

# Mentee Handbook



## Welcome to the SIT Alumni Mentoring Programme!

Organised by the SIT Advancement and Alumni Division with the partnership of SIT Student Life Division and SITizen Ambassadors, this flagship programme aims to build a platform to foster a nurturing relationship between alumni and students and instill a greater sense of belonging towards our university.

The programme launched in 2020 had garnered significant support from SIT's illustrious alumni who work in the public and private sectors. These alumni have experienced the 'SIT journey' you, as students, are undertaking, and thus are in the best possible role to mentor you. More importantly, they have volunteered their valuable time to advise, coach and guide you, our SIT students in the areas of career, academics, life skills and more.

We urge you to seize this unique opportunity to create a rewarding experience for yourself and your mentor. This is your chance to gain insights from our very own graduates.

### 1. What is Mentoring?

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Mentoring is a fundamental human relationship, in which a person invests his or her time, energy, and expertise to nurture the growth and ability of another person. Mentors are the special people in our lives who help us reach our potential. They are '*helpers*' and their style may range from that of a persistent encourager who boosts our self-confidence to that of a stern taskmaster who teaches a '*Mentee*' to appreciate excellence in performance. Whatever their style, they care about their *Mentees*.

Mentoring is one of the all-encompassing methods of encouraging human growth. Today, mentoring is often spoken about in corporate circles, but mentors can touch every facet of a person's being if their wisdom is accepted and applied in diverse ways to an individual's life. It is a process wherein the Mentor and Mentee work together to discover and develop the Mentee's latent abilities and encourage the Mentee to acquire knowledge and skills as and when the opportunities and needs arise. The Mentor serves as a tutor, counselor, friend, and foil enabling the Mentee to sharpen her/his skills and increase her/his knowledge.

***An Important Note:*** *To gain from mentoring, a person has to reach out, grasp, and learn from the wisdom that the Mentor offers. The mentee can only experience the benefits of mentoring by assuming ownership of what the Mentor has offered and using it appropriately.*

The following guidelines show you how to make best use of your relationship with your Mentor.

## 2. Getting Acquainted

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"Fit and chemistry must be considered when pairing the mentor and the protégé. If the two don't get along, it matters little what each can offer the other in terms of knowledge and skills."

- *Michael Zey, Building a successful formal mentor program*

Getting acquainted with your Mentor over the Internet can be quite convenient. If you are looking for ways to connect online using the SIT Alumni Mentoring Programme, the following are a few suggestions to help you get started on conversations with your Mentor:

1. Hobbies and extracurricular activities.
2. Modules that you have undertaken, projects that you have worked on, or career related interests.
3. Your favorite modules in SIT, favorite book, etc.

Don't forget to learn about your Mentor by asking her/him questions too!

We encourage you to voice your concerns with your Mentor. In case you find it difficult to discuss topics using technical terms, we advise you to paraphrase your questions. Although it might take several online discussions to clarify a point, your Mentor is likely to appreciate your interest and your passion to learn.

### 3. Means to Communicate

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There are various ways in which you can communicate with your Mentee. These include:

1. E-mails
2. Chats/ discussion boards
3. Skype/Zoom for audio or video conversations
4. Meeting in person whenever possible
5. SMS/ WhatsApp/ etc.

### 4. Set Your Goals and Summarize Completed Sessions

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To have a successful **Mentoring Relationship**, you must;

- Understand your needs
- Set your goals
- Convey your needs and goals to your Mentor
- Discuss how you can accomplish them
- On completing a discussion session, summarize the session to form new action items

A good start would be to answer the following questions;

1. **What do you want to achieve from this mentoring relationship?** (e.g. completing requirements for a degree, finding a right IWSP or job, securing admission to graduate school)
2. **How will you know if you have reached these goals?** (e.g. being able to graduate as intended, receiving an offer to work in the area of your interest)
3. **What challenges do you anticipate?** (e.g. uncertainty about the availability of certain courses, slow job market, time-consuming applications)

We hope you are now able to clearly define your goals and make best use of the time spent with your Mentor.

## 5. Effective Online Communication

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The term '*Communication*' covers just about any interaction with another person. It includes sharing information, ideas, and feelings. Communication is a two-way process. You can probably remember several occasions when the lack of communication or miscommunication has left you feeling angry, or worried.

While speaking to someone, whether face to face, or on the phone, you can use hand gestures, facial expressions and voice modulation for conveying your thoughts. Imagine what happens when you communicate over emails; or, when you have to communicate through online discussion boards. Here, you cannot make use of non-textual ways of conveying information; you can only rely on your text messages.

The following netiquette tips are critical to a Mentor - Mentee relationship:

- **Meaningful Subject Line** - A good subject line ensures that the recipient recognizes the importance of your message and doesn't delete it accidentally. Another reason is that the subject line will give your Mentor a clear idea of the topic you want to discuss.
- **Clear and Concise Messages** - Was your Mentor's points clear? Were you able to understand them? If not, ask your Mentor for clarification. Asking for a clarification will allow your Mentor to restate, elaborate, or reconsider her/his message. It is very important that even your messages are clear and concise. Using apt and correct words, avoiding long sentences and using formal language (not SMS/slang vocabulary) will help you communicate effectively.
- **Investigating Assumptions** - Even if they have not been stated explicitly, have you understood the assumptions your Mentor has made in the message? Stating your understanding of the message, or asking your Mentor about to clarify her/his words can be useful in preventing any misinterpretations.
- **Communicating about Communication** - It is very important to inform your Mentor of your schedule, well in advance. This prevents a communication breakdown, which would have resulted in unnecessary frustration.

We sincerely hope that you have a fruitful online experience, as you exchange your thoughts with your Mentor.

## 6. Networking Tips

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Networking is a learned skill that takes time and practice to improve. It is likely that your Mentor has leveraged her/his network of contacts at various times in her/his life. Learn from her/him how she/he built her/his network. Appreciate the effort that goes into maintaining these quality relationships. If your Mentor is willing, then request her/him to share her/his contacts with you, so that you can reach your goals.

When you approach your Mentor, or any of her/his contacts, this is the networking etiquette that you must follow:

- a. When asking for a favor, ask politely. For instance, say, ‘Perhaps you can point me in the right direction...’, or, ‘Could you help me...’
- b. Follow up using the 48-hour rule. Respond to phone messages and emails, and send thank you notes, nice-to-meet-you notes, or emails after a meeting, within 48 hours.
- c. When calling up a person who has been referred to you, by someone else, mention your contact’s name early in the conversation. For example, ‘John suggested that I contact you about...’

We wish you the very best in building your network of contacts!

## 7. Suggested Activities for Mentors and Mentees

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The following are activities that we suggest you participate with your mentor when you meet him/her in person:

- Engage in lunch meetings to discuss different subjects, including the institution, classes, career path and extra-curricular activities.
- Get introduced to your Mentor’s colleagues and faculty members acquainted to her/him.
  - Expand your network of contacts.
- Show your Mentor some of your favorite places in the country — places they might otherwise never discover themselves.
- Attend cultural and sporting events together.

## 8. Don't Lose Sight of Your Goals

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There might be times in your Mentoring Relationship when things might stagnate and a fresh impetus is required. At such times, we recommend the following activities:

- Revisit the goals that you have set for your mentor and for yourself. Are you on the right track to achieve what you had set out to do?
- Could you have done something better? Being enthusiastic can help you and your mentor move forward.
- Do you think you need to extend the mentoring period? Learning, as they say, never stops.

Re-energising the relationship goes a long way in ensuring the success of the mentoring relationship.

## 9. Help during Periods of Transition

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As you and your mentor near the completion of your Mentoring relationship, you may wonder whether your takeaways from the Mentoring Relationship will smoothen your transition into future endeavors. There may still be loose ends that need to be tied up, or some fears about moving on.

We now encourage you and your Mentor to discuss your transition from your current position to your post-mentoring goals. Your Mentor may be in a position to help you prepare better for what lies ahead and thus reduce the anxieties you may have about the changes that await you.

Nothing can replace experience!

## 10. Need for a Good Closure

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Some Mentoring relationships end with the successful completion of learning goals; some do not for a number of reasons. Even unproductive or unsatisfactory Mentoring Relationships can benefit from a good closure. The key to a successful closure is being prepared with an exit strategy. A good exit strategy has five components:

1. A learning conclusion (processing the learning that took place because of the relationship while working towards the achievement of learning goals)
2. A process for integrating what was learned (a conversation focusing on how to apply the learning and take it to the next level)
3. A meaningful way of celebrating success (planning a mutually satisfying way to celebrate the successful achievement of goals)
4. A conversation focusing on redefining the relationship (talking about how the relationship is to continue, whether it moves from a '*Professional Mentoring Relationship*' to '*Colleague*', '*Friendship*', or ceases to exist entirely)

5. Moving on (both mentor and mentee let go and identify ways of keeping in touch, if appropriate and/or mutually desired)

## **11. Provide Regular Feedback**

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It is important to provide regular feedback on mentoring and your Mentoring Relationship to your Mentor as well as the Program Facilitators. Complete the Mentor Program survey(s) and Mentor feedback form(s) sent to you via mentoring portal. Constructive feedback to the Mentor will help her or him guide you better and can improve your Mentoring Relationship. Feedback to us, the facilitators, will allow us to address your necessities/concerns and thus improve the programme, thereby ensuring an enjoyable mentoring experience.