

THE CAREER MENTOR PROGRAM

Do you remember when you were a student, eager but a little confused, pondering various educational paths and occupations? Did you ever wish that you could meet with someone who could show you the ropes and actually tell you about a career from experience?

The Career Mentor Program was developed to help students explore their occupational options by connecting them with committed professionals for **informational interviews**. The Program was formed in 1990 through a partnership between the University of Manitoba Counselling Service and the Alumni Association. While the advantages to students are obvious, this program also benefits mentors by giving them the chance to:

- Impact the career plans of students in a profound manner
- Promote their profession
- Build a committed workforce
- Identify and connect with prospective employees
- Encourage students to learn, live and work in Manitoban
- Connect with the University of Manitoba

Welcome to the Career Mentor Program! You are now a member of a large and dedicated team of individuals committed to helping University of Manitoba students.



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Career Services

WHY DO STUDENTS PARTICIPATE?

Most participants in the Career Mentor Program have some career direction. They may be contemplating a few occupational options or trying to garner information on how to enhance their employability skills. Some are hoping to develop a network or learn about labour market conditions in this province. Participation in the Career Mentor Program is often a logical next step after students have researched and explored an occupation in other ways.

Students in the Career Mentor Program want a “realistic snapshot” of an occupation that is often only obtainable from someone who actually works in the field. In short, they want you, the Career Mentor to share your experiences as a professional. In doing this, you give them valuable insight into the world of work and play a role in their future career development.

HOW DOES THE CAREER MENTOR PROGRAM WORK?

THE MEETING...

Once you have agreed to see a student, you will receive his/her name via e-mail or phone. The student will then contact you to set up a meeting, which generally occurs in the workplace. Mentors who are uncomfortable with the idea of meeting with students in the workplace (i.e. if they work out of their homes) may choose to meet with students at the University, coffee shop or another alternate location. Please contact us if you would like to reserve a meeting space in our centre.

Different from some other mentoring programs, our program is an **informational interviewing program**. Each visit is expected to last approximately **1 hour**. Do not feel you have to meet with the student on an ongoing basis.

STUDENT-MENTOR MATCHING...

When matching students with mentors, we make use of our confidential database containing the names of over 700 mentors from a wide variety of occupations. If we do not already have a mentor who satisfies the request, we attempt to find one. In order to do this, we use:

- Referrals from mentors in related occupations
- Personal contacts
- Faculty contacts
- Association membership lists
- Association administrators
- Internet searches

Please note that our program is confidential and your personal information is not distributed to other organizations.

We know that our mentors are busy people. In an attempt to avoid mentor "fatigue," we try to approach mentors no more than twice per term. Students are also incredibly busy. Despite our best efforts, students sometimes fail to follow through with the program. Once it becomes apparent to us that the student is unable to fulfill the commitment, we will either encourage the student to contact you or contact you ourselves.

STUDENT PREPARATION...

When students sign up for the program, they are required to attend a Career Mentor Program Orientation. During this orientation each student is given a handbook that has a list of informational interviewing tips, sample questions and suggestions for how to get the most out of their visit. The orientation also includes an overview and discussion of career values which helps students determine their personal reasons for being motivated to work and their unique preferences for job satisfaction. Students are asked to consider the following career values in the order of their importance:

Achievement	Ethics	Lifestyle
Social Interaction	Financial Benefits	Management/Leadership
Creativity	Independence	Security
Environment	Intellectual Stimulation	Social Recognition
Social Service	Variety	

The purposes of this exercise are:

- To increase the students' awareness of main sources of job satisfaction available from work.
- To help students prioritize career values so they have useful guidelines when making career and related educational decisions.
- To give students better ideas of what kinds of questions they should be asking.

Students are given a list of sample questions, which are grouped according to the values mentioned above.

During or after the orientation, students are given their mentor's name and contact information. They are instructed to phone the Career Mentor within **two** weeks.

EVALUATION & FEEDBACK

Following your meeting with the student, you may complete a Mentor Evaluation Form. This form and the feedback you provide is confidential and helps us improve the program and create a more efficient process for you and the student. This evaluation form can be completed in paper form or entirely online at:

http://umanitoba.ca/student/counselling/mentor/student_mentor_evaluations.html

Printable PDF copies of these forms are available on the Career Mentor Program website.

OTHER ROLES AVAILABLE FOR MENTORS & HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

Besides conducting informational interviews, there are other opportunities and services available for mentors:

- Speak to groups of students at the University of Manitoba through our "**Career Chat**" series.
- Offer job-shadowing opportunities to students.
- Participate in a career panel as part of events like **Career Month** (January)
- Speak with distance education students through phone, email, or video conference.
- Employer Services – if you would like to recruit students for work or volunteer opportunities we are happy to support you through our annual **career fairs**, free **job posting** service, or information sessions.
- Promote and recruit students for industry events or conferences – We would be happy to send an e-notification through our CareerCONNECT list-serve and display a poster in on-campus Career Services bulletin boards.

If you are interested in participating in one of the above activities, please e-mail us or call us at 204-474-8667.

THE QUESTIONS

The following is a list of typical questions students may ask, based on their personal career values and stage of career planning.

- Could you outline your primary job responsibilities and indicate the percentage of time that you devote to those activities?
- What are the important skills or abilities that you need to perform your job well?
- What are some of the major stressors in your work? Do you consider this to be a low/medium/high stress job?
- What are some of the things (academic and non-academic) that you learned while attending university that you have found to be necessary/helpful in your job?
- How important is it to have the “right” degree or courses in order to succeed in this career? What are other important qualifications that you as an employer/ employee would consider to be important?
- Does your organization offer summer or part-time employment or volunteer opportunities for students who are looking to gain experience? Can you suggest other work/volunteer experiences that would be advantageous?
- What is the typical salary range or starting salary for this occupation?
- What is the future demand for your occupation? Do you see any specialty areas developing in the industry?
- Can you suggest any career-related literature that I could read to gain a better understanding of this occupation/organization/industry?
- Would you choose this same occupation if you were just starting out? Why or why not?
- Are there professional associations or organizations that I could join as a student member?
- Can you recommend any other individuals within the industry who would also be helpful to talk to?

MENTORING TIPS

Here are some tips to help you in your role as a Career Mentor:

- Feel free to share your personal experiences.
- Be encouraging and positive, but at the same time be realistic.
- If it is appropriate, offer the student a workplace tour.
- If you think that the student would benefit from meeting with someone else, feel free to refer them.
- Never feel that you should be offering the student a job or volunteer placement. That is not the purpose of an informational interview.
- Do not feel obligated to spend more than an hour with the student. You did not commit to more than one hour.
- If possible, indicate that you may be available in the future if the student has more questions.
- If the student requires information about post-secondary programs, please feel free to refer them to us.

OTHER CAREER PLANNING RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

Career Services offers a comprehensive array of programs and services to assist students in career decision-making and planning. The Career Mentor Program is just one of the resources that are available. Feel free to refer students to any of our services.

Other career services include:

- Career Planning and career decision-making appointments
- Career testing and assessment
- Career Services Centre, with an extensive career library and other resources
- Career Consultants who provide support, information about occupations, and assist with resume writing, job search strategy, and interview skills



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The Career Services Centre, 474 University Centre

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