

CHALMERS

Guide for mentees

Guidance for mentees on the Chalmers mentoring
programme

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1. How to use this guide

This Guide for Mentees has been produced to help you as you take on the exciting role of mentee in a mentoring programme at Chalmers. It includes tips and guidance that we hope will help you during the course of the programme. We recommend that you read the whole guide once all the way through and then use it to assist you and for reference as you go through the programme.

The Guide for Mentees is in three sections:

Overview of the mentoring programme

This section sets out the overall aims and objectives, gives a brief description of each stage in the process that you will follow when you are part of the programme and outlines the benefits to you as a mentee.

The role of the mentee

Here, we clarify what your role is as mentee, what is expected of you and what you need to think about.

Tools for mentorship

Finally, the guide contains tools for you to use when working with your mentor. These include suggested topics of conversation and aids to help you set your personal goals for the programme.

2 Overview of the mentoring programme

This section gives a brief description of the mentoring programme, setting out the aims and objectives and the various steps of the programme and illustrating the benefits of being a mentee.

2.1 Aims and objectives of the mentoring programme

The mentoring programme aims to support students in their professional development and create good relationships between students and industry. A summary of the aims is as follows:

- Facilitate the transition from academia to industry,
- Foster an environment for students to make conscious choices,
- Give students and alumni opportunities to develop networks,
- Lead to personal and professional development for both students and alumni,
- Give alumni an understanding of the modern-day Chalmers.

2.2 How the mentoring programme is structured

What is a mentoring programme? You probably know something about it as you have chosen to become a mentee. But what is expected of you? How does it work? See below for an overall description of the process you will follow as a participant in the mentoring programme.



1. Application and selection

Congratulations, you are now part of a mentoring programme at Chalmers! You became a mentee because you submitted an application to our programme managers and they felt you had an interesting profile. It means you are someone who has great potential.



2. The matching process

Mentees are matched with mentors by the programme managers. Your mentee profile was placed alongside mentors' profiles and you were matched with a mentor who can help you with your personal development on the basis of four core criteria – competence, career, special requirements and personality.



3. Introduction to the programme

The mentoring programme starts with a combined meeting for all mentees and mentors. You will be given information about how the programme is organised and what is required of you as a mentee and suggestions for things that you and your mentor can talk about. Mentees then meet their mentors and set goals for the year.



4. Meetings

The main element of the programme is one-to-one meetings that you and your mentor will hold approximately once a month. You decide for yourselves where and when to meet, and your conversations should focus on topics determined by your needs and wishes as mentee. To complement this, there will be a combined follow-up meeting and a social gathering giving you the opportunity

to meet other mentors and mentees and share your experiences of mentorship.



5. Evaluation and end of programme

At the end of the programme, after just under a year, there will be a combined closing meeting for both mentees and mentors. In advance of this, you will be asked to complete an evaluation form to help develop and improve the programme.

2.3 Benefits of being a mentee

There are many benefits to being a mentee in Chalmers' mentoring programme:

- As a mentee you will gain insights into working life and opportunities to create valuable contacts with people in industry,
- The programme will help you become aware of different career options and clarify your goals, and also help you develop clearer links between your studies and your working life to come,
- As a mentee, you will learn a great deal from the mutual discussions with your mentor around personal and professional development,
- In your role as mentee, you will have the opportunity to benefit from your mentor's experience and knowledge.

3 The role of the mentee

As a new mentee, you will no doubt have lots of questions. This section clarifies what your role as mentee is and what is expected of you in that role.

3.1 What is a mentee?

As mentee, you have the principal role in the mentorship, which means that you also bear the main responsibility. ‘Mentōr’ was the name of the adviser of the young Telemachus in Homer’s *Odyssey*, and it is important that you see your mentor as someone who can provide advice and guidance. Mentorship is not so much about transferring knowledge as about personal development. It is not the mentor’s responsibility to come up with ready-made solutions. The idea is that the mentor helps you develop by yourself. Your role as a mentee includes having a dialogue with your mentor that contributes to your personal development and helps you achieve your personal goals.

3.2 What is expected of a mentee?

The first, and important, question you need to ask yourself is whether mentorship is right for you. There are many other methods you can use for self-development and mentoring does not suit everyone. It needs a lot of commitment, initiative and time on your part. You must be prepared to meet your mentor about once a month and prepare what you want to talk about in advance. You should also set and work on your personal goals and see your mentor as a guide and adviser who can help you achieve them. If you are able to do this, you will find the mentoring process rewarding and it will help you develop. You will gain fresh perspectives on your studies and your future and a chance to plan an interesting career, one in which you will be able to decide for yourself what route you want to follow and not be controlled by too many external factors.

A mentee is...	A mentee is not...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Someone who actively seeks advice and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpless
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some who communicates openly and honestly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependent on their mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Someone who takes responsibility for their relationship with their mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grateful for the time and energy their mentor devotes to their relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subservient in their relationship with their mentor• Undemanding – your mentor needs to know what you want

3.3 Personal goals

Once you have decided to become a mentee, you should write down the personal goals you want to achieve through the mentorship programme. This is one of the most important steps in the mentoring process as it is the basis of what you and your mentor will be working on in your conversations. In the *Tools for mentorship* chapter, there are examples of personal goals that you can set for yourself and tips on how to work up good goals of your own. Go to that chapter when you are in need of inspiration.

3.4 One-to-one meetings

As mentee, you are responsible for preparing all your meetings with your mentor. It is your duty to make sure you never arrive at a meeting unprepared. Your conversations should reflect your personal goals for the mentorship. You may want to ask questions about your mentor's place of work, get constructive feedback on your skills or seek advice in respect of important career choices. If you have questions that may be difficult for your mentor to answer, you should email them to them a few days in advance of each meeting so that they have a chance to prepare.

3.4.1 The initial meeting

The first one-to-one meeting between you and your mentor can take place at your mentor's place of work or at a neutral venue where you will not be disturbed. You should assume your meetings will last one or two hours, but it is a good idea to allow extra time for your initial meeting.

We recommend that you have your initial meeting about two weeks after the introductory meeting so that you get underway quickly. If both your diaries are full, plan your meetings a few months ahead and make sure you give priority to any meetings you schedule. The initial meeting is a good time to get to know one another and to tell each other a bit about yourselves, including your home background, studies or position, work, leisure interests and strengths and weaknesses. Show that you trust your mentor and give as freely of yourself as you can to ensure you develop a strong partnership. Make sure too that your mentor is clear about your goals and expectations for the mentorship.¹

Points to discuss at your initial meeting:

- What do we think we can learn from each other?
- What are our expectations and goals for our mentoring relationship?
- Where and how often shall we meet, and for how long?
- How formal do we want our meetings to be?
- Is there anything we shouldn't talk about?
- Which aspects of our discussions will stay between us and which do we want to talk to others about?
- When and how will we check whether the mentorship relationship feels right for both parties?

We recommend that you and your mentor briefly note down your expectations and objectives and anything else you agree in a simple 'contract'. The contract will help you remember what you wanted from the mentoring programme as you go along.

3.5 End of the programme

The formal mentorship ends after the programme's closing meeting. You can of course continue the relationship by yourselves if you and your mentor feel it would be worthwhile. If you decide to continue, we recommend that you look back at the programme together and ask yourselves: Where were we a year ago? What has happened? Where are we now? What did we get from the programme? Is it enjoyable? We recommend that you then say goodbye to each other and ask yourselves again at a later date whether you want to continue your relationship. That will enable

both parties to bring the relationship to a close in a positive way.²

¹ Hultman J. & Sobel L., Mentorn: en praktisk vägledning ['The mentor: a practical guide'], 2005

² Hultman J. & Sobel L., Mentorn: en Praktisk vägledning ['The mentor: a practical guide'], 2005

4 Tools for mentorship

To make your role as mentee easier and help create a good relationship between you and your mentor, we have put together the following tips and advice that may be useful during the mentoring process.

4.1 Suggested personal goals for the mentee

As mentee, you should set goals for the mentorship during the initial stages of the programme. Your personal goals should be linked to the overall aim of the programme, so you should go through each of the points below and set personal goals that fit with your own life and the stage you are at with your studies and career:

- Facilitate the transition from academia to industry,
- Foster an environment for students to make conscious choices,
- Give students and alumni opportunities to develop networks,
- Lead to personal and professional development for both students and alumni,
- Give alumni an understanding of the modern-day Chalmers.

Here are some examples of possible personal goals:

My goals for the mentoring programme are to:

- Get help from my mentor with planning my career and creating a 5-year plan for my career,
- Get help with how to present myself in a job interview, have a pretend interview with my mentor and try to improve my performance on the basis of my mentor's feedback,
- Get help with writing a good CV,
- Extend my industry network. Use my mentor's tips and existing network to make new relationships with industry that may be useful in my future career,
- Identify my strengths and weaknesses and seek tips and advice on how I can exploit my strengths and improve in my areas of weakness.

One method we recommend for establishing good personal goals is the SMART method. Each letter in the word SMART represents an aspect of the written goal³. It must be:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Attainable

R = Realistic

T = Timely

³ <http://www.goal-setting-guide.com/smart-goals.html>, accessed 13-08-2007

Specific

Your goals must be genuine and incorporate the outcomes you want to achieve. Being specific is important for helping you to focus your actions and clearly define where you are going. To establish a straightforward goal that will work, you need to ask 'What?', 'Why?' and 'How?' questions.

Measurable

It is important that your goals are measurable; otherwise, it is difficult to know whether or not a goal has been achieved. It is crucial that you measure your progress as you work towards your goal, so you should have a method in place to continuously monitor how you are doing throughout the course of the programme.

Attainable

When you have identified the goals that are most important to you, you must take care not to set goals that are too difficult to attain. This is particularly important if you are not used to setting goals and working towards them until you have achieved them. A goal should neither be too simple nor too difficult. It needs to be somewhere in the middle, requiring some effort on your part but not too much.

Realistic

For the goals to be realistic, you need to be willing and able to work to attain them. A goal must be realistic in terms of where you are in your life right now. Set the goal high enough so that it is satisfying to achieve it.

Timely

The goals must be time-bound and apply to a fixed period. It is easier to work towards something if you have a clear deadline. If the goal is not time-bound you may not start the work at all, as, without a deadline, there is no pressure on you to take action straightaway.

4.1.1 Writing a journal

It is a good idea for mentees to write a journal during the course of the programme. It provides continuity for the mentorship in between your one-to-one conversations and helps you reflect on the issues you have discussed. Use the journal to write down your thoughts and anything new you have learnt. This will motivate you, as it will often make you realise that you have learnt more than you thought. Writing a journal also helps to focus your mind. If you can't write something clearly, you often can't think it clearly. Here are some questions you might want to answer as you write your journal:

- What happened?
- What did it make me feel?
- What did I learn?
- How should I move on?⁴

⁴ Ahlström G., *Mentorskap – erfarenheter för personlig och professionell utveckling* ['Mentorship – experiences for personal and professional development'], 2002

4.2 Suggested topics of conversation

One of the most important factors for successful mentorship is a good relationship between you and your mentor. There is no set formula for a good relationship or how to develop one. However, we recommend that you consider the following topics and questions in your conversations with your mentor.

Get to know each other

- What are you working on at the moment?
- How did you get to where you are today? What have been your biggest challenges and your greatest achievements?
- Has there been anything in your career that you have found particularly enjoyable?

Education and specialisation

- Discuss the choices you will have to make during your education and the pros and cons of each choice.
- Is your choice of master's programme important?
- What are your mentor's best study tips?

Work-life balance

- What do you do to maintain a balance between your work, your family and your interests? What tips and advice can you share?
- What are your interests outside work?

Establish professional relationships

- What can I do to create better relationships with industry?
- What do you recommend I do to build up networks in industry and make best use of them?
- Is there anything specific I should think about when initiating professional relationships?

Career development

- What are the most valuable insights you have gained during your career? How can I use them during my career?
- What do you think my strengths are? Weaknesses? Areas for improvement? How can I use my strengths and improve in my areas of weakness?
- If you were in my situation, how would you have planned your career?
- What short-term goals can you think of for me that are realistic and attainable? Long-term goals?
- Do you think I need to extend my knowledge base in order to attain my goals?

4.3 Useful advice

- Clarify why you want a mentor
- Tell your mentor about your expectations at an early stage
- Be open and honest – give freely of yourself
- Listen actively
- Keep an open mind and be yourself
- Have the courage to try new ways of doing things
- Be active in the mentoring relationship and take the initiative
- Set your own goal and put the bar at the right height
- Give your mentor feedback on what you think about the mentorship
- Be aware that mentorship involves give and take
- Be available, and prepare all your meetings well⁵
- Be independent and have a positive attitude
- Remember that the mentor's role is passive but supportive. The mentor is there to guide you, not to solve your problems
- Appreciate your mentor's advice but make your own decisions
- Show an interest in your mentor's private and professional lives
- Take the opportunity to test out new ideas on your mentor
- Ask questions, even those you think are irrelevant
- See your mentor as an asset and make use of their insights and experience. It is good to learn from your own mistakes, but better to learn from those of others



4.4 Trust and confidentiality

To ensure that the relationship between mentor and mentee is one of trust and complete openness, it is important that everything said during their conversations remains between the two of them, unless otherwise agreed in respect of a specific issue.

⁵ Hultman J. & Sobel L., *Mentorn: en Praktisk vägledning* ['The mentor: a practical guide'], 2005