

NESSE

Network of Early-career Scientists & Engineers – Mentorship Program Tips

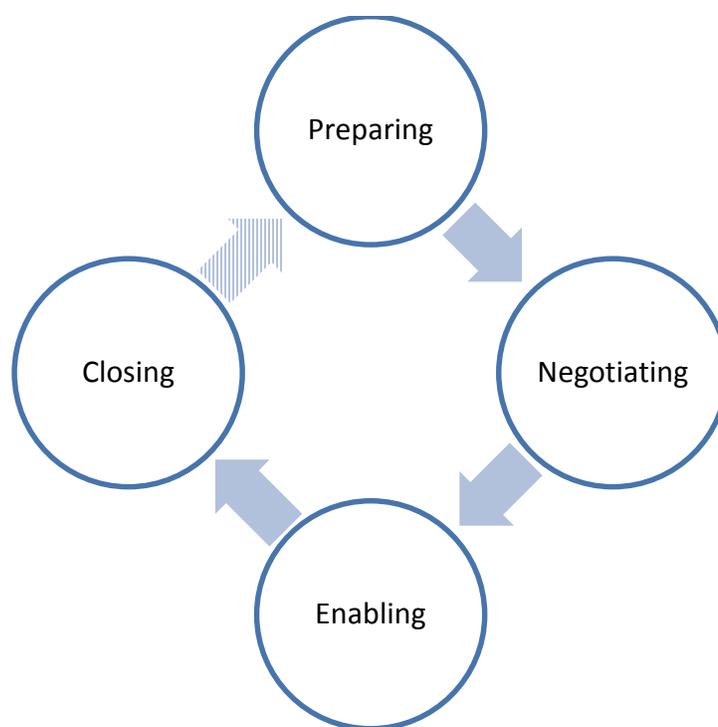
The key goal of the NESSE mentorship program is to connect early-career scientists and engineers interested in the field of green science and sustainability with peers or professionals worldwide for support and advice.

What is mentorship?

Mentorship is a professional relationship established between two people, where a more experienced person guides less experienced person through the subject where professional development is desired.

Four Phases of Mentorship Process

There are 4 distinguished phases of the mentorship process:



Phase 1: Preparing

- Both mentor and mentee must prepare individually and in partnership
- Mentors explore personal motivation and their readiness to be a mentor, assess their skills and identify their own areas for learning and development
- Both: establish clarity about expectations and roles
- Do not look for chemistry: it is natural to look for chemistry when meeting a prospective mentoring partner. Chemistry is overrated. Instead ask yourself: “Can I work productively with this individual? Do I honestly feel that I can further this person’s learning?”

Strategies and considerations for Initial conversation

To-Do list	Strategies for conversation	Mentor considerations
Take time getting to know each other	Obtain a copy of the mentee’s bio in advance of the conversation. If one is not available, create one throughout the conversation	Establish rapport Exchange information Identify points of connection
Talk about mentoring	Ask: Have you ever before been engaged in a mentoring relationship? What did you learn from that experience?	Talk about your own mentoring experiences
Determine the mentee’s goals	Ask: What do you want to learn from this experience? Give mentee an opportunity to articulate broad goals.	Determine if the mentee is clear about his or her own goals and objectives
Determine the mentee’s relationship needs and expectations	Ask: What do you want out of the relationship	Be sure you are clear about what your mentee needs or wants from this mentoring relationship. If you are not, encourage the mentee to think through what he or she wants from the relationship
Define deliverables	Ask: What would success look like for you?	Do you have an area of experience or expertise that is relevant to this person’s learning goals?
Share your assumptions, needs and expectations, and limitations candidly	Ask for feedback Discuss: Implications for relationship	What are you willing and capable of contributing to the relationship?
Discuss options and opportunities for learning	Ask: How would you like to go about achieving your learning goals? Discuss ways: learning and communicating Ask: What is the most useful kind of assistance I can provide? Discuss means: shadowing, project, resources, connections, etc.	Discuss implications if each other’s styles and how that might affect the relationship.

Phase 2: Negotiating

- Partners come to an agreement on the learning goals and define the content and process of the relationship. Establish ground rules and create a shared understanding about assumptions, expectation, goals, and needs.
- Discuss confidentiality, boundaries, and limits regardless of how difficult these topics are to discuss
- When and how to meet, responsibilities, criteria for success, accountability, and timeline for closure
- Review, complete and sign a **Mentoring Agreement**

Tips for completing the Mentoring agreement: While the mentoring agreement is being discussed make sure both party understand and agree on the following:

- The goal for the relationship
- What the mentee wants to learn
- Learning support required for the mentee
- How often will the meetings take place
- How much time mentee is committing to achieving learning goals
- How mentee prefers to learn
- How the mentor plans to encourage and support accountability.

Examples of ground rules:

- Our meeting begin and end on time
- Each of s actively participates in the relationship
- Our communication is open, candid and direct
- We will respect our differences and learn from them
- We will honor each other's expertise and experience
- We will safeguard confidentiality
- We will manage time well
- We will put interruptions aside

Mentoring Negotiating Questions and outcomes:

Outcomes	Questions answered
Well-defined goals	What are the specific learning outcomes desired from this relationship
Success criteria and measurement	What are the criteria for evaluating successful accomplishment of learning outcomes? What is the process for evaluating success?
Delineation of mutual responsibility	Who will be responsible for what?
Accountability assurances Relationship ground rules Confidentiality safeguard Boundaries	How do we ensure we do what we say we are going to do? What are the norms and guidelines we will follow in conducting the relationship? How do we protect the confidentiality of this relationship? What are the not-to-exceed limits of this relationship?
Protocols for addressing stumbling blocks	What are stumbling blocks we might encounter? What process should we have in place to deal with them as they occur?
Consensual mentoring agreement	What do we need to include to make this agreement work for us?
A work plan for achieving learning goals	What is the process? What are the steps for achieving the goals?

Establishing and Evaluating Mentees SMART learning goals

Specific:

- What is it the mentee is trying to accomplish in this relationship?
- Are mentee’s goals specific, concrete and clear?

Measurable:

- Are the goals capable of being measured?
- In what ways a success be measured?

Action Oriented:

- Are the goals future oriented?
- What results should you be able to see when the mentee’s goals are accomplished?
- What concrete things will the mentee be able to do as a result of accomplishing the goals identified?

Realistic:

- Are the goals achievable within availability of your time?
- Are there other resources that need to be available in order to achieve the goals?

Timely:

- IS the time allocated for accomplishing the learning goals reasonable?
- Has a completion date been set for attaining the goals?

Planning Form

Learning Goals:			
Objectives	Learning Tasks and Processes	Resources	Target Date

Use the following checklist to discuss what confidentiality means to you and your mentoring partner, and what are your expectations regarding confidentiality for this relationship.

Testing Confidentiality Assumptions

Which of the following assumptions about confidentiality do you hold?

- _____ 1. What we discuss stays between us for as long as we are engaged in our mentoring relationship?
- _____ 2. If asked by your supervisor, I can freely disclose our conversation?
- _____ 3. After our formal mentoring relationship has ended, it is okay to talk about what we discussed how we related.
- _____ 4. If there is a demonstrated need to know, I can appropriately disclose our conversations, my impressions, or anything else that pertains to the relationship.
- _____ 5. What we say between us stays there unless you give me permission to talk about it with others.
- _____ 6. Some issues will be kept confidential, while other will not.
- _____ 7. It is okay to discuss how we relate to one another but not the content of our discussions.
- _____ 8. It is okay to talk about what we talk about as long as it is positive.

Are there other assumptions you hold that should be added to this list?

Preparedness Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you determine if you have sufficiently completed the negotiating phase

- Accountabilities are in place for both parties and the relationship
- Expectations are clear
- Goals are well defined and clear
- The responsibilities of each partner are defined
- Norms have been developed and agreed to
- Frequency and method (skype, phone, in-person, other web meeting software) of meetings is agreed on
- We are in agreement about how often we should connect and who should do the connecting
- We have articulated the criteria for success
- We have developed a workable strategy for dealing with obstacles to the relationship
- The work plan makes sense
- We have discussed how and when the relationship will be brought to closure
- Our operating assumptions about confidentiality are well articulated
- The boundaries and limits if this relationship have enough room for flexibility

Phase 3: Enabling

- Learn and develop, communicate openly, reflect on the learning progress continuously.
- Mentor to nurture mentee’s growth by establishing and maintaining an open and affirming learning climate and providing thoughtful, timely, candid and constructive feedback.
- Both to monitor the learning progress to ensure the learning goals are being met.

Long distance interaction reflection for each session

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What went particularly well during our mentoring session? 2. What relationship challenges did we face? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were we communicating effectively with each other? - Were we candid and open in our communication? - Did we take care to check our assumptions with each other? - Were we actively listening to each other? 3. What logistical challenges emerged? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did we do to hold ourselves accountable for the learning? 4. What logistical challenges affected our communication? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were the venues (e-mail, phone, meetings) we have selected working for us? - Were the external factors, such as time and access that affected our interaction in any way? 5. What three strategies could improve the quality of our mentoring interaction? 6. What is the action plan for implementing each of the three strategies?
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Ongoing Accountability

The relationship	<p>How are we doing? What is the quality of our interaction? In what ways might we strengthen our relationship?</p>
The learning process	<p>Is the process we are using working to facilitate your learning process? In what ways are your learning needs being met? Not met? What might we do to make the process work better for you? What do we need to change or strengthen? What are you learning about yourself as a learner in this process?</p>
Progress toward learning goals	<p>What progress are you making toward realizing your learning goals? What is your greatest success thus far? What is your biggest frustration? What gives you the most satisfaction about what you are learning?</p>

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Time:

- Mentoring relationship must be a commitment. Take time to discuss background information and other relevant information. Discuss time commitment allocated for this relationship during the negotiation phase.
- Avoid multitasking and sandwiching mentoring between the meetings. Explain the context when giving advice.
- Come to the meetings prepared
- Encourage mentee to use available time constructively and
- Start each session with progress review or update to help you regain focus.

Mentor's role: active facilitator, who creates and maintains a supportive climate that promotes the conditions necessary for learning to take place

Suggestions:

- Ask questions
- Paraphrase and reformulate to clarify your own understanding and ensure you are on the same page.
- Summarize, as it reinforces learning and reminds of what has taken place
- Do not be afraid of silence – it provides opportunity for learning, as a person may need time to think and reflect quietly. Encourage it. Mentee: Actively involved in diagnosing, planning and evaluation his/hers own learning.

Phase 4: Closing

- Be aware of the signals that indicate it is time for closure. Evaluate if the learning goals have been met or if the relationship is no longer effective.
- Evaluate personal learning and celebrate progress made.