



Mentorship Program

Mentoring Feedback

Receiving and sharing feedback in a trusted mentoring relationship can be the most beneficial and rewarding part of mentoring. Use the below tips to enhance the sharing of feedback.

Why should I give feedback?

- It is your obligation to help your mentee identify and learn the skills and knowledge needed for a successful career.
- Feedback allows you to acknowledge your mentee's strengths and to motivate the mentee to work on areas of weakness.
- Your mentee wants and needs your feedback to move forward in her career.

When should I provide feedback?

- There is no answer set in stone, but the general answer is that you should provide feedback frequently.
- It is helpful to provide feedback on a regular basis, so your mentee doesn't get bogged down pursuing the wrong path in her research or professional development.
- Feedback should be given on a timely basis.
- Prompt and frequent feedback will go a long way toward cementing your relationship.

How do I give constructive and effective feedback?

- The most important element in providing effective feedback is establishing an atmosphere of mutual trust and regard. When a feeling of trust has been created, it is easier both to give and to accept feedback.
- Make sure that the mentee understands that you are working toward a mutual goal – the mentee's success. Providing and receiving feedback can be a very positive experience for the mentor and the mentee as long as you both understand that you share the same commitment to developing the mentee's career.
- When you give feedback, it is important to acknowledge the mentee's accomplishments and successes along with the areas in which she needs to improve.



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- Keep the feedback simple. When planning to give feedback, decide on a small number of areas that you want to cover. You don't want to create a shopping list of faults that could overwhelm and discourage the mentee.
- If a mentee is falling behind in her work, don't automatically assume a lack of commitment. Explore with your mentee what is really going on.
- When providing feedback, offer to work with your mentee to develop solutions to any problems that she is encountering.

What do I do while I am receiving feedback?

- Listen while your mentor is giving feedback and wait until she or he is finished before you respond.
- Make sure you understand the feedback. It's useful to paraphrase the feedback to your mentor to ensure that you captured the intended meaning. Ask the mentor to clarify or to be more specific if she or he has not been. Or ask for strategies to resolve the issues and work together to develop solutions.
- Try not to be defensive. Your mentor is trying to help you succeed. If you're feeling defensive, it might be a good idea to ask if you can make an appointment to discuss the feedback later, after you've had time to consider it. You don't want to continue the conversation while you are upset. It's best to have a cooling down period. You also don't want to ask your mentor to defend the feedback, since feedback generally involves subjective perceptions and opinions.
- Finally, whether you agree with the feedback or not, thank your mentor for her or his time and for being helpful to you.

What if I get feedback that I don't agree with?

- Step back a bit. It's useful to consider the feedback calmly and to think about it in the overall context of moving forward in your career. An important element of receiving feedback is evaluating it but evaluate it without emotion.
- Ask a trusted peer for her or his point of view or to talk with another mentor.
- While your mentor usually has more experience and expertise than you have, the decision about whether or not to use the feedback is ultimately your own. If you decide not to use the feedback, let your mentor know and tell her or him your reasons. Your mentoring relationship is long-term, and you don't want to jeopardize it by alienating your mentor.
- Your mentor may want to give you additional feedback. Listen to it and think about it before you finalize your decision. And if you decide not to use the feedback, keep the feedback in mind, since it may make more sense to you down the road.

This section adapted from the Institute for Clinical Research Education Mentoring Resources, University of Pittsburgh.

Mentoring, educating, advocating, and encouraging women to seek careers in the asphalt industry.