

Suggested First Meeting Outline: Introductions & Goals

The goal of the first meeting is to build rapport, clarify expectations, and co-design structure for the mentorship relationship moving forward.

Purpose:

- Establish connection and get to know one another
- Discuss mentorship expectations and shared goals
- Identify potential focus areas, activities, and communication preferences
- Complete the Mentorship Agreement Form
- Schedule the next meeting and determine specific action steps

1) Introductions & Building Rapport

Take time to share about your personal and professional background. In the space below are some potential questions that can guide conversation:

Questions to ask mentors:

- Where did you grow up?
- What are your hobbies or interests?
- What motivates you or gives your work meaning?
- Why did you choose Illinois Tech?
- What was your academic and career trajectory?
- How did you determine your career path or specialty?
- Have you had mentors in the past? How did they support your development?
- What has been your previous experience with mentorship?
- What is one piece of guidance that you wish you knew earlier in your career?

Questions to ask students:

- Where did you grow up?
- What are your hobbies or interests?
- What motivates you or excites you professionally?
- Why did you choose Illinois Tech?
- Why did you choose your major or field of study?
- What are your long-term or short-term career goals?

2) Discuss Mentorship Purpose & Goals

Clarify expectations and collaboratively define what success in mentorship will look like. A great way to set effective goals is through the SMART goal framework.

Discussion prompts:

- What do you hope to gain from mentorship?
- What does mentorship mean to you?
- What skills, experiences, or competencies would you like to strengthen/develop?
- When do you feel most supported by your mentor?
- How can your mentor challenge you to grow?

3) Identify Focus Areas, Activities & Topics

Review recommended activities or determine personalized ones based on identified goals.

Examples may include:

- Resume or LinkedIn review
- Career exploration or networking guidance
- Informational interviews
- Skill-building activities (e.g., mock interviews, communication skills training, project planning, etc.)
- Industry insights and professional development discussions
- Job shadowing opportunities

4) Complete Mentorship Agreement Form

Use the Mentorship Agreement Form to document the agreed-upon goals, expectations, and communication preferences. **This form is for your personal reference and does not need to be submitted for review.**

5) Schedule Future Communication & Next Steps

Determine:

- Frequency, duration, and format of meetings (i.e., virtual, phone, in-person, etc.)
- Expectations for responsiveness and communication style
- Any tasks or preparation for the next meeting (e.g., drafting a resume, preparing questions, scheduling networking communications, etc.)
- How progress and follow-through will be tracked (shared document, email check-ins, agenda items, etc.)

Essential Elements for Effective Mentorship Conversations

Essential First Conversation Elements	Mentors	Mentees
Be Prepared	Learn what you can about your mentee before the first meeting.	Learn everything you can about your mentor before the first meeting. Come prepared with questions you would like to ask.
Discuss Mentorship Overall	Discuss your own experiences with mentorship. What has been helpful or unhelpful?	Actively listen. Ask questions.
Identify Mentees Needs	Actively listen. Ask questions.	Discuss where you are right now, where you hope to be, and how the mentorship can help.
Collaborate to identify Goals and Activities	Discuss what you can and cannot help with. How will you be accountable?	Discuss what you <i>hope</i> to gain through this mentorship. How will you be accountable?
Seek agreement on responsibilities	"I will do ____."	"I agree to ____."
Set timelines	"Let's work on this for 3 weeks, then determine if we should continue or work on something else."	"Let's work on this for 3 weeks, then determine if we should continue or work on something else."
Determine meeting availabilities and who will set the meeting	Provide days and times that you are available.	"I will be responsible for finding dates and times that fit into your schedule."
Agree to open communication	"Please tell me if you feel this mentorship isn't helping, or if the advice is not a fit. Both of our time is valuable."	"I will tell you if the mentorship is not helpful, or if the advice is not a fit. I understand that both of our time is valuable."