

Guide for STUDENTS

**The Notre Dame MBA
Mentor Program**

V3.kp.kc.kd.cp.05.27.08

Contents

TOPIC	SLIDE NUMBER
Overview	3
Objectives	4
Role	5
Role requirements	6
How we chose your mentor	7
Expectations	8
Ground rules	9
Characteristics of effective mentoring	10
Sample topics	11
Listening	12
Receiving feedback	13
If problems surface	14
Giving feedback to the program	15
Next steps	16
Contact information	17

A Basic Overview

- Thank you for signing up for the Notre Dame MBA Mentor Program.
- This Guide has been prepared to provide you with a brief overview of the Program and process, and guidelines for ensuring your interactions with your mentor are meaningful and professional.
- *Reading this Guide is required.* Please let us know how we can assist you as you participate in this process. Contact us at mbacareer@nd.edu with any questions or suggestions.

The Objectives of the Program

- The Notre Dame MBA Mentor Program has four primary objectives:
 - provide students with expert guidance and counsel as they explore career options and devise professional development and job search strategies over the next one to two years
 - provide mentors with a chance to share knowledge gained throughout their professional career with students who are our next generation of business and community leaders
 - provide students with skills in networking and mentoring they can use throughout their careers
 - involve seasoned members of the Notre Dame community [alumni, recruiters, executives] in the mission of the Notre Dame MBA program to develop students as business professionals.

Your Role

- The term “mentor” has its origins in ancient Greece, when King Odysseus asked his trusted friend “Mentor” to teach and guide his son. Today, mentors are typically individuals who are either assigned formally or who provide guidance informally to an individual who is more junior to them in an organizational structure.
- It is reasonable to engage your mentor in any of the following capacities:
 - *Counselor*: provides professional advice to you on topics such as career path options, resume content, networking strategies, interviewing tips, and values-based career decision-making.
 - *Industry expert*: provides useful information and answers your questions about their industry, career path, primary business responsibilities, important lessons learned, and success strategies.
 - *Supporter*: provides encouragement if you become ‘stuck’ with respect to pursuing your career goals.

Specific Role Requirements

- Initiating contact with your mentor two times per MOD
- Being prepared for each interaction with your mentor
- Being open to advice and feedback from your mentor
- Sharing substantive issues with your mentor
- Ensuring that all interactions with your mentor are professional in nature (including written, phone, email and in-person contacts)
- Following through on all commitments made
- Notifying your CD career coach or the student Mentor Committee if a problem arises
- Regularly thanking your mentor for his or her time
- Maintaining complete confidentiality with respect to information exchanged unless otherwise understood with your mentor.

How we chose your mentor for you.

- Notre Dame alumni and select businesspeople in the Notre Dame community were invited to sign up to participate in this Inaugural Program.
- Interested individuals completed an on-line profile about their background, professional interests, and career preferences.
- A committee composed of MBA Program administrators reviewed this information against similar profile information gathered from interested students.
- The committee met as a group and matched students and mentors according to the student's preferred industry, functional area and/or location focus.

Baseline Expectations

- Recognize your mentor is exceptionally busy.
 - A “good” mentoring relationship for the purposes of this Program will probably consist of a number of email exchanges or phone calls over a several-month period of time or longer.
 - If your mentor will be on campus within the coming year, or if you will be in your mentor’s area during a break from classes, a face-to-face meeting is encouraged but not expected.
- We ask that in your initial contact with your mentor, you discuss and agree on the following topics:
 - brief overview of your and your mentor’s background
 - the goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship
 - their preferred form of communication – phone, email; set times or spur of the moment; you contact mentor directly, or go through an assistant; the best time and place to reach your mentor (home or work), etc.
 - expectations with respect to preparation for each conversation
 - expectations with respect to time commitments and constraints.

Baseline Ground Rules

- **For the mentor:**
 - be willing to share information about him or herself and their experiences that can assist you as you explore career options and make career decisions
 - be willing to share industry expertise and professional resources [such as search firms, web sites, professional meetings] that can assist you in becoming more knowledgeable in your chosen area
 - be diligent with respect to communicating changes in availability and the need to reschedule mentoring sessions.
- **For the student:**
 - prepare in advance for all interactions with the mentor
 - take responsibility for initiating contact and continuing to contact the mentor several times over the course of the next few months or longer
 - follow through on all commitments made particularly with respect to the scheduling and length of mentoring sessions
 - the focus of this Program is professional development, not obtaining a job.
- **For both:**
 - treat all information exchanged as confidential unless both parties agree it can be disclosed to others.

Characteristics of Effective Mentoring

- Getting the most from your mentor requires:
 - an honest articulation of career goals, and a willingness to engage in the work needed to clarify these goals
 - an openness to new ways of thinking about careers
 - enthusiasm and willingness to share experiences with your mentor
 - preparing ahead and asking good questions that lead to fruitful discussion with your mentor
 - openness to receiving and acting on constructive feedback
 - realism about what the mentor can and cannot do for you
 - having or acquiring the ability to work well with someone you may not have personally chosen as your collaborator
 - willingness, over time, to share resources and networking contacts with your mentor
 - being professional and trustworthy in all mentoring interactions.

Sample Topics and Icebreakers

- Background and experiences
- Time management, organization suggestions
- Career goals and dreams – short-term vs. long-term
- Making career decisions when others are involved (e.g. spouse, family)
- Career path options
- Ways to acquire/strengthen industry expertise [professional associations, periodicals, web sites, meetings]
- Resume and cover letter content tips
- Networking resources and strategies
- Interviewing tips
- Internship and job search strategies in a particular location, industry or functional area
- Offer evaluation and salary negotiation
- Transitioning from school to work
- How you can prepare to be a successful leader in your desired field/pitfalls to avoid

Some Listening Tips

- Good mentoring requires good listening – by both parties. A few tips:
 - show interest
 - be open
 - let the mentor know when your time is limited
 - ask open-ended questions (that result in more than “yes” or “no” answers)
 - ask clarifying questions that encourage the mentor to fully flesh out his or her thoughts
 - avoid distractions (such as emailing or driving while talking on the phone)
 - be empathetic to your mentor, and interested in his/her personal challenges and dilemmas
 - be willing to accept feedback from your mentor at appropriate times.

Tips for Receiving Feedback

- One of the most important roles a mentor can fulfill is offering constructive feedback. Because of the depth of your mentor's professional experience, they will have much to offer in terms of advice and counsel. Being able to receive feedback is just as important as knowing how to give it. A few tips for receiving feedback:
 - demonstrate your openness to receiving feedback and to making changes based on what you have learned
 - be non-defensive when receiving feedback; focus on your behavior, not on you personally
 - take responsibility for your own actions
 - be aware of the context in which your mentor is speaking. Their opinion may affirm what you already know, or it may contradict your own view or a view you have received from another professional. Regardless, be open to their perspective. You don't have to agree with everything they say, but show an openness to their insights and a willingness to learn from them.
 - never say anything negative about a third party
 - all feedback given in the context of a mentoring relationship should be work- or job- related. If a conversation is moving into the personal realm, steer it back to the professional.

If Problems Surface

- If your expectations aren't being met, communicate this clearly to the mentor. Discuss ways to keep the relationship effective. If this problem persists, please let the Program administrators know.
- If the demands of the mentor on your time and resources exceed your ability to accommodate them, please first discuss this with the mentor and try to negotiate a workable arrangement. If this fails, please let the Program administrators know.
- If you need to end the relationship prematurely for any reason, please let the mentor and the Program administrators know as soon as possible. Always remember, how you end a relationship is at least as important as how you begin one.

Giving Feedback to the Program

- We are keenly interested in your feedback regarding the Program.
 - You will be asked regularly for feedback.
 - In the meantime, feel free to offer your suggestions by emailing mbacareer@nd.edu.
 - Also, you will receive additional information from Career Development throughout the Program.

Next Steps

- Your mentor's name and profile will be provided to you in your ND mailbox (basement of Mendoza). An email will alert you to check your mailbox. We ask you to contact your mentor by email within ten days of receiving your match letter. If you have not had an initial conversation with your mentor by that date, please let us know.
- Representatives from the MBA Mentor Program will be in contact with you throughout the year to learn how the Program is going from your perspective.

Program Contact Information

- **MBAA Contact**

- Ken Pascal, ND MBA '09, MBAA CD Committee Chair. 415 203 6572 kpascal@nd.edu

- **Primary Program Administrator:**

- Cindy Proffitt, Assistant Director, MBA Career Development, Mendoza College of Business. 574 631 2843 cproffit@nd.edu

- **Senior Program Administration:**

- Karen Dowd, Sr. Dir., MBA Career Development, Mendoza College of Business. 574 631 8488 kdowd1@nd.edu
- Ed Conlon, Assoc. Dean, Graduate Programs, Mendoza College of Business. 574 631 9295 econlon@nd.edu