



PharmaSEE Mentorship Program (PMP)

MENTEE HANDBOOK



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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

“Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction” – John C. Crosby

The goal of this program is to tap into the vast professional experience of the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy alumni in order to help you transition from student life to work-life and assist in strengthening your self-image and vision of possible futures.

Through the power of mentorship, you will be exposed to a brand new perspective. Mentors will share their knowledge and experiences in a collaborative effort towards your personal development.

With the **PharmaSEE Mentorship Program** (PMP) we aim to provide experiential learning for our students by infusing our alumni community and resources into student life in order to enrich the overall student experience.

Here are some benefits to being a mentee in PMP:

- Creates opportunities to learn from the experiences of alumni
- Increases networking potential through professional development sessions involving mentors and mentees as well as potential opportunities initiated by your mentor
- Creates opportunities to strengthen your knowledge base through professional development sessions
- Creates opportunities to improve communication skills through 1-1 sessions with your mentor and group sessions with mentors and mentees
- Offers opportunities to interact with professionals who can help shape your transition into the workforce
- Demonstrates professionalism and a commitment to personal and professional development of self

MENTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Mentees in the **PharmaSEE** program are expected to:

- Value the mentor as a person
- Develop mutual trust and respect with the mentor
- Establish expectations and communication methods upon the onset of the mentoring relationship
- Maintain confidentiality
- Respect the mentor's guidance
- Recognize that the mentor is able to provide direction, but is not responsible for solving problems/issues
- Focus on personal and professional development throughout the mentoring process
- Be flexible. Regardless of whether your educational background or professional goals match the mentor's experience, your participation in the program will be worthwhile!



TIPS FOR MENTEES

Establish contact

Once you have your mentor's information, introduce yourself with our sample "Welcome" email, which can be found in the "Resources" section of this handbook. While you may copy the message verbatim we encourage you to recreate the message with your own personal touch.

Plan what to discuss

You may expect your mentors to take the lead in your 1-1 meetings/conversations. However, the expectation of this program is that **you will be prepared to initiate mentor-mentee discussions**. Since you are the individual seeking guidance, it is important to let the mentor know what you are hoping to learn or receive guidance about – refer to the "Goal Sheet" within the "Resources" section to help you generate ideas.

Remember that the purpose of the mentee-mentor relationship is to promote your professional growth. As a result, you should ensure that interactions with your mentor comply with applicable ethical standards as described in the "Resources" section of this handbook.

Set expectations

Talk to your mentor about the best times to communicate with each other. For instance, if you anticipate that your schedule will be extremely busy during certain times of the year or you know that you will be out of town with limited time to connect, let them know ahead of time.

Also speak to your mentor about the best methods to communicate with one another. Do they prefer an email or a phone call for updates? Would they like you to text possible meeting times/dates? Would they prefer a Zoom or MS Teams call? Remember you are to be in communication at least once a month, so it is important to determine the best way to make this happen.

Respect boundaries

While you are encouraged to establish a supportive relationship with your mentor, there may be some circumstances under which you will have to respect boundaries. In particular, discussing personal or relationship issues is not recommended.

Understand the mentor role

Academic life can be very stressful. Mentors, however, are not intended to serve as mental health professionals, legal professionals, or parents. If you find that you are going through a rough time, we encourage you to access the various campus resources designed to assist and support students.

A list of resources is provided in the "Resources" section.

Focus on obtaining insight

You have been signed up to be a mentee because you are interested in learning from a professional with a wealth of experience to share. As a result, you can expect your mentor to provide you with guidance and feedback throughout the mentoring process.

However, it is important to remember that your mentor is not meant to solve your problems, tell you what to do, or how to do it. In this program, we ask that you communicate honestly and openly with your mentor and respect the information and guidance that they provide to you. When your mentor shares ideas or offers suggestions, they are doing so as a collaborator, not as a parent or guidance counselor.

Maintain contact

Maintaining regular contact will aid in the development of a successful relationship. If you receive a note from your mentor, it is essential that you respond promptly (within 24 hours). If it is a busy time during your semester (e.g. midterms), send a “short note” to let your mentor know about your commitments and that you will respond in a more detailed manner shortly.

This will assure your mentor that you received their message and intend to respond. Upon sending this “short note”, it is important that you follow-up within 48 hours with a longer message.



VIRTUAL MENTORSHIP

While many of our students and alumni live within the Greater Toronto Area, there are many in the program that live outside the Toronto boundaries. Some live hours from Toronto and the campus, others in different provinces, and even outside of Canada.

While in-person meetings are the best opportunities to connect with one another, technology has made it easier to bridge geographic boundaries.

Virtual meeting platforms like [Zoom](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), [WhatsApp](#), or even [Facetime](#) have made online face-to-face meetings easy and convenient.

If you require some assistance or need some advice on how to set-up virtual mentorship, please let the program coordinators know and they would be happy to help.



TIMELINE OF ACTIVITY

Month 1

Setting expectations and career goals for mentorship

Exercise Sheets

- Complete the Mentorship Program Goal Sheet – discuss with your mentor
- Complete Self-Reflection Worksheet – discuss with your mentor

Discussion Topics

- Establish ground rules and expectations (i.e how often you want to meet, how you want to meet (in-person vs online), the best method for communicating, etc.)
- Discuss your background (e.g., education, work, volunteer experiences) and career plans with your mentor
- Inquire about your mentor's history and their transition from school to work (e.g., how they made career decisions)
- Inquire about your mentor's career field (typical day, satisfactions, challenges, trends in the field, entry level positions)
- Discuss with your mentor how you can become more knowledgeable regarding your field of interest (e.g., industry websites, industry/professional associations, certification programs)
- Tell your mentor about your skills and experience and obtain advice regarding how you can best market yourself for your field of interest
- Plan with your mentor what tasks you will undertake before your next meeting



Months 2 and 3

Bridging the gap between school & work

Possible Activities

- Meet for coffee or a meal, pick somewhere quiet enough that you can have a conversation. Decide on a location that works for you both. You do not need to offer to pay, and you shouldn't expect your mentor will offer either, make sure you work within your personal budget.
- Review your resume and cover letter with your mentor

Discussion Topics

- Discuss with your mentor how their actual work experiences have compared to the expectations they had when they were a student
- Speak with your mentor about workplace expectations (i.e. corporate culture, developing a career in the field, tips for following the dress code and possible pitfalls in the first year)
- Discuss how to gain relevant experience (i.e. summer jobs, part-time work, internships, volunteerism, entry-level positions, etc.)
- Discuss the career and industry information that you researched during months 1
- Follow up with any commitments from the first contact (i.e. activities regarding skill development)
- Discuss with your mentor any relevant on- or off-campus seminars that you have attended (i.e. career, academic, professional, leadership focused)



Month 4 and 5

Taking steps to the future

Possible Activities

- Look for professional association events you could attend together
- Work with your mentor to develop a career action plan

Discussion Topics

- If considering application to graduate school, discuss application procedures and materials
- Discuss with your mentor how you might use information gained through the program to look for work and/or apply for post-graduate education
- If welcomed by your mentor, arrange for any future contact beyond the official “end” of the program



MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

In order for your mentor to help understand your career, professional and educational goals, it is essential that you maintain **ongoing and consistent communication**.

As there are many communication options available, please make sure to clarify with your mentor their personal preference for keeping in touch. Each mentor/mentee relationship has different dynamics and we suggest you discover and share what works best for you early on.

Consider the following ideas:

- Keep in regular contact (at least one email, phone call or text per week – depending on what you have decided with your mentor)
- Provide your mentor with information regarding your ongoing efforts with respect to school, work search, application to post-grad studies, etc.
- Be an effective communicator and active listener
- Follow up on any commitments made to your mentor
- Establish guidelines and boundaries for the relationship; respect what your mentor can and can't do
- Discuss the outcomes of the sessions provided through the PharmaSEE program

STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES TO HELP GUIDE YOUR FIRST MENTORING SESSION

Prior to your first meeting engage in self-reflection

- Complete Goal Setting Worksheet - See Appendix A
- Complete Self Reflection Worksheet - See Appendix B

At your first meeting discuss your Self-Reflection & Goal Setting worksheets

The purpose of your first in-person mentoring meeting is to begin building a relationship with your mentor. Discuss your background (education, volunteer and work experience) and ask them about theirs. Review together and discuss your self-reflection and goal-setting worksheets which is intended to help you with this process as well as establish a solid foundation for moving forward with future meetings.



RESOURCES

Sample Welcome Email

Upon receiving notification of your mentor match, establish a positive relationship early on by sending a short introduction email.

Dear «*Mentor*»,

My name is _____ and I am excited that we have been paired for the 2023-2023 PharmaSEE Mentorship Program.

To let you know a bit about myself, I am entering my final term/year of studies at the LDFP. I am an PharmD student looking to get into _____.

I chose to enroll in the mentorship program to learn/help me with_____

I am looking forward to learning more about you and your current role. I feel fortunate to have a mentor to help guide me through my transition from school to work, so thank-you for participating in this program.

I look forward to setting up our first meeting, would you please let me know your availability for *(a few different dates or time period)* and if you prefer to meet virtually or in person. If you would like to connect by phone, email or in-person prior to our meeting, please let me know. You can respond to this email address and my cell phone number is _____.

I look forward to connecting with you shortly.

All the best,
«*Your Name*»

GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

(appendix A)

To be completed by the mentor and mentee together.

Set three career goals with your mentor. For example, identify professional goals for the next 6 months, 1 year and 5 years. Define the skills, knowledge and resources needed to achieve these goals and outline the required actions and timeline.

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Actions to achieve goals

GOAL	Knowledge & Skills Required	Actions to Achievement	Timeline
Goal 1			
Goal 2			
Goal 3			

SELF-REFLECTION WORKSHEET

(appendix B)

Review and complete the self-reflection worksheet. Bring worksheet to first in-person meeting with your mentor for discussion.

Personal/Professional

What questions or concerns do I have about entering into my chosen field?

What are my strengths?

What skills do I need to and/or would like to develop?

What are my career-related, professional or academic goals? (see goal setting exercise to be completed during first in-person session with mentor)

Establishing a Strong Mentoring Relationship

What goals do I have for this mentoring relationship?

What expectations do I have for this mentoring relationship?

What do I hope to gain from participation in the PharmaSEE Mentorship Program?

How do I tend to communicate with others? (e.g. tend to engage in limited conversation until I get to know someone or very open and communicative upon first meeting)

What is the best way for me to maintain ongoing and consistent communication with my mentor?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

These helpful resources will help you to make the most of your PMP experience.

Self-Evaluation

Mentees consider the following:

- What goals do I have for this mentoring relationship?
- What would I like to gain from this experience?
- What questions or concerns do I have about entering into my chosen field?
- What are my strengths?
- What skills do I need to develop?

Mentors consider the following:

- What key learning experiences and important insights will I share?
- What aspects of getting started in my career were particularly challenging for me?
- What support was I given and how can you pass that along?
- What discoveries did I make on my own?

Active Listening

Active listening is something that you probably do already but is something worth mastering. It requires you to do more than hear the message. It requires you to participate in the message to shape its meaning.

The skill of **active listening** includes the following three elements:

Body Language

It is important for you to communicate non-verbal thoughts like, "I am interested in what you have to say" or "I want to hear what you have to say" with your body expressions. Like you, your mentor might need these expressions of encouragement to determine if you are really interested in what he/she is saying. There are a number of ways to get these messages across.

A few examples are listed below:

- Establish eye contact with the other person.
- Maintain a physical stance that is relaxed and open.
- Minimize tense gestures like the crossing of arms and legs.
- Face the other person.
- Incline your body toward the person but leave room for personal space.

Questioning

If you do not understand something, ask questions! Questions can help clarify facts or concepts that you are unsure about. Frame your question around what your mentor has said to show your interest and desire to understand.

Example:

Mentee: I'm fearful of the competition. I'm not sure how to make myself a desirable candidate.

Mentor: What aspects of the competition do you fear? What qualities do you want to be able to demonstrate?

Also, ask about your mentor's *feelings* to establish a sense of empathy in your rapport. Everyone wants to be understood. You can start by trying to see things from your mentor's perspective.

Summarize and Reflect

First, get a sense of *when* you can begin to paraphrase. Watch for non-verbal cues that tell you when your mentor has finished his/her train of thought. *Restating* it in your own words is a way to show your attempt at understanding what you have just heard. *Reflecting*, on the other hand, shows your empathy for the emotional content of the message. Remember to listen without judgment -- it shows your desire to understand the other person's perspective.

Suggestions for Starting Phrases

In case you feel tongue-tied about starting a conversation, here are some phrases that can help you loosen up. Use these phrases when you trust that your perceptions about a subject are accurate, and when your mentor is receptive to your communication.

- You feel... What I hear you saying...



- From your point of view... You are...(identify the feeling, i.e. angry, sad)
- It seems to me... I'm picking up that you...
- In your experience... From where you stand...
- I really hear you saying that... As you see it...
- Where you're coming from is... You think...

Here are some additional phrases that are useful when you are having difficulty perceiving clearly, or when your mentor might not be receptive to your communication.

- Could it be that... Maybe you feel...
- I wonder if... It is conceivable that...
- I'm not sure I'm right, but... Maybe I'm out to lunch, but...
- Would you buy this idea... Maybe this is a long shot, but...
- What I guess I'm hearing is... I'm not sure if I'm with you, do you mean...
- Correct me if I'm wrong, but... I'm not certain I understand, you're feeling...
- Is it possible that... It seems that...
- Could this be what's going on... As I hear it, you...
- This is what I think I hear... ...is that the way it is?
- You appear to be feeling... ...is that what you mean?
- I sense that maybe you feel... ...is that the way you feel?
- Let me see if I'm with you, you... Let me see if I understand; you...
- From where I stand you... I get the impression that...

Discussion versus Debate

Sometimes you may find yourself in a debate when you thought you were in a discussion. When you realize that you are debating and not discussing, decide if you want to remain there.

A discussion is the sharing of ideas that can expand perspectives. It suggests a "win-win" attitude, and is assertive without being aggressive.

A debate, on the other hand, is the burden of ideas, opinions and perceptions. It is often characterized by a "My view is better than yours" attitude. It suggests a "win-lose" attitude, and is aggressive.

Skills: Active Listening and Questioning

In discussions, emphasize the "active listening".
In debates, emphasize "questioning".

Ask for definition of terms, supporting data, and references.

People may like to debate for the intellectual stimulation it provides. There is a challenge in asserting your opinion through logical deduction. The exchange of opinions is not meant to be taken personally. However, debates run the risk of turning into emotionally charged arguments, which may reflect poorly on you.

You want to communicate that you appreciate your mentor's point of view while maintaining a friendly rapport with them. Debating aggressively may alienate you from your mentor.

If you wish to escape a debate, first communicate your understanding of the other point of view. Close off the debate and seek a mutually agreeable subject to discuss.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Program Facilitators

PharmaSEE Mentorship Program (PMP) Student Club
pharmacy.mentorship.ut@gmail.com

Lina Yacoub, 2T5
Co-President

Edwin Thomas, 2T7
Co-President

Samir Kanji, 2T6
Associate Director

Mi Dang, 2T8
Events Director

Maya Crews, 2T7
Secretary & Communications Director

Varsha Menon, 2T7
Events Director

Christina Kang, 2T5
Social Media Director

Annie Cho, 2T5
Class Rep

Fadi Haddad, 2T7
Class Rep

Saphia Mourad, 2T6
Class Rep

Fieruz Mobarak, 2T8
Class Rep

Office of Advancement & Alumni Relations
Claire Simpson
Manager, Alumni Relations
Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy
claire.simpson@utoronto.ca

Websites and more information

PharmaSEE Mentorship Program (PMP)
<https://www.pharmacy.utoronto.ca/pharmasee>

Student Life and Services
<https://www.pharmacy.utoronto.ca/apply-student-support/student-life-services>

Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations
<https://www.pharmacy.utoronto.ca/about-leslie-dan-faculty-pharmacy/alumni-donors>