



PharmaSEE Mentorship Program (PMP)

MENTOR 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 our students transition from student life to work-life and assist in strengthening their self-image and vision of their possible futures.

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

With the **PharmaSEE Mentorship Program** 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 mentor in the **PharmaSEE** program:

- Provides intrinsic satisfaction (makes you feel good) by helping an emerging professional from your alma mater develop their potential
- Creates opportunities to share experiences
- Increases networking potential
- Creates opportunities for experienced professionals to strengthen their knowledge base and improve communication skills
- Enhances your leadership, teaching and coaching skills and encourages you to become a more reflective practitioner
- Offers opportunities to interact with future professionals who will shape the future of our country
- Demonstrates professionalism and a commitment to personal and professional development of self
- Provides satisfaction of giving-back and re-acquainting yourself with the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy

MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A mentor is a coach, a motivator, a friend and a guide. As such, your job is to provide advice and support to your mentee in order to facilitate the visualization and realization of their career goals and full potential.

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

- Value the mentee as a person
- Develop mutual trust and respect
- Establish personal boundaries, expectations and communication methods early on
- Maintain confidentiality
- Listen both to what is being said and how it is being said
- Help the mentee solve his or her own problem, rather than give direction
- Focus on the mentee's own personal development, and resist the urge to produce a copy of yourself
- Be flexible. Your career or experience may not match the mentee's expectations precisely, but this does not mean it won't be appreciated!

TIPS FOR MENTORS

Make a list.

Think about some of the things you would have wanted to know when you were in your mentee's position. For example, what it was like to be starting out as a new graduate, challenges and successes of the job search, starting off in a new organization and reasonable expectations to have when entering the workforce.

Plan what to discuss.

When students initiate discussion, it is usually to inquire about their mentor's university involvement and the transition into the working world, although there may be other topics that might prove beneficial for discussion. You may want to reflect back on your academic or early professional experiences and identify information that would have proven useful to you at that stage.

Remember that the purpose of the mentor relationship is to promote the mentee's professional growth. Mentors should assure that interactions with mentees comply with applicable ethical standards as briefly described in the *"Resources"* section of this handbook.

Establish contact.

Once you have your mentee's information, introduce yourself with our sample "Welcome" email, which can be found in the *"Resources"* section of this handbook.

Maintain contact.

Maintaining regular contact and soliciting the same will aid in developing a successful mentoring relationship. Sometimes a short sentence acknowledging receipt of a note and saying you'll be in contact later will suffice during a busy time. Additionally, it will assure your mentee of future contact. You may even prompt or encourage your mentee to do the same.

A quick line, such as *"I haven't heard from you lately, are you very busy with school/work?"* may help bridge a lag in communication.

Set expectations.

Talk to your mentee about the best times to communicate with each other. For instance, if you anticipate your schedule getting particularly busy during certain times of the year, or you know that you will be out of town, and/or some place with limited access to email, you may want to let them know ahead of time.

Establish boundaries.

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

Refer if necessary to campus resources.

Academic life can be very stressful for some individuals. Mentors, however, are not intended to serve as mental health professionals, legal professionals, or parents. If you find that your mentee is going through a rough time, please feel free to encourage them to explore any of the various campus resources that are designed to assist in these circumstances.

A list of some of the more common resources is provided in the *“Resources”* section.

Focus on wisdom.

You have been chosen to mentor a graduating student because you are a professional with a wealth of experience to share. As a result, you can expect your mentee to come to you for guidance or feedback from time to time. However, don't feel as if you should have to solve your mentee's problems, tell them what to do, or how to do it. In this program, we only ask that you freely share what you have done and learned in your own life that has helped shape your professional career. If you feel comfortable sharing ideas or suggestions, please do so as a collaborator, *not* as a parent or guidance counselor.

VIRTUAL MENTORSHIP

While most 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

- 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 mentee's career plans and background to assess their level of information and preparedness for their career
- Discuss your own history (i.e. how you made career decisions)
- Invite your mentee's questions about your career field (typical day, satisfactions, challenges, trends in the field, entry level positions)
- Discuss your mentee's goals (students will be asked to complete a goal sheet)
- Suggest how your mentee can become more knowledgeable about the field (i.e. industry websites, industry/professional associations, publications, certification programs)
- Give advice on how your mentee can market their skills/experience for your particular field
- Plan with your mentee what tasks they will undertake before the second contact

Months 2 and 3

Bridging the gap between school & work

- If possible, meet for coffee or a meal, give your mentee some parameters and ask them to find a good place to meet that works for both of you. You are not expected to pay for this meal, each person can pay their own way. Understand that students will have a limited budget and don't insist on anything outside of the budget.
- Discuss how your actual work experiences have compared to your own expectations when you were a student
- Discuss how to gain relevant experience (i.e. summer jobs, part-time work, internships, volunteerism, entry-level positions, etc)
- Discuss career and industry information your mentee researched during month 1
- Follow up with any commitments from the first contact (i.e. activities regarding skill development)
- Recommend that your mentee attend career development and academic planning workshops and seminars; encourage participation in leadership development workshops.

Month 4 and 5

Taking steps to the future

- Provide advice regarding your mentee's resume, cover letter, professional school application procedures or admission tests
- Discuss how your mentee might use information gained through the program in looking for work and/or applying for post-graduate education
- Help your mentee to develop a career action plan
- Arrange for any future contact beyond the official "end" of the program year

MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

Staying in touch with your mentee during the program is a great way to encourage and support a young professional's career goals. Your support could be a word of encouragement or even sending a website link related to their field of interest. Since there are many communication options available, please make sure to clarify with your student your personal preference. 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 or phone call per week - if that's what works best)
 - Email a message or relevant website address
 - Email a relevant article
 - Phone or send a text message
- Be encouraging in the mentee's efforts and assets
- Be an active listener
- Follow up on any commitments made to your student
- Be direct with your student regarding what you will and won't do in the relationship
- Encourage your student to use all available campus resources
- Discuss the outcomes of the workshop sessions with your student

RESOURCES

Sample Welcome Email

Establish a positive relationship early on by sending a short email to your mentee.

Dear «*Mentee*»,

As you close in on completing your PharmD program, it is wonderful that you are taking proactive steps to ensure a smooth transition into your professional journey. Congratulations on your decision to participate in the ***PharmaSEE Mentorship Program!***

I have chosen to serve as your mentor during this transition period because, as a Pharmacy graduate myself I understand the importance of having an experienced mentor with whom to discuss your plans and career goals. During our time together I hope to provide you with the knowledge, resources and feedback that you need in order to feel confident in taking the next steps toward your career goals.

If you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to get in touch at «*Your e-mail address or phone number*». I look forward to meeting with you at our next networking event.

All the best,

«*Your Name*»

GOAL SETTING WOKSHEET

To be completed by the mentor and mentee together.

Set three career goals with your mentee. For example, identify their 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			

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

These helpful resources will help you to make the most of your PharmaSEE 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?

First Contact

- Discuss the skills and strengths that you or your mentee feel may require development.
- Explore what can be expected on the job? What are the differences between university and the workplace?
- Talk about the workplace environment: culture, challenges in starting out, developing a presence.
- Discuss your mentee's background; Are they on the right track toward their chosen career? Will they require further experience, and if so, what kind?
- Discuss with your mentee how they can market their skills/experience. For example, what should be emphasized on their resume? In the interview?

Personal Topics and Themes

- Expectations of the mentoring relationship
- Obtaining a work/life balance
- Preparing oneself for the transition to full-time work life.
- Sharing your personal background depending on comfort level (family, hobbies, traveling etc.)
- Things you (the mentor) would do differently if given the chance

Professional Topics and Themes

- Professional skills that are critical for your profession or career
- Examples of undergraduate education and the university experience that prepared you for entering the workplace/your current position
- Types of positions the mentee expects to obtain following graduation
- Some of the steps (if any) your mentee is taking to achieve this goal
- Any challenges or work-transitions that happened throughout your career and how you dealt with them
- Workplace culture and how they might differ from organization to organization

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 mentee 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 mentee 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 mentee'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 mentee'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 mentee 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 mentee 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 mentee 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 mentee's point of view while maintaining a friendly rapport with him or her. Debating aggressively may alienate you from your mentee.

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.

MENTORSHIP CHECKLIST

- What are you responsible for in the mentorship program?
- How should you prepare for your first meeting with your mentee?
- What kinds of things should you be concerned about during your first meeting?
- What can you discuss with your mentee?
- How can you keep in touch with your mentee?
- Describe some specific skills that you think will benefit or improve your mentoring relationship.

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 Program
<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>