



Alumni Mentoring Program

Mentor & Mentee Guide

Mission

The Engineering Alumni Mentor Program seeks to foster meaningful and productive one-on-one relationships between alumni and students of the College of Engineering through the sharing of professional and life experiences.

The program is centered on the dual goals of strengthening alumni connections with the College of Engineering as well as placing students on the path to success. Mentoring is seen as essential to the college's mission given the unique way in which alumni mentors help care for and form the whole student. Mentoring relationships involve an initial eight-month commitment that may be renewed throughout the student's undergraduate career.

Applications

College of Engineering students may apply through the first month of school. Preference is given to sophomores, juniors, and seniors, although all students are welcome to apply. Alumni may apply to be matched with a student mentee on a rolling basis.

Matching

Every effort is made to match a student with a mentor that have overlapping major and/or career interests. After matches are established, students and mentors are notified by email. College of Engineering staff will review applications to assign matches and notify pairs.

Timeline

Matches will be communicated by the end of September. Mentor and mentee pairs are expected to connect at least once a month from October through April. Mentor and mentee pairs are welcome to continue working together after the conclusion of the formal program. There will be a virtual kickoff informational meeting for mentors and mentees in September.

Format

Mentors and mentees may meet in-person, over the phone, or virtually. Students and mentors will complete a brief survey at the conclusion of the program to reflect on the experience and provide feedback.

Questions & Support:

Katie Wilder is the director of the Engineering Living Learning Program and serves as the coordinator for the College of Engineering Alumni Mentoring Program. She can be reached at katie.wilder@uky.edu.

Guidelines for a Successful Mentoring Relationship

Mentee:

- Be respectful and on time for all meetings with your mentor.
- Take initiative and think about questions or topics you would like to discuss with your mentor before your meetings.
- Maintain communication within the established schedule and respond to their contact promptly.
- Determine your interests, skills, and goals and share these with your mentor.
- Ask for help and guidance; seek out information related to your career development.
- Accept both praise and constructive feedback.

Mentor:

- Share your story and experience as appropriate and as you are comfortable.
- Ask open ended questions to promote deeper discussion.
- Respond to your mentee in a timely manner when they reach out to schedule meetings.
- Consider connecting your mentee with other professionals in your network that could further help your mentee reach their goals.

Outline for the First Meeting

- Get acquainted by sharing your backgrounds (see potential discussion questions below)
- Discuss expectations or intentions you each have for the relationship over the course of the year
- Set goals for the mentoring relationship, informed by what the student wants to work on or discuss
- Schedule your next meeting (at least one meeting/month)

Suggested Topics to Discuss

- Career tracks
- Career exploration
- Types of businesses/employers
- Current issues in the profession
- Job market trends
- Organizational culture
- Professional organization membership
- Quality of life in the profession
- Work/life balance
- Management issues
- Approaches to ethical/professional dilemmas
- Business dress
- Study/travel/employment abroad
- Campus involvement
- Senior design project ideas
- Professional dinner etiquette
- Online/social media etiquette
- Internship search advice
- Career fair navigation advice
- Job search advice
- Resumes and cover letters
- Interviewing and networking skills

Suggested Activities

- Chat via Zoom, Skype, Google Hangout, FaceTime, etc.
- Meet for coffee or a meal
- Field trip to mentor's company or job site
- Resume review
- Job shadow
- Attend a professional organization or networking event together
- Lecture or conference attendance
- Community service
- Informational interview(s) with colleague(s) of mentor
- Read and discuss a book, essay, or article

Questions to Ask Your Mentor

Education & Preparation

- Why did you choose to attend UK? What led you to engineering?
- How much formal education is needed in your field? What sort of special training or advanced degree is required?
- What are the important characteristics (personal traits/qualities) for someone entering this field?
- What kinds of experience do employers want?
- What kinds of extracurricular activities and/or volunteer experiences would be beneficial?
- Are there minors/electives/special knowledge and skills that would be helpful in this field?
- What type of part-time, full-time, or summer jobs should I be seeking right now that may prepare me for this career path?

Working Conditions

- Would you please describe your organization (its mission, size, structure, etc.)?
- What is your job title?
- What did the interview process you went through look like?
- What is the typical career path in this field? What are the entry-level positions?
- How many hours per week are you expected to work? Any additional hours?
- What other things are expected of you outside working hours (such as civic or social obligations)?
- What is a typical day on the job like for you?
- What times of year are busiest/slowest?
- What are the most satisfying and the most frustrating parts of your work?
- In what ways can this job be stressful? What are the daily pressures you contend with?
- How much variety does this job involve? What is the pace of work? Is travel required?
- What is the starting salary for an entry-level position?

Networking

- How did you find your first job after graduation? What avenues did you explore to find job openings in your field?
- What role does networking play, if any, to help break into this field?
- How important is it to know someone in the industry?
- What professional associations or organizations are useful to belong to in this field?
- What magazines, journals, and website are important to read in this field?

Industry & Advancement

- How has the field changed since you started your career?
- What are the trends/challenges you see in the future of this field? What are the major trends/challenges you face today?
- How is the job market for your field in this area of the country?
- How long should I expect to stay in an entry-level position?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What would be the next step in a career path for a job like this?

About Your Mentor

- What is your background? Describe your career path. How have you progressed to your present position?
- What do you find personally rewarding in your career?
- What do you find frustrating or disappointing about your career?
- If you were starting out again, would you plan your career the same way? What would you do differently?
- If your job were suddenly eliminated, what other kinds of work could you do?
- What was the most surprising part of your transition from college to work?