



International Pediatric Academic Leaders Association

IPALA Mentoring program Guide for Mentees

“Mentoring” is a relationship which gives people the opportunity to share their professional and personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process. It can take many forms; typically it is a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced staff member but mentees may opt to establish more than one mentor relationship. It is based on encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

Things that you may gain from the mentoring process may include:

- Developing new skills
- Identifying areas for professional growth
- More strategic career planning
- Gaining or increasing knowledge of organisational culture, structure and processes
- Access to new networks and contacts
- Finding new ways to approach old problems
- Increased confidence in abilities
- Increased job satisfaction
- Enhanced career opportunities.

This document is designed to be a guide for those mentees who have self-nominated and arranged a mentor through the IPALA mentoring program.

Establishing a mentoring relationship

In order to make the most of the mentoring process, it is important to decide what your objectives are, and the areas you need support or guidance in.

These may include:

- Understanding promotion criteria & procedures
- Understanding organisational structures and how to use them
- Management and leadership issues
- Conflict resolution
- Financial management skills
- Strategies for members of committees
- Chairing meetings
- Communication skills
- Balancing teaching, research and administration
- Career planning and development
- Preparing a resume/interviewing skills
- Research skills
- Understanding what opportunities should be embraced
- Grant application and fellowship writing
- Teaching skills
- Policy analysis and development
- Time management
- Balancing work and family
- Staff supervision.



International Pediatric Academic Leaders Association

International Pediatric Academic Leaders Association, IPALA Guide for Mentees

Once an arrangement for a mentor has been made with the assistance of the IPALA Leadership program it is up to you to make contact with them and establish an initial meeting.

You should negotiate the operational details of the mentoring relationship with your mentor in the first few meetings. Issues for consideration include:

- When, where, how often, and how long will you meet with your mentor? (4 meetings per year recommended)
- How formal/informal and how flexible would you and your mentor like the relationship to be?
- What are your objectives for the mentoring relationship?
- What are the expectations and roles of the mentor and mentee?
- What kind of issues, tasks or projects would you like to work on with your mentor?
- Consider the types of activities you would find valuable, in addition to meeting and talking with your mentor?
For example:
 - Observing your mentor in action
 - Shadowing your mentor to see what he/she does on a typical day
 - Asking your mentor to review your work
 - Asking your mentor to observe you in action and provide feedback, and/or
 - Working on a joint project or task together
- How will the relationship be maintained if either party is away or if meetings have to be cancelled or rescheduled?
- What are the confidentiality requirements?
- Remember, your mentor is not your supervisor/ manager – they do not have the answers. The agenda is yours as the mentee - the mentor is there to facilitate, not influence, your decisions.

Mentee etiquette

Mentees achieve more when they are:

- Interested in developing their careers
- Proactive; They take responsibility for their own development
- Open to receiving feedback
- Willing to accept challenges
- Positive about change and growth
- Able to set goals and work towards them
- Committed to working through on-the-job issues
- Keen for greater organisational knowledge.

Be respectful: of your mentor. Show that you value their time and experience. It is as important to talk about what your mentor wants and needs from the relationship as it is to discuss your needs as a mentee.

Show gratitude: Everyone likes to be thanked. Mentors are volunteers; they do not expect to get paid. They do, however, want to receive some satisfaction from the relationship. The only way that mentors can know how they're doing is if mentees tell them. What you have to offer your mentor is your appreciation and an explanation of the impact the relationship has had on your current and future success.

Be humble: Be willing to accept critical feedback so that you are open to learning new ways of thinking about your professional activities.

Resources

"Making the Right Moves- a practical guide to scientific management for postdocs and new faculty" Burroughs Wellcome Fund and Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

"At the Helm: A Laboratory Navigator" Kathy Barker.

This document has been adapted, with permission, from the Mentoring Program of Flinders University CMPH