

# WiSE

Women in Science & Engineering

Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) Mentoring Program  
at the Okanagan Campus of the University of British Columbia



## **Student Handbook**

## CONTENTS

	Page
Message from the WiSE Mentoring Program Committee .....	3
Goals of the Mentoring Program .....	4
Background .....	4
Program Overview .....	4
Schedule of activities for mentees .....	4
Benefits of Mentoring .....	5
Mentoring Roles .....	5
Industry Mentor .....	6
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 .....	6
Becoming a Successful Mentee: Tips for all students .....	7
Cultivate a Professional Attitude .....	7
Communication Etiquette .....	8
Effective Listening Skills .....	8
Creating Memorable Moments .....	9
Tips for Senior Student Mentors .....	10
Break down suggestions into concrete steps .....	10
Provide enough information .....	10
Consider “what if...” .....	10
Ask questions to spark action .....	11
Offer constructive feedback .....	11
Follow-up and debrief .....	11
Code of Conduct: Guidelines for Mentoring Relationships .....	12
Program Evaluation .....	13

(Much of this handbook is based on UBC’s Vancouver Campus  
*Tri-Mentoring Program Student 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.

The schedule of events and deadlines is found on our website, **[wise.ok.ubc.ca](http://wise.ok.ubc.ca)**, under the Students tab:

<http://wise.ok.ubc.ca/student-mentees/schedule-of-activities-for-mentees/>

## **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.

### **Top Five Benefits of Mentoring 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. Develop time management, leadership and communication skills.
5. Gain clarity on career, academic, and personal plans.

### **Junior Students**

- Discover networking/volunteering/extra-curricular activities on campus
- Gain clarity about an educational path
- Make contacts with other students
- Strengthen academic habits
- Learn time management skills
- Find out how a senior student became clearer on her educational/occupational path
- Receive tips on finding summer jobs
- Receive tips for surviving certain courses
- Observe a role model (the senior student being a mentor)

### **Senior Students**

- Make contacts with industry mentors
- Learn about real-life work experiences
- Job shadow someone in their area of study
- Enhance interview skills
- Improve their resumé and cover letter
- Develop mentoring and leadership skills
- Observe a role model
- Learn about networking
- Receive advice on gaining career-related experience and finding job openings

## **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 profession, and as a mentor for the junior student
- Junior student mentee

## **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.
2. Provide a career focus.
3. Actively participate in the WiSE Mentoring Program

## **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 prepare for their entrance into the professional world. Senior student mentees may ask their mentor for advice and guidance on how to be a mentor. They may also learn professional behaviour and mentoring techniques by modeling their mentor's techniques.

## **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 Liaison**

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

## **WiSE Mentee Liason**

Mentees receive support from the *WiSE Mentee Liaison* (Candice Quin), 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.

## BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL MENTEE: TIPS FOR ALL STUDENTS

### Mentors expect you to:

- Meet as often as originally agreed upon in October
- Ask for advice
- Listen thoughtfully and advise the mentor about results
- Keep confidentiality
- Be prepared for meetings

### Cultivate a Professional Attitude

- **Ask for advice.** Be as specific as possible when asking for advice. Rather than relying on your mentor to tell you how you are doing, be an active mentee. An active mentee reflects on her own conduct, asks for feedback, analyses what she has done well, and looks for ways to improve and contribute more to the process.
- **Take the initiative.** Don't sit around and wait for your mentor to look after you. Initiate conversations, make requests, suggest activities, keep in contact, and take responsibility for your own commitments. Your mentor expects you to take the initiative!
- **Prepare in advance for meetings.** Review your objectives for the mentoring program. Research the types of positions or industries you're interested in. Develop questions to ask your mentor based on your goals and research.
- **Be courteous and respectful.** Remember that your mentor is busy and is volunteering her time to assist you. Respect your mentor's time by never being late for a meeting, and by replying to phone calls and e-mails promptly.
- **Make only positive or neutral comments about your mentor to others.** If you believe you have a fundamental difference with your mentor, try to talk about it. If you continue to have problems, ask your Mentoring Program Coordinator for help.
- **Acknowledge suggestions and advice.** Ask clarifying questions and make specific requests for information and resources. Even if your mentor's suggestion is not in line with your initial way of thinking, be open to your mentor's ideas and take time to reflect on what you are being told. Show appreciation for the time and assistance given by your mentor. Mentors need encouragement and acknowledgement too!
- **Follow through on any commitments you make in a timely manner.** Your mentor may make specific requests of you (e.g. bring a resumé or work sample to your next meeting for review). When the unexpected happens and you can't follow through when you said you could, communicate this clearly, and as early as possible, to your mentor.
- **Take the time to get to know your mentor.** As you meet with your mentor, share information, and get to know each other, you will build trust and your exchanges will become easier. Try not to put too much pressure on yourself or your mentor.

## **Communication Etiquette: Tips for Maintaining Professional Communication**

- Reply to e-mails within 24 hours, even if you just confirm receipt of the e-mail and indicate you will write a lengthier response later when you have more time.
- Have a professional-sounding e-mail address that is easy to remember (e.g. use your name or some derivation of it).
- Return phone message as soon as you get them, within 24 to 48 hours.
- Don't wait until late in the day to make business phone calls. Try to make calls before noon; if you have to leave a message, the other person has time throughout the day to get back to you.
- Introduce yourself every time you call. Don't expect your mentor to recognize your voice. Use your full name, and indicate that you are in the WiSE Mentoring Program.
- Leave your phone number every time you leave a message. Even if you know the other person has your number, it will save them time if they don't have to look it up.

## **Effective Listening Skills**

Successful mentees listen to what their mentees have to say with attentiveness and interest, and connect the mentor's knowledge with the things they need to learn. Successful mentees are open to new ideas and experiences.

Be respectful. Before meeting with your mentor, turn off your cell phone: no calls and no text messages.

- **Focus.** Put all your attention on the speaker and make eye contact. Ensure your body language communicates interest, as opposed to the disinterest implied by fidgeting, doodling, crossing of arms, or turning away.
- **Be an active listener.** Communicate your interest through expressions and mannerisms such as nodding, smiling, frowning, or shaking your head, and through soft verbal cues such as, "Uh huh", or "really?" These show the speaker you are paying attention and will help your brain to stay engaged and process the information being presented.
- **Ask yourself questions.** The rate of thought is generally four times faster than the rate of speech. Keep yourself tuned in to the conversation by thinking to yourself such questions as, "What is the main point here?", and "How will I respond to this?"
- **Acknowledge.** Paraphrase your understanding of what has been said as well as the feelings expressed.
- **Clarify/Probe.** If you need clarification or more specific information, wait for a natural break in the speaker's train of thought and pose your question in a concise format.
- **Finish listening before you speak.** Beyond waiting for the speaker to finish, be sure you have processed the message before you jump in. This is especially true of emotional topics in which you are anxious to state your own view. Pause to think about what you'll say and ensure you haven't misconstrued anything you have heard.
- **Take notes.** Bring a notebook and make note of any feedback or suggestions made by your mentor, or tasks for your next meeting.



Probably the greatest challenge faced by mentoring relationships is finding enough time and energy to meet. In addition to face-to-face meetings, use phone calls and e-mail to stay in touch when your schedules are busy.

## **CREATING MEMORABLE MOMENTS**

Below are some activities that senior students can do with their industry mentors:

- Participate in a mock interview with your mentor
- Ask to have an informational interview
- Spend some time at your mentor's workplace (job shadowing)
- Attend a workshop, conference or some other event together
- Go for a coffee or a meal and talk about career interests and accomplishments
- Ask them if they mind sharing personal stories about the work life (e.g. how did they manage conflicts or disagreements at work?)
- Tour a facility in your area of interest
- Discuss the goals you set during your orientation training
- Ask your mentor how they went about finding a job
- Discuss the types of employment that are available for your degree
- Look at job websites together to explore potential job opportunities
- Ask about how they maintain a work/life balance
- Share your cover letter and resumé with your mentor and ask for feedback
- Ask your mentor about possible past experiences they have had as a mentee

Below are some activities that senior students can do with their junior student mentees:

- Go for lunch and discuss some of the courses you have taken or are planning to take
- Go for dinner with your mentor (as a triad)
- Share your resumé and cover letters, and discuss them
- Discuss books that have been helpful to you in your discipline, for studying, or personally
- Tour a facility together that is pertinent to your disciplines
- Attend a workshop, conference, or some other event together
- Discuss and review projects that you are working on
- Explain how you have made decisions in your life
- Collect brochures of services available at UBC that you think might be helpful for your mentee, and discuss them
- Find a professor who would be willing to participate in an informational interview, and conduct that interview together
- Volunteer together
- Go to a networking event provided by an association in your area of interest

## **TIPS FOR SENIOR STUDENT MENTORS**

When offering advice and suggestions, it helps to be clear about what your goal is in imparting this information. Identifying your goal will help you to offer useful advice and suggestions; for example, your goal in offering a specific suggestion or piece of advice may be:

- To help your mentee change a behaviour
- To persuade your mentee to consider a problem or issue
- To get your mentee to try a new perspective on a specific issue
- To encourage a new activity, approach or attitude

Once you have determined why you are offering this information, you can use the techniques below to assist with your delivery.

### ***(a) Break suggestions down into concrete steps***

When making a suggestion to your mentee, work with your mentee on identifying the 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 – attend the event, act professionally, and carry out the agreed-upon responsibilities.

### ***(b) Provide enough information***

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. Provide concrete information, like a brochure, or the complete URL to a website.

### ***(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 leads mentees to the advice or suggestion you are making, but includes them in the process. While “You should...” and “If I were you...” statements are more direct, they often provoke a defensive reaction. “What if...” statements can lead mentees to make the realization on their own, and they are far more likely to act on it. 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***

Part of the process of offering advice and suggestions is to help you mentee move beyond hearing words to taking some specific 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***

When your advice or suggestion includes some sort of corrective feedback or constructive criticism, it helps to sandwich the negative between two items of positive feedback. Begin and end by talking about something your mentee is doing well, or something you admire. Then address the area that needs improvement in the middle. This will assist your mentee in hearing the information without becoming defensive or feeling attacked.

***(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 why and explore ways to move from talk to action. 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.

## **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.

## **PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

***Mentees and Mentors participating in the WiSE Mentoring Program must 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 the longitudinal study; withdrawing from the longitudinal study also means withdrawal from the WiSE Mentoring Program.*

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 mentees. In late January, mentees will participate in a one-hour focus group of 10 mentees. We appreciate feedback on:

- Program structure
- Success in matching mentors and mentees
- What is working/not working in the mentoring process