



IxDA Mentoring - Mentor's Guide

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For more details, please contact
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Introduction

Congratulations and thank you for volunteering to become a mentor in the IxDA Sydney mentoring program. It's a big responsibility and it takes a lot of commitment for someone to become a mentor. So, good on you!

This document is to help you get started with your mentoring session. Use this as a guideline rather than a rule. Modify them as you see fit.

As a mentor, your role is to:

- Help your mentee to identify their strengths and capitalise on them
- Help your mentee to clarify their goals
- Motivate and inspire
- Broaden perspectives and ways of thinking
- Support your mentee in achieving their goals

As a mentor you will share your knowledge but might learn a few things yourself. At the minimum it's a great opportunity to improve your skills in

- Listening
- Feedback
- Empathy

These are all skills you need to be a great mentor. Try to be mindful of them in your meetings and thrive to improve them, if you like.

How often should I meet my mentee?

There are no set rules on this. It's up to you and your mentee to decide what's appropriate. We encourage you to meet your mentee face-to-face at least once a fortnight night because we believe you get the best outcomes by meeting this way.

However, we know that this isn't always possible. Fortunately, the technology has come along way. You can use Skype, Facetime, Google Hangouts, etc. to do video calls. Of course, emails and phone calls are another method to get in touch.

When things get busy, often your meetup arrangement may get affected. To reduce the risks of this, be up-front with your mentee about your commitments. Discuss this in your first meeting together (more about this in the next section).

1st Meeting

We highly recommend that your 1st meeting to be face-to-face. You should have your 1st meeting within the 1st to 2nd week after it's being announced. If you are having issues to get in touch with

your mentee by this time, please contact the organiser asap so we can help you resolve it or match you with a different mentee.

The focus of your 1st meeting should be about:

- Getting to know each other
- Defining the goals and outcomes of the program
- Having an agreement on how you would like to work together
- Deciding if this is for you - i.e. Whether you want to continue mentoring the mentee we assigned for you.

There's a lot to discuss in your 1st meeting. Some of the topics you might want to discuss in your 1st meeting, such as:

- **Introduction to each other**
 - Tell your mentee about your background
 - Try to get to know your mentee by asking them questions about their background, experience, skills, etc
- **Determine your mentee's goals and outcomes during the program**
 - Your mentee might be having trouble to work out what they want to get out of the program. Your role is to guide them in the right direction.
 - Discuss with your mentee about what they would like to be able to do/learn;
 - Discuss with your mentee about what they would like to do more of and less of;

TOOLS:

Skills Matrix

http://ixdasydney.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/SkillsMatrix_V2.xlsx

Use this spreadsheet to find out about your mentee skills and which ones they want to evolve further. You can print it out and go through it with your mentee on the first meeting.

Mentoring Canvas - by Alastair Simpson

<https://ixdasydney.org/mentoring/mentoring-canvas/>

You can use this mentoring canvas as a framework to help you and your mentee determine the goals and outcomes of the program by understanding the problems that your mentee's need help with. Do this exercise together with your mentee on your 1st meeting.

- **Have an agreement on the time commitment**
 - Discuss with your mentee on how often you would like to meet. As mentioned before, there's no set rules for this. It is up to you and your mentee to decide.

- **Have an agreement on how are you going to meet/work together**
 - Discuss and decide together on what methods works for both of you - e.g. Face-to-face, over Skype, emails, phone, etc.
- **Have an agreement on what happens if one of you can't meet at schedule time/day**
 - Discuss and decide together on how you would handle the situation when one of you have to cancel. For example, you might have an agreement that whoever who needs to cancel the meeting would need to notify the other party at least 24hr prior and organise another suitable time as a replacement.
It's important to discuss this so you don't fall off the track when time gets busy and you can still have a productive meeting.

TIPS for keeping up your commitment

Once you've decided how often you both would like to meet, create a repeat schedule in your calendar and invite the mentee. You would be less likely to cancel if you already have them in your calendar!

- **Activities**
 - Depending on the goals of your mentee, discuss any appropriate activities to help your mentee achieve their goals during the program

TIPS

Your mentee would be looking for your lead and guidance in this. However, don't feel pressured that you have to give the answer right away. If you need help to think about the best way to help your mentee, reach out and contact the IxDA mentoring team and we might be able to help you.

- **Have an agreement on any follow ups**
 - Discuss and decide together if any follow up needed between meetings and how your mentee is going to reach you (vice versa) between meetings.
 - As a mentor, we encourage you to lead with follow-up conversation between meetings to check-in with your mentee and see how they're going.

- **Decide if you want to continue**

Your 1st meeting doesn't guarantee the commitment. It's not too late to back out! We understand that things may not go as smooth as planned. So, it's ok to say no!

If you don't think this isn't going to work out for both of you by the end of your 1st meeting, please let the us know ASAP so we can help you find another mentor/mentee (if possible). We can't always guarantee that you'll get another mentee but we'll try our best.

Have an honest conversation together and decide if you would like to continue or back out. We want you to enjoy the experience as well as being able to learn.

- **Next step**
 - If you decided to continue with the program, don't forget to discuss the next step.
 - Decide together what activities do you want your mentee to do before the next meeting
 - Discuss a draft agenda for the next meeting
 - If possible, schedule the next meeting in your calendar

2nd Meeting, 3rd, 4th....

By this time, you should know your mentee's goals and be on your way to help them.

Your focus for the sub-sequent meetings:

- Follow up on what activities you've decided together
- Follow up on your mentee's progress towards achieving their goals
- Support and help your mentee with any issues or concerns

TIPS

Prior to the meeting, have an agenda for what you're going to discuss so it can be more productive. You can set the agenda together at the end of each meeting for your next meeting.

If you have any concerns/issues, need any assistance, please contact us so we can help you.

Ask open ended questions that help the mentee explore their situation.

Seek first to really understand the mentees situation and context before leaping in with ideas.

Give your opinion but try to mention other views too.

Potential questions

You can help to define your mentees goals at one of the first sessions. They should ask themselves:

- Where do I see myself in five years?
- What methods, areas and types of jobs interests me the most?
- What are my strengths and interests?
- What are my weaknesses and dislikes?
- What does success look like?

To break the ice, you can ask

- What things have you been working on?
- Where are you stuck?

- What kinds of problems are you encountering?
- What have you done so far to address those problems?

Sometimes it's more effective to help the mentee to find the answer themselves. In that case these questions might help you:

- What result do you want to see?
- What options do you see?
- What obstacles could you face?
- What do you think is the best way to achieve the result you are after? What information will you need?
- Who could you ask to find out more?

Potential discussion topics

- Improving skills & soft skills
- Methodologies
- Discuss case studies
- Career pathways
- Biggest lessons learnt
- How employers tick and what they want
- Biggest challenges
- What really matters

Potential activities

- Explain a method or framework
- Review a recent project
- Practise a specific skill such as interviewing

Last meeting

Finally, you've reached your last meeting! In this meeting, it's all about wrapping up and retrospectives.

Some of the topic for discussion for this meeting:

- Discuss the outcomes of the program.
 - Has your mentee achieved their goals?
- What have you learnt as a mentor
- Ask your mentee on what have they learnt
- Anything you could do better
- Any suggestion/feedback to put forward to the IxDA Sydney Mentoring committee (We always love to hear your feedback - good/bad!)