



CAREER MENTOR PROGRAM

HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

Connect your education to the world of work.

- Learn from professionals through information interview
- Receive advice and information to support your career choices
- Get inspired and ignite your career!



**University
of Manitoba**

Career Mentor Program Student Handbook



The Career Mentor Program was designed to help students explore their occupational options. We connect you with committed professionals for informational interviews in the workplace. As a career mentee you will gain the opportunity to:

- learn about an occupation or industry through the firsthand experience of a mentor
- formulate realistic career goals
- gain confidence in your career decisions or ability to connect with potential employers
- develop informational interview skills
- form valuable networks in the world of work

A. How does the Career Mentor Program Work?

Our process is designed to ensure that both students and mentors are prepared for the informational interview. You will be required to attend a program orientation that involves a *career values* evaluation. The Career Mentor Program staff will match you with a mentor and orient Career Mentors to the program. The student is responsible for: contacting the mentor to arrange a meeting time, following through with the mentor visit and conducting an informational interview session, and completing a student evaluation.

Informational Interview

The purpose of this program is for you to gather information about the occupation in order to help you make career decisions. Therefore, the meeting will take place in the form of an informational interview. This means that you will be conducting the interview with your mentor. You will be asking them questions about their occupation, but first it is important to target **career values** in order to come up with related questions.

Career Mentor Program Step-by-Step Checklist

If you require assistance at any of these steps, please let us know.

Step	Action	Completed (X)
Step 1	Following your orientation, wait up to two weeks to receive an email from CMP staff with your mentor's contact information. Feel free to contact us if you haven't heard from us within two weeks.	
Step 2	Contact your mentor to set up a date/time for your informational interview to take place within one week of receiving contact information. Contact cmp@umanitoba.ca if you would like assistance with drafting an email for the mentor, or if you would like us to review your email.	
Step 3	Research the mentor's career and the company/organization to prepare your questions. Contact cmp@umanitoba.ca if you would like assistance with research and/or coming up with questions to ask the mentor.	
Step 4	Contact your mentor one to two days prior to your interview to confirm meeting details (date, time).	
Step 5	Attend your virtual interview. <i>*Confirm that there are no technical issues with your meeting platform 30 minutes prior to the interview. See the virtual meeting tips and tricks section for more information (pg.).</i>	
Step 6	Fill out a <i>Student Evaluation Form</i> at the link you received in your initial email from CMP staff. http://umanitoba.ca/student/careerservices/careerplan/mentor/cmp-student-feedback-form.html	
Step 7	Send a thank you note to your mentor and to anyone else who helped you out.	

Getting Prepared: Orientation Session

The orientation prepares you for the mentor visit by helping you to develop questions specific to your values and the chosen occupation. In addition, protocol for the mentor visit is reviewed. Any questions that you may have can be answered during this time.

Step 1: Student – Mentor Matching

Matching students to mentors can be complex and time-consuming. At present, the program has a database with over 1000 mentor volunteers from a large array of professions. However, if we don't have a mentor who satisfies your specifications, we do our best to find one. This may take additional time to locate a new mentor through referrals or other sources. Matching a student with a current mentor usually takes one to two weeks. If you do not receive an update within two weeks, please reach out to us.

Step 2: Contacting Your Mentor

After you receive your mentor information, it is important that you **contact your mentor as soon as you can (within 1 week)**, to set up a meeting time. They are expecting you to contact them and it may take time to coordinate a mutually agreeable time. ***If you cannot fulfill your commitment to meet with your mentor, PLEASE contact us immediately.***



If you are contacting the mentor via **e-mail**, please keep in mind that this communication should be professional as it is your first impression. Be sure to proofread, spell check and select the most appropriate e-mail address from which to send the message.

Be sure to include information such as:

- Your current degree program
- Why you are interested in their career
- The days and times that you are available

Sample Email to Mentor

Dear Mr/Ms/Dr _____,

I hope this message finds you well. I'm registered with the University of Manitoba Career Mentor Program. Thank you very much for agreeing to meet with me.

I am currently completing my (degree program), and I am interested in learning more about your career because _____.

I would like to set up a meeting time and am wondering what dates would work best for you. I am available during the week of (date) to (date). Please let me know when you would prefer to meet.

I look forward to hearing from you. Have a great day.

Sincerely,

Please note that if you would like assistance in drafting your email or would like us to review your email before you send it to your mentor, please do not hesitate to email cmp@umanitoba.ca, call 204-474-8667 or visit us at 474 University Centre.

Step 3: Research

Take time to research your mentor's career by visiting the Career Service's Explore Occupations page: <http://umanitoba.ca/careerservices/career-planning/explore-occupations>. You should have a general understanding of the general nature of the work and the level/types of education/training required for the career.

If your mentor's career is not listed, please do not hesitate to start your own research and reach out to the CMP Coordinator at cmp@umanitoba.ca for more information.

Once you have a general understanding of your mentor's career, do some research into the company/organization that they work for. Try looking up their workplace's website for a better understanding of their role in their workplace.

Please refer to Section B & C to create your questions related to career values.

Step 4: 1-2 Days Before the Meeting

1-2 days before the meeting, it may be helpful to check-in via e-mail to confirm the date and time of your interview, especially if you scheduled the meeting far in advance.

Ensure that you have all the materials you may need; such as your list of questions, a notebook, and a writing utensil. If you are using a note-taking software like Microsoft Word, or Pages ensure that it is open prior to the meeting.

Please note that if you have any hesitations about any aspect related to the meeting with your mentor, please do not hesitate to contact us at cmp@umanitoba.ca, call us at 204-474-8667, or visit us at 474 University Centre.

Step 5: The Mentor Visit

The mentor visit should take approximately an hour, although times may vary. The visit typically takes the form of an *informational interview*. Site tours or job-shadow may be possible depending on your interest, mentor interest and availability, and occupational practicality.

Note: During the Fall 2020 semester, all student-mentor meeting will occur online. Students must make arrangements with the mentor about preferable meeting platforms (e.g. Zoom) prior to the interview.

Please refer to Section D for further assistance and tips to help you conduct your informational interview.

Step 6: Feedback & Follow-up

The **Student Evaluation** is your chance to let us know what you thought of the program - the ways that it can be improved, whether the matching to your mentor was appropriate, and if you would like another match to further your career research.

The Evaluation Forms for students are available both online and paper copy.

Online program evaluations can be accessed through the Career Mentor Program website: <http://umanitoba.ca/student/careerservices/careerplan/mentor/feedback.html>

It is important that you complete your evaluation after your mentor visit because it confirms that the visit has taken place. **If we do not receive your evaluation, we assume that you have not visited your mentor** (we must follow-up and send them an apology).

Step 7: Feedback & Follow-up

Send a thank you note to your mentors and any other people that provided assistance. The mentors are volunteering their time and insight to help students learn more about their careers. Remember that these mentors may be your colleagues or employers in the future!

B. Career Values

Career values are the needs, rewards, or satisfactions that we derive from or require from the work that we do. Career values can be thought of as our personal reasons for being motivated to work, or as our unique preferences for job satisfaction. Our career values are closely tied to our innate likes and dislikes, previous experiences, and social and cultural influences. Career values are often an essential factor in making career decisions. Asking questions that reflect your values may help you to gain even more tailored advice from your mentor.

Definitions of 14 career values are provided below. They can help you to decide which factors are important to you in your career. After determining your priorities, it is easier

to formulate questions for your mentor. There are also sample questions provided below for each of the career values, which may help you to brainstorm questions you might not have thought of otherwise.

Achievement The need to get a feeling of success, accomplishment or personal pride from completing a project or task. Achievement-oriented people like to make the most of their talents and abilities. They like to have goals and see the results of their efforts.

Social Interaction A desire to work in a position that provides interaction with co-workers and/or the public. Sharing work, getting support or encouragement from other workers or supervisors, and/or having a feeling that the workplace is a pleasant social environment may also be a part of this value.

Creativity A value associated with work that provides opportunities to be innovative, original, expressive, imaginative, artistic, or creative. The type of creativity can vary and may include involvement in: fine arts, music, design, literature, performing arts, language/communication arts, or invention.

Environment A desire to work in a physical environment or geographical location that appeals to you. It might involve the immediate physical environment (preference for a modern office or working outdoors), a lifestyle preference (urban or rural), or relocation due to the type of work that you want (oceanography or forestry).

Virtue Ethics The ethics that you carry with you day to day (morals). A preference for work that provides freedom for one to follow his/her personal virtues, principles, or moral values. For example, if you believe strongly in gender equality, could you work for a company that in its advertising/commercials objectified men or women?

Financial Benefits A value associated with the salary level and benefits (pension, insurance, bonus or incentive plans) that one expects or needs to meet a desired standard of living. Having the opportunity to be financially rewarded for working hard, taking risks, or having initiative/special talents is also part of this value.

Independence A desire to have freedom or control over how your work is done, with little or no supervision. This may involve a preference for working alone, but more importantly it reflects a need to manage yourself, or to do things your own way. In exchange for greater autonomy, it is usually expected that you will assume greater responsibility for job performance.

Intellectual Stimulation A preference for work that involves a high degree of mental activity in the form of problem solving, analyzing, researching, or continuous learning. Individuals who are studious, curious, questioning, logical, theoretical, or philosophical usually seek work that is intellectually stimulating.

Lifestyle A desire to have a career that leaves you with time and energy to devote to non-work activities such as family and social life, recreation, personal development, or community/volunteer involvement. This value represents a desire to have a balance or a boundary between the work and non-work elements of life.

Management/Leadership A value associated with leadership and authority over others; being responsible for ensuring that the work of the organization is completed satisfactorily; directing and evaluating the performance of others. Decision-making, problem solving, and planning are usually associated with the supervisory or managerial function.

Security A preference for work that is normally in steady demand, or is unlikely to be affected by economic changes, or which will likely be in high demand in the future. This value may also reflect the desire to work at a structured or well-defined job requiring systematic, organized, and precise work habits.

Social Recognition A value associated with work that gives one status, prestige, respect, or social approval. This recognition may be based on a prevailing social opinion that the work is considered important in our society or on the workers' personal feeling that his/her work is respectable or worthwhile.

Social Service A value present in work that allows one to help or to provide service to others in some way. The help may be offered to individuals or groups, and it may be provided directly or indirectly to those being helped. Teaching, social work, religious service, childcare, and nursing are some examples of social service careers.

Variety A value associated with work that is frequently changing and different. Change may result from doing different tasks or dealing with different people. This value may also be satisfied through work involving travel, excitement, adventure, risk, or danger.

C. Questions

If you would like some **assistance with writing questions**, feel free to have one of the Career Mentor Program staff go over them with you. Here are some guidelines to follow:

DO:

1. When asking questions in an informational interview, make sure that most of your questions are **open-ended**. For example, don't ask "Do you like your job?" because this question can be answered with only one word. Instead, ask "Why do you like your job?" This question will yield a useful answer.

2. Keep in mind that the more you know about the organization or occupation that your mentor is involved with, the more specific and meaningful your questions will be. Therefore, it is important to **research the organization and/or the occupation** before visiting your mentor. You will get more out of your interview and maybe even make a good impression on your mentor.
3. **Take your questions with you to the interview.** This will insure that you remember to ask all of the questions that you intended and that the interview runs smoothly.
4. Ask questions based on your career values! The more you ask about questions relating to **specific values**, the more the mentor can respond to them and give you related information.

DON'T:

1. **Ask for a job.** The purpose of this program is not to employ you, but rather for you to gather information about the occupation in order to help you make career-related decisions. Having said that, it is an opportunity for you to be forming networks in the world of work.
2. **Ask how much your mentor makes.** This can be a sensitive topic for some people, so please refrain from asking "how much do you make?", however feel free to ask more open-ended, well thought-out questions such as "what is the typical salary range for someone working in your occupation?".
3. **Ask personal questions.** Keep it relevant. Ask questions specific to a mentor's occupation as opposed to personal questions. For example, if you are interested in the lifestyle (work-life balance) relating to an occupation, ask questions such as "how many hours do you work in a week?" as opposed to "how often do you see your family?".
4. **Text your mentor.** Although this may seem like the most direct and quick way to get in contact with your mentor, this is a professional program so emailing or phoning is most appropriate in most cases (unless we have indicated otherwise).

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

➤ **VALUES QUESTIONS**

The first set of questions below reflects the different **career values**. Questions that reflect you and your work values will help the mentor to get to know you and provide opportunity for them to offer you personalized advice. Feel free to also premise some of your questions very briefly with information about yourself; for example you could say, *“Variety is something that is very important for me to have in a job; how much variety do you experience in your daily work?”*

1. ACHIEVEMENT

- What gives you a sense of accomplishment in this occupation?
- How often do you get to see the results of your work?

2. SOCIAL INTERACTION

- How much of your job involves interaction with co-workers? The public?
- Is there a team approach to your work?
- What is the work atmosphere like?

3. CREATIVITY

- Do you get to express individuality in your work, or do you follow strict guidelines?
- Do you have leeway in your job to be creative and imaginative in what you do?

4. ENVIRONMENT

- Can you describe your working conditions? Are you indoors or outdoors? Is it noisy or quiet? Are there any environmental work hazards?
- How much opportunity is there in this field to relocate? Where could you go?

5. VIRTUE ETHICS

- Under what circumstances can you refuse to do something not in tune with your beliefs?

- Do you ever feel that your ethics are being challenged?

6. FINANCIAL BENEFITS

- What is the typical salary range/starting salary for this occupation?
- Do you receive benefits? What types?
- Are there financial incentives for upgrading or taking extra courses?
- Are you paid for your overtime hours?

7. INDEPENDENCE

- How much time do you spend working independently?
- Do you have control over how your work is done? Or are you closely supervised?

8. INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION

- What part of your job is the most mentally stimulating or challenging?
- How much learning and research do you do? Is there a lot of problem solving?
- Does your occupation take full advantage of your intellectual capabilities and education?

9. LIFESTYLE

- Do you have set hours or do they vary?
- Do you get time off? How much holiday time do you have?
- Are you ever on-call?

- Approximately how many hours do you work in an average week?
- Is travel required? How often and to where?
- How much flexibility are you allowed in your job in terms of dress, hours, vacation, or job location?

10. MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP

- Does your job involve supervision? Do you evaluate others in terms of performance?
- Are you involved in setting organizational goals or determining budget allocation?
- How do individuals in this field move into management positions?

11. SECURITY

- What are the current labour market conditions for this occupation?
- How stable is this job?
- What is the future demand for this occupation?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in this field?
- How long do employees stay with this type of organization? Why do they typically leave?

12. SOCIAL RECOGNITION

- Do you feel respected as a result of the work you do?
- How are your achievements recognized?
- Is your job performance reviewed on a regular basis? How?
- What social obligations go along with your job?
- Is there a lot of public exposure?

13. SOCIAL SERVICE

- Does your work bring about social change? How?
- Do you feel that you help others?

- How does the community benefit from your work?

14. VARIETY

- Is there a “typical day” for you? Or is everyday quite different?
- Does your work involve a variety of tasks?
- What is the most exciting part of your job?
- Do you travel very often?
- Do you have to complete one project before starting another? Do you work on many simultaneously?



Here are more sample questions to ask:

➤ **GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR**

- What types of activities did you participate in before entering this occupation? Which were most helpful? When / how did you decide on this career?
- What should I consider before deciding if this is the right career path for me?
- What does this industry look for or find most impressive in potential employees?
- Could you describe a typical entry-level position in this occupational field?
- Are there any professional journals or career-related literature/ organizations that would help me to learn about this field?
- Can you recommend appropriate volunteer experiences, internships or summer jobs I should consider?
- What coursework have you found most helpful?
- How can I get experience in this field while I am still in school?
- If you could go back in time, would you do anything differently in your preparation for this occupation?
- How important is it to have the “right” degree or courses to have a chance to develop a career like yours today? What are other qualifications are considered important?
- What are some of the “do’s and don’ts” in trying to develop a successful career in your field?
- What are the characteristics of people who usually excel in this field? What personal qualities do you need to succeed?

➤ **PROS AND CONS**

- What do you like most about your job? What are some of the challenges within this profession?
- Would you choose the same occupation again if you were just starting out? Why or why not?

- Do you have any special words of warning or encouragement as a result of your experience?
- If you could change any aspects of your career, what would you change?
- Why did you enter this occupation? Was it all that you had expected it to be?
- What are some of the major stresses in your work? Do you consider this to be a low/medium/ high stress job?

➤ **JOB DUTIES**

- Could you outline your primary job responsibilities and indicate the percentage of time that you devote to each?
- Are there any duties that you perform on a regular basis? What are they?
- Have your job duties changed as you have gained more experience?

➤ **OTHER QUESTIONS**

- What other occupations can you get into with the same background?
- If you had to choose another related occupation, what would it be? Why?
- Are there any other occupations that you would suggest for me to explore as an alternative to this one?
- Can you refer me to any other people inside/outside of this organization? Is there someone else I could contact for more information?
- What experiences (work-related or otherwise) have helped you succeed in your occupation?
- How is your job similar to and/or different from Occupation X? (This question can help you to compare related occupations and differentiate the professional roles.)

D. Informational Interview Tips

Keep in mind that your career mentor may be a **future colleague or potential employer**. Whether this is the case or not, it is important to make a good impression. Here are some tips that will help you to make the most of your interview.

1. **What to wear:** The most important thing is to be comfortable at the meeting. However, you should consider the workplace you are entering when you choose an outfit. If your informational interview includes a workplace tour, you should wear

appropriate clothing and footwear. If you are using the informational interview to network and would like to make a good impression, then business casual dress may be appropriate. Since you are meeting virtually with your mentor, still ensure you are dressed appropriately, just as if you meeting them in-person. Also, make sure that the room you are using is clean, neutral, and brightly lit.

- 2. Your questions:** Research the mentor's career and their workplace prior to the meeting. Prepare your questions ahead of time, arrange them in the order that you hope to ask them, and bring them with you to the interview.
- 3. Getting to the interview:** Since the meeting is virtual, you don't have to worry about location and directions. However, make sure that there are no technical problems with your meeting platform or computer prior to the meeting. Run a test 10-30 minutes prior to your interview to make sure everything is running smoothly.
- 4. What to bring:** Mentor's phone number, your list of questions, pen, paper, clipboard, and any helpful notes compiled from your research.
- 5. Introducing yourself:** Smile, be yourself, maintain good eye contact and posture, and know that it is normal to be nervous. Mentors will understand that you may be nervous and they are supportive. Remember that they have volunteered to participate in this program- they **want** to talk to you. Don't forget to thank the mentor for the opportunity to meet.
- 6. During the interview:** Stay focused on the mentor's job and career field. You can share something about yourself, but don't talk about yourself too much. Try not to take up time asking questions that can be more easily answered by another source. Keep your remarks positive. Never ask for a job. That is not the purpose of an informational interview and it may make the mentor reluctant to see other students. However, do ask for advice about job or volunteering in the industry. Feel free to ask the mentor if you can stay in contact or possibly even job-shadow. Please be sensitive to the mentor's time constraints. Unless otherwise arranged, they have consented to spending an hour with you, so try to keep the interview to an hour or less.
To ensure that you are not interrupting the mentor mid-sentence, pause a couple seconds after they have stopped speaking before ask your next or follow-up question. This will make up for any unexpected delays or lags in the communication platform. Remember that you are not talking face-to-face so be cognizant to when is the best time to speak following the mentors response.

Thank you note: Following the interview, send a thank you email to the mentor and anyone else who helped you out. Be sure to let them know what was most helpful to you!

E. Virtual Meeting: Tips and Tricks

- Test out the software in advance (one day and 10-23 minutes prior)
- Dress appropriate, arrive on-time, avoid multi-tasking
- Keep camera on and mic muted when not speaking
- Strategically place your camera so you do not see an open closet
- If you are using your bedroom, make sure its tidy (e.g. the bed is made)
- Use a room that is brightly lit and neutral in colour and decor

F. Other resources from CAREER SERVICES

The Career Services offers a comprehensive array of services and programs to assist you with career decision-making and career planning. The Career Mentor Program is just one of the available programs.

Career Planning and Assessment

Career Consultants are available to support you at any stage of the career planning process – from exploring your personal characteristics and career preferences to identifying occupational options, decision-making and success planning. There are many assessment tools that can also help you learn about yourself and provide occupational matching. Students may choose from the following options:

- **Career Values, Interests, Personality Assessments & Self-Directed Career Planning** Exercises on our website; these resources are free and available 24/7
- **Strong Interest Inventory (SII)** – this interest inventory is a great tool to match occupations to your interests. It is the most used career inventory in North America. Sign-up for this inventory and an interpretation time at 474 University Centre. There is a \$30 fee for this service.
- **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** – this personality inventory can be a helpful tool to help you learn more about your personality type and match occupations. Sign-up for this inventory and an interpretation time at 474 University Centre. There is a \$30 fee for this service.

Career Information

There are many resources in the Career Services Centre that can help you explore occupational options or search for educational alternatives. Career Consultants are

available to provide information, support and advice to students who are career undecided or seeking occupational information.

The Career Services Centre holds a large number of resources in-house, including:

- 250+ Occupational Files (including labour market information, educational info and career interviews)
- Career Compasses
- Career Planning Books & “What to do with a degree in...” handouts
- Canadian University & College Calendars
- Professional and Graduate School Directories
- Job Search, Resume, Cover Letter & Interview Books/Guides

Employment Services

Career Services also has employment services for students and recent U of M alumni. Students can receive help with their interview preparation and job search via webshops, workshops, drop-in or individual appointments. We also have a **Resumé Learning Centre** where students can receive guidance with resumés. An annual **career fair** with over 100 employers is organized by the department and held every January. Another very important resource for students is our database **Career Connect** where students can view job and volunteer postings and register to receive e-mail notifications about upcoming events.

*To receive e-mail notification of upcoming Career Services' events, register by clicking **Student Account Registration** under the students tab at the top of the screen and fill in all required information.

If you would like to meet with a Career Consultant or Career Advisor, attend our **drop-in sessions** or call to book an appointment. Sign-up for one of our many workshops on CareerCONNECT: <https://www.uofmcareerservices.ca/home.htm>



If You Have Any Concerns... CONTACT US!

If, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable with the mentor match, using Zoom, or any other aspect of the program, please let us know by calling

204-474-8667 or visiting us at **474 University Centre**. If you prefer to reach us by e-mail, our address is: cmp@umanitoba.ca. In addition, if you need to meet with your mentor at the university instead of at their workplace, then inquire with us about booking a meeting room/space at Career Services.

G. APPENDIX – Tools to Assist You

Questions to Ask your Mentor

This worksheet may help you prepare for the informational interview with your mentor. Use it to help you ask all the questions you've wanted to ask your mentor. Remember to ask questions based on your career values! The more you ask questions based on career values, the more the mentor can respond to them and give you related information.

Mentor's Name

Occupation Title

Mentor's Organization/Company

Date of Informational Interview _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

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16. _____
