



Guide for Mentors

The Notre Dame MBA Mentor Program



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Overview

- Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Notre Dame MBA Mentor Program.
- This Guide provides:
 1. a brief overview of the Program and process, and
 2. guidelines for ensuring your interactions with our students are meaningful and professional.
- *Reading this Guide is required for all Mentors.*
Please let us know how we can assist you as you participate in this process.

Contact us at mbacareer@nd.edu or (574) 631-2843 with any questions you might have about your role.



Program Objectives

- The Notre Dame MBA Mentor Program has four primary objectives:
 - 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 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 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 as a Mentor⁽¹⁾

- 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.
- In the context of the Notre Dame MBA Program, you are asked to focus on three roles:
 - *Counselor*: provide professional advice to your student on topics such as career path options, resume content, networking strategies, interviewing tips, and values based career decision making.
 - *Industry expert*: provide useful information and answer questions about your industry, career path, primary business responsibilities, important lessons learned, and success strategies.
 - *Supporter*: provide encouragement to the student when they appear to be ‘stuck’ with respect to pursuing their career goals.

(1) The term “mentor” has its origins in ancient Greece, when King Odysseus asked his trusted friend “Mentor” to teach and guide his son.



Mentor Matching

- Notre Dame alumni and select businesspeople in the Notre Dame community are invited to participate in this Program.
 - Individuals interested in serving as mentors completed an online personal profile highlighting their background and career experiences.
- Students interested in the Mentor Program indicate their interest viewing Mentor profiles and expressing interest via email directly to the Mentor.
 - Mentors view interested student profile and resume information.
- Mentor accepts or rejects invitation to serve as Mentor by responding to the student directly or via the Primary Program Administrator.



Program Expectations

- We recognize you are 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.
 - If you will be on campus within the coming year, or if the student will be in your area during a break from classes, a face to face meeting is encouraged although not expected.
- We ask that in your initial contact with the student, you discuss and agree on the following topics:
 - brief overview of your and the student’s background
 - the goals and expectations for the mentoring relationship
 - your preferred form of communication – phone, email; set times or spur of the moment; student contacts you directly, or goes through an assistant; the best time and place to reach you (home or business), etc.
 - expectations with respect to preparation for each conversation
 - expectations with respect to time commitments and constraints.



Program Ground Rules

- **For the Mentor:**
 - disclose information about yourself and your experiences that can assist the student as they explore career options and make career decisions.
 - share industry expertise and professional resources (such as search firms, web sites, professional meetings) that can assist the student in becoming more knowledgeable in their chosen area.
 - communicate changes in availability and the need to reschedule mentoring sessions diligently.
- **For the student:**
 - prepare in advance for all interactions with you.
 - take responsibility for initiating contact and continuing to contact you several times over the course of the next few months.
 - follow through on all commitments made particularly with respect to the scheduling and length of mentoring sessions.
 - keep the focus of this Program on professional development, not obtaining a job.
- **For both:**
 - treat all information exchanged as confidential unless both parties agree it can be disclosed to others.
 - communicate ground rule concerns to mbacareer@nd.edu or 574-631-2843.



Sample Topics and Icebreakers

- Background and experiences
- Time management, organization tactics
- Career goals and dreams – short term vs. long term
- Career path options
- Ways to acquire/strengthen industry expertise (professional associations, periodicals, websites, meetings)
- Internship and job search strategies in a particular location, industry or functional area
- Networking resources and strategies
- Resume and cover letter content tips (note: all resumes are professionally reviewed by Notre Dame staff)
- Interviewing tips
- Making career decisions when others are involved (e.g. spouse, family)
- Offer evaluation and salary negotiation
- Transitioning from school to work
- How the student can prepare to be a successful leader in their desired field/pitfalls to avoid



Listening Tips

- Good mentoring requires good listening – by both parties:
 - show interest via tone and reflective listening.
 - ask open ended questions (that result in more than “yes” or “no” answers).
 - ask clarifying questions that encourage the student to fully flesh out their thoughts.
 - be open and constructively critical.
 - be empathetic, especially when challenging the student to think or behave differently.
 - be willing to offer feedback at the appropriate time.
 - avoid distractions (such as emailing while talking on the phone).
 - let the student know when your time is limited.



Tips for Giving Feedback

- One of the most important roles you can fulfill for the student is offering constructive feedback. Because of the depth of your professional experience, you will have instant credibility with the student, and they will be willing to listen to and learn from you. When giving feedback:
 - be direct and straightforward.
 - be non-judgmental.
 - be candid.
 - be specific, focused, and timely.
 - be non-personal (focus on a behavior, not on the person).
 - encourage the student to take responsibility for their own actions (i.e., ask “What can you do to...?”).
 - keep it work- or job-related.
 - deal with behavior or actions, not people or personalities.
 - be fair, professional, and balanced.
 - offer help, support, and suggestions.



Program Quality

- If your expectations aren't being met:
 1. communicate this clearly to the student.
 2. Offer them feedback and give them the opportunity to make the changes needed to keep the relationship effective.
 3. If this problem persists, let the Program Administrator know.
- If the demands of the student on your time and resources exceed your ability to accommodate them:
 1. Discuss this with the student and try to negotiate a workable arrangement.
 2. If this fails, please let the Program Administrator know.
- If you need to end the relationship prematurely for any reason, please let the student and the Program Administrator know as soon as possible.



Program Feedback

- We are keenly interested in your feedback regarding the students and the Program.
 - You will be asked regularly for feedback and will be receiving Program updates throughout the year.
 - In the meantime, feel free to offer suggestions by email to mbacareer@nd.edu or 574-631-2843.



Next Steps

- Throughout the year, peak Program matching periods are July (One-Years) and October (Two-Years).
- Matches can occur year-round in the new system as a result of students' career development progress toward MBA Mentor Program eligibility.
- Send us your feedback at any time.



Program Contact Information

- **Primary Program Administrator:**
 - Cindy Proffitt, MBA Career Development, Mendoza College of Business, 574-631-2843, mbacareer@nd.edu
- **Senior Program Administration:**
 - Patrick Perrella, Director, MBA Career Development, Mendoza College of Business, 574-631-8488, pperrell@nd.edu