ideas, guidance, and experience regarding all aspects of career development and professional life, rather than industry-specific information.

Characteristics of a strong mentor-mentee relationship include:

- Realistic expectations
- Willingness to share information, thoughts, and ideas
- Effort to engage fully in the mentoring program and participate in all activities
- Strong listening skills; even when there are challenges, all participants in the mentoring relationship should feel heard

If a problem arises with your mentee, first discuss it with her directly. If the problem persists, please contact the WiSE Mentoring Program Coordinator.

Other Resources for Your Mentee

Your responsibility as a mentor is to help your mentee start building a career. Students' lives may get complicated by financial, house, personal, academic and health issues, which you can address within the context of a career; however, if your mentee approaches you about issues beyond the scope of the mentoring relationship or your comfort level, refer your mentee to the WiSE Mentoring Program Coordinator, or another appropriate campus resource.

ACTIVITIES TO SET EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS

The activities suggested in this section are designed to help you and your mentee clarify expectations and goals, and build a foundation for your meetings.

You may complete some of these activities in person with your mentee, or through phone and e-mail conversations. For other activities, your mentee might want to do some personal reflection first and discuss her ideas with you later. Discuss what works best for both of you.

Both you and your mentee can make suggestions and offer ideas for activities that will help get the conversation going, give you a chance to model professional behaviour, provide opportunities for you to offer concrete guidance and advice, or spark discussion.

The Career-Development Continuum

Knowing where your mentee falls within the career development continuum will help you and your mentee set and achieve reasonable goals; for example:

- **If your mentee is unsure of her career goals:** defining clear career options is a viable objective. Together you can explore options, discuss paths, and brainstorm possibilities for the future.
- **If your student has already started to build a career:** learning how to craft a resumé or meet industry professionals would be appropriate goals. Together you can explore the realities of the industry, review your mentee's resumé, and spend a morning at your place of work.

The following list of statements helps mentees place themselves on the career-development continuum. Have your mentee select the career development goals that are most important to her now.

1. I need to explore the types of work that are right for me.
 - I need to generate career options that spark my interest.
 - I want to identify the types of careers that match my skills, interests, values and personality.
2. I want to find out what I can do with my degree.
 - I'd like to know how to meet and ask questions of people who have first-hand experience with a career option that I am exploring.
 - I want to identify the types of careers that match my skills, interests, values and personality.

3. I want to know how to gain career-related experience and find job openings.
 - I need to know how to uncover opportunities before they are advertised.
 - I want to feel comfortable networking with employers and gaining experience.
4. I want to improve my resumé and cover letter writing skills.
 - I need to match my skills and accomplishments to a particular opportunity and express them persuasively in a resumé, cover letter and other self-marketing tools.
 - It would be helpful to receive constructive feedback on how to improve my resumé.
5. I want to improve my job interview skills.
 - I need to feel confident answering commonly-asked interview questions.
 - It would be helpful to receive feedback on my interview skills from a professional.
6. I want to learn about what employers expect from me once I'm hired.
 - I need to develop strong communication skills that will help me function effectively as an employee and team member.
 - I would feel more confident if I had a better idea of the experiences that I might face in a new job. I want to be clear on my rights and responsibilities as an employee.

After you have reviewed the career-development goals with your mentee, review the six categories in the career continuum below and identify where your mentee is located on the continuum.

- 1. You're not sure what interests you, what you're good at, or what would suit you well. You don't feel that you know much about the work world.
- 2. You have some idea of what you want to do, but you need to find out more about it. You would like to explore related career options.
- 3. You know what you want to do, but you need to gain relevant work experience and start networking.
- 4. You know what you want to do and you have relevant experience, but you need to learn how to present it professionally in a resumé and cover letter.

- ❑ 5. You need to learn how to present yourself professionally in interviews, and how to demonstrate that your skills and accomplishments relate to each opportunity that you pursue.
- ❑ 6. You know what you want to do, you have some experience, and you know how to present yourself professionally in resumés and interviews.

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR MENTEE TRANSITION TO A CAREER

Each number in the continuum (and in the preceding questions) corresponds to one of the following activities, which mentors and mentees can complete together. Links to information are found on Career Services' web pages under Career Tools:

<http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/students/careers/services/resources.html>

1. Which types of work are right for me?

Mentees who are still researching possible career paths can generate career options by assessing their personality, values, skills, and interests, and by tracking opportunities available in a constantly shifting labour market.

Subjects to discuss:

- The most interesting or enjoyable aspects of your work.
- How your work fits your values.
- The skills you most enjoy using.
- Skills you do not get to use as much as you would like.
- How your current work is a good match for your personality.
- Future directions or trends for your field.

Try this: Defining Career Satisfaction

In this exercise, mentors help mentees explore criteria for a satisfying career. Mentor and mentee complete the following statements on their own, and then discuss their answers.

To me, career satisfaction:

- means doing work that...
- lets me work with people who...
- lets me use my natural ability to...
- is done in an environment that...
- doesn't require...
- rewards me for...
- gives me opportunities to...

Look at how your answers are similar and how they differ. Discuss past work, volunteer, school, or extracurricular experiences that were satisfying, and other experiences that were dissatisfying. Work together to identify the common themes among these experiences. Use the discussion to help your mentee identify her top five characteristics of a satisfying career.

2. What can I do with a degree in...?

Mentees asking this question are ready to start exploring the career possibilities in their areas of study and related fields.

Subjects to discuss:

- How you originally learned about your career.
- How your current job does or does not relate to your degree.
- What sources of information were helpful to you when you were getting started.
- Some of the first steps you took to pursue this career.

Try this: Career Research

Help your mentee identify and research a career option using some of the online resources at www.ubc.ca/okanagan/students/careers/ (see the links under “What can I do with my major?”). Does this option fit her goals for the future? What are the next steps she can take to explore this option further?

3. How do I gain career-related experiences and find job openings?

Mentors and mentees can explore the broad range of opportunities that students can use to gain experience and make connections in a chosen field, including volunteering, networking, job shadowing, internships, and co-op programs.

Subjects to discuss:

- How to create a professional network.
- The value of belonging to associations and industry groups.
- Conferences, workshops, and courses you have attended.
- How professionals in your field hear about new opportunities.
- The range of positions in your organization or industry.

Try this: Get Out There

Attend a networking event, conference, workshop or other event together. Help your mentee prepare for the event and discuss the experience afterward.

Links to how to conduct an Information Interview and network:

<http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/students/careers/services/resources/actionplan.html>

4. How do I improve my resumé and cover letter?

Workshops and advisors with Career Services assist students with creating professional resúmes and cover letters. Mentors are not expected to duplicate that service, but many mentors can offer an employer’s perspective on a student’s cover letter and resumé.

Subjects to discuss:

- What makes a resumé stand out?
- How to target a resumé and cover letter to a specific company, industry, and position?
- How to follow up after submitting a resumé and cover letter.

Try this: Create a Powerful Lead

Work with your mentee to draft a strong opening statement for a cover letter.

5. How do I improve my job interview skills?

Mentors are not expected to be experts on interviewing techniques, but they are encouraged to share their own perspectives and experiences.

Subjects to discuss:

- Best and worst interview experiences.
- Answering difficult interview questions.
- Common questions and how to prepare for them.

Try this: Mock Interviews

Mentors can “interview” mentees so that they can practice their skills. Afterward, discuss the mentee’s answers and brainstorm ways to improve them.

6. What will employers expect from me once I’m hired?

Mentors can provide important insights into the “soft skills” required to be an effective communicator and employee.

Subjects to discuss:

- Skills crucial to succeeding at work (e.g. communication, time-management skills)
- Most impressive behaviours in a new hire.
- Facing ethical dilemmas at work.
- Conflict resolution skills.
- Important professional skills.

For additional information and ideas:

<http://career-advice.monster.ca/in-the-workplace/starting-a-new-job/10-ways-to-be-professional-at-work-canada/article.aspx>

Try this: Job Shadow

Arrange for your mentee to spend a day or a half-day shadowing you at work. If this is not possible, help your mentee set up a job shadow or work experience with another professional. Either way, spend some time after the job shadow experience to debrief.

While shadowing you, your mentee can learn:

- What a typical day at work is like
- How a meeting is run
- Ways to communicate with colleagues in person, online, and on the phone
- Techniques and tools for managing time
- Trends/opportunities: newsletters, professional associations, online forums, or events.

CODE OF CONDUCT: GUIDELINES FOR MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The following Code of Conduct provides important guidance to both mentors and mentees about their mentoring relationships. These boundaries protect the rights of all mentoring participants. Both mentors and mentees are asked to sign a contract agreeing to the following points:

1. Trust and confidentiality are critical components of a successful mentoring relationship and will be maintained at all times.
2. The Student Declaration, all UBC policies, and this Code of Conduct will be strictly adhered to.
3. No illegal drugs will be promoted or consumed within the mentoring relationship or related to mentoring partnership activities.
4. No alcohol will be promoted or consumed within the mentoring relationship or related to mentoring partnership activities where students are below the legal drinking age. Where students are over the legal drinking age, alcohol consumption within the mentoring relationship or related to mentoring partnership activities will take place only in licensed establishments, and no excessive alcohol consumption will be promoted.
5. Students must be enrolled in courses at the Okanagan Campus of UBC for the duration of the program and must remain in good academic standing.
6. Attendance and active participation in all WiSE Mentoring Program training sessions, meetings, and events is required.
7. Romantic or intimate involvement between mentees and their mentors during the term of the mentoring program is not allowed.
8. Professional conduct will be maintained at all times throughout the mentoring relationship.
9. Commitment to the mentoring relationship is an important part of the WiSE Mentoring Program. Those unable to fulfill their responsibilities, or those who are having difficulty in their mentoring relationship, should contact the mentoring coordinator to discuss an appropriate course of action.
10. Failure to comply with any of the above can lead to the termination of the mentoring relationship and individual participation by either the mentee or mentor.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

We are committed to improving the WiSE Mentoring Program at the Okanagan Campus of UBC, and we are responsive to the feedback we receive from mentors. A member of the WiSE Mentoring Program committee will contact you in February to monitor the program informally. We appreciate your thoughts and feedback on:

- Program structure
- Success of your match
- What you feel is working/not working throughout the process

Mentees and Mentors participating in the WiSE Mentoring Program are also expected to participate in a longitudinal evaluation research project. The purpose of this research is to examine how formal mentoring programs contribute to young women's academic success and their transition into professional careers or graduate study. Our study intends to measure the effectiveness of this formal WiSE mentoring program in helping young women studying in sciences and engineering achieve their academic and professional goals. The overall objectives of this evaluation are: (1) to gain insight to the mentorship program by examining the activities and outcomes of the program; (2) to assess the impacts of the program by identifying the successes and areas for growth, which will allow us to strengthen the services offered and methods of delivery; and (3) to understand how the program has affected participants in terms of their immediate and long-term academic and career goals.

Given our intention of scientifically evaluating the usefulness of this program, the longitudinal study is a requirement of participation in the WiSE Mentoring Program; however, participation in the mentoring program is voluntary. Individuals can refuse to participate, or withdraw, from the program at any time, and such a decision will not affect their relationship with the University of British Columbia, either now or in the future. By withdrawing from the WiSE Mentoring Program, individuals are also withdrawing from this longitudinal study; withdrawing from the longitudinal study also means withdrawal from the WiSE Mentoring Program.