

## **Mentors' Guidelines**

### **Background**

Mentorship is the influence, guidance or direction given by a mentor. It is the process by which an experienced individual helps another person develop their goals or skills usually through a one-on-one confidential conversation, and other learning activities. A mentor has more experience and knowledge on a certain field and offers support to the mentee by supporting them in their professional growth or areas of growth. Both the mentor and the mentee make a commitment to engage actively and grow together.

Being a mentor does not always involve directing or telling your mentee what to do. It is being there for your mentee and playing multiple roles based on the context to help your mentee achieve their objectives.

We appreciate you for volunteering your time and skills to mentor the upcoming young leaders. As a mentor, you will have a great opportunity to share your experience, wisdom, and knowledge, gain new perspectives, evolve your thinking, deepen your skills as a mentor, cultivate new talents, and develop new relationships.

### **Engagement, Commitment and Program Duration**

The first phase of the mentorship program will run for a period of 6 months. However, we hope that the mentor and mentee can create a lasting relationship and continue engaging even after phase 1 of the program closes.

To facilitate productive engagement with the mentee, we kindly request you commit at least 5 hours a month to engage with the mentee. This can be broken down into:

1. Virtual meetings with the mentee; at least two sessions every month.
2. Email conversations
3. Technical support ie. reviewing their scholarship applications, and offering them guidance in activities they intend to undertake.
4. Sharing with the mentee potential opportunities you may come across in your area of practice.

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## **What roles can a mentor play?**

### **❖ A mentor can be a cheerleader**

A mentor can offer support, encourage and celebrate their mentee's success. It is usually reassuring for anyone to know that someone is rooting for their success and they are there to support them when called upon.

### **❖ A mentor can be a consultant**

A mentor has much more experience than their mentee. The insights, and expertise can really help the mentee in effective implementation of projects they may be pursuing and also help them figure out problems, and save a lot of time and effort.

### **❖ A mentor can be counsellor**

A mentor can listen and guide the mentee but not necessarily give them all the answers. Sometimes, the journey is more insightful than the outcome. Mentors can provide guidance but challenge the mentee to come up with their answers and figure out the way forward on their own. This process can help them develop some important skills and develop their creative and critical thinking skills.

## **Some important mentoring skills that will help you optimise your engagement with your mentee.**

### **1. Cultivating trust**

Trust is essential in a mentorship setup and relationship. The mentee has to trust the mentor for them to open up, share the goals, aspirations, and challenges. For the mentor to be trustworthy, the mentee must believe in your competence, and believe that your motives are right.

Some of the ways to cultivate trust include; being honest with your mentee; honouring your promises and keeping appointments; showing genuine interest and support, and meeting your mentee more often.

## 2. Listening Actively

- ❖ Active listening is one of the major skills of a mentoring relationship. It helps to create a positive environment which allows for open communication, and development of a positive rapport. Additionally, it helps in helping them mentor to ascertain their mentee's interest and needs. You can do this by giving affirmative comments and providing feedback. You can also verify your perceptions to ensure that you are on the same page with your mentee.
- ❖ It is good to be empathetic when need be. Validate your mentee by acknowledging their individual challenges and feelings.
- ❖ It is good to show interest in what they are sharing with you, and reflect on some of the aspects shared to show that you have understood what they were sharing. Avoid background noise and interruptions and offer your mentee undivided attention.
- ❖ When responding to their emails, it is important to be responsive to the message they were communicating earlier. It is good you reserve discussing your own experience until after your mentee has had the opportunity to elaborate explain their concern, issue, or question.
- ❖ Always keep an open mind, do not judge or criticise your mentee. It is also good to respect their background.

## 3. Encouraging and inspiring the mentee

- ❖ It is good to be encourage, correct and advice the mentee in a positive way through various ways such as:
  - Showing genuine belief in their capacity to grow professionally, and achieve their goals
  - Offering positive comments on their achievements
  - Responding to their fears, worries, frustrations, and challenges with a lot of warmth, encouragement, support, and understanding.
- ❖ You can also inspire your mentee to excel by sharing with them your career journey. Be genuine and truthful with them describing your successes, mistakes, and experience

that you have encountered so far. Feel free to share with them the steps you took when you faced challenges and how that helped you in your growth.

- ❖ Help them grow by introducing them to opportunities, and people that you feel would inspire them or help them in their growth journey too.

#### **4. Determining your mentee's goals and building their capacity**

As a mentor and role model, feel free to share with your mentee some of your career and personal goals when you find it appropriate. It is okay to provide them with feedback on how you set your goal, and how you achieve them based on the development of your relationship. Help your mentee to nurture their capacity for learning by:

- ❖ Helping them to gain broader perspectives of their responsibilities.
- ❖ Cultivating their knowledge and skills by explaining, offering useful examples, showing them the existing processes, and posing to them thought-provoking questions.
- ❖ Help them find resources that may catalyse their growth.

### **Guidelines to help set up a structure for your mentoring relationship with the mentee**

#### **1. Establish expectations and guidelines for engagement**

In your first meeting with the mentee, help them to feel comfortable. Explain your role, what you expect from the mentee, and what you are prepared to do and help them. Be warm to them.

#### **2. Understand your mentee**

Learn about your mentee's priorities and the knowledge your mentee is hoping to gain, and their aspirations. Get to know them well and well and note down the most important details.

#### **3. Set goals mutually with your mentee.**

Engage with them and agree what initial issues you will focus on, time commitment, and how the success will look like

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#### **4. Develop a contact schedule.**

Discuss with your mentee how often you will meet in person and the convenient communication platforms, and your availability.

#### **5. Be accountable.**

As a role model, honour your promises and implement what you agree on with the mentee in within the timeframe you agree with them

#### **6. Allow the mentees to make individual decisions.**

As a mentor, you have a lot of experience and knowledge and it is easy to tell the mentee what to do. However, for them to gain the required skills and exposure, it is good to challenge them to find some of the answers on their own.

#### **7. Share opportunities, and expand their network.**

It is very likely that you have connections, and know of opportunities that can benefit your mentee. If they are committed to learning, and growing, help them expand their networks as wide as possible.