

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

2024-25 Student Handbook





Psychology UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Welcome

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Department of Psychology Alumni-Student Mentorship Program. As a participant, you will have the chance to get acquainted with established Psychology graduates and learn from their experiences in the workforce and academia, as well as develop essential skills such as professionalism and communication. Take full advantage of this opportunity to explore your career options and make a connection with a successful professional with a degree in Psychology.

Your success in this program depends on you. Once we have matched you with a mentor, it will be your responsibility to continue the conversation with your mentor and to keep us informed of your progress.

We look forward to hearing from you as the program progresses. If you have any questions or feedback, please let us know. The Psychology Undergraduate Team is here to support you. We are happy to invite you to take part in this year's Mentorship Program and we wish you much success in the months to come.

Best regards,

Katherine Duncan

Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies
Department of Psychology

Ashley Waggoner Denton

Associate Professor, Teaching Stream (and Alum)
Department of Psychology

Psychology Mentorship Program

The Mentorship Program seeks to assist students like you who are interested in meeting Psychology program graduates working in industry and/or academia as well as gaining insights into potential career paths. This handbook is designed to provide ideas and scenarios for a successful mentoring experience. It will also help you develop networking and communication skills that will be invaluable to you both before and after graduation.

This is a unique opportunity to learn more about a career path that a graduate from your program has followed. It also gives you a chance to learn what "real world" work or graduate school is like.

In addition to learning about a field you are interested in pursuing in your future career, the Mentorship Program is also meant to expose you to areas that you may not have yet considered but which you might find useful and educational. The opportunity is yours to encourage your mentor to share their knowledge with you. Who knows? Your mentor's expertise in a related field may spark your interest in a career that you had not previously considered and/or or knew little about.

Commitment

Week of October 21 – 25, 2024

Attend a Program Orientation: On your application form you will be asked to select a date and time to attend a mandatory orientation. You will be contacted with your orientation details in mid-October, including the exact dates and times.

October 30 – November 1, 2024

Contact your Mentor: Alumni and students will be notified of one another's name and contact information. NOTE: *It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with their mentor* by e-mail and introduce themselves. This is intended to take place before the Meet & Greet Event.

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

Meet & Greet: This event is a wonderful way for you to meet your mentor for the first time if they live in the area. You will receive an email invitation closer to the event, in the meantime, please **save the date**.

Where: Psychology Lounge Room 4043, Sidney Smith Hall

November 2024 through March 2025

Meetings: Mentors and students are asked to participate in a minimum of two to three meetings from November to March.

Late March 2025

Program Closing Event: Date and time to be confirmed.

April 2025

Complete Evaluation: You will be asked to complete a program evaluation form. This will be very helpful in our continued efforts to improve the program.

Fundamentals of Being a Student Mentee

Meetings

It is the student's responsibility to initiate first contact with their mentor. Most students are nervous about reaching out for the first time. It can be overwhelming to make the initial connection, but it is never as difficult as it seems at the time. Remember, your mentor agreed to be matched with you and is looking forward to working with you. Keeping this in mind will make it easier for you to take the initiative and let you get the most out of this mentorship experience.

If you do not hear back from your mentor within a week of initiating contact with them, please let us know. You can contact us at psy.ug-assistant@utoronto.ca. We will then contact the mentor on your behalf and/or assign you to another mentor, if possible.

Between November and March, you are expected to participate in at least two to three meetings with your mentor. Communicate with them clearly about your availability, be on time for meetings, and let them know if you can't make it and need to reschedule.

Courtesy

Your mentor participates on a voluntary basis and is giving their personal time to participate in this program and should be appreciated as such.

Confidentiality

You and your mentor are responsible for identifying and observing areas of confidentiality. Possible areas of confidentiality include personal and privileged industry information.

Professionalism

As the program progresses, you will become better acquainted with your mentor. This is a great thing, and we encourage you to feel comfortable speaking with and interacting with your mentor; however, this comfort must always be tempered with appropriate standards of professionalism. That applies not only to communications, but also in your progress reports and feedback at the end of the program.

Preparedness

Come to the relationship prepared! Rewarding mentorship experiences happen when students have questions in mind when meeting mentors. This handbook includes some questions you can ask and some ideas for activities to get you started. Know what you would like to learn and achieve in this program.

Participation

In the event that you have not made the effort to contact your mentor within one week of receiving their contact information, you will lose your right to participate, and your mentor will be matched with someone else. It will be your responsibility to manage your time and effort from your initial e-mail to introduce yourself.

Do not ask your mentor for a job or a graduate position. This is not the purpose of this program.

Contact us if you have any questions or concerns

You can email the Undergraduate Team at psy.ug-assistant@utoronto.ca at any time. We're here to help and support your progress in this program.

Preparation

Read and refer back to this handbook

Familiarize yourself with the objectives of this program; these are the same objectives that you will need to be successful in the workplace or in graduate school. Remember, this program *cannot* get you a job or into research, but it can give you the skills you need to find your way on your own.

Make your first impression a good impression

As the saying goes, you don't get a second chance to make a first impression. As you would with a job interview, dress in appropriate business casual attire when meeting your mentor for the first time. Similarly, when sending the first e-mail to your mentor, be professional in your spelling, composition and phrasing.

Establish specific goals

Make sure you have a clear and specific idea of what you want to achieve before you contact your mentor. We have suggested some questions further along in this handbook to help you get started.

Respect your mentor's time and schedule

Your mentor is volunteering their time to help you. Be respectful of this by using this time effectively and being conscientious about your correspondence. Make phone calls during regular hours (9:00 AM - 5:00 PM from Monday to Friday) unless you've discussed an alternate schedule with your mentor. In addition, give your mentor some time to respond to e-mail or voicemail before following up. Allowing for a 24 - 48 hour response time is reasonable.

Establish rapport with your mentor

Tell them more about yourself and ask questions to find out more about what their experiences were like in the program/Department or about UofT in general. You already have this in common.

Know your mentor's role

They are there to:

- Share their knowledge about your career or research area of interest;
- Offer you advice and guidance, including how to communicate and interact professionally;
- Answer questions you may have about their academic and professional experiences;
- Recommend other people or resources which might be able to support your goals.

During the Program

Stay organized

Create a folder in your email account dedicated to messages to and from your mentor. Be sure to save all correspondence with your mentor in case you need to refer back to it.

Feel free to let us know how your correspondence is going. We are interested in your experiences, and welcome any feedback you can provide to improve this program.

In the early stages and beyond

- Discuss your background to find out if it fits with your career choice.
 - Ask for advice on how you can demonstrate your skills/experience in your field of interest.
 - Do you require further education, and if so, what kind?
 - What kinds of skills/experience should you emphasize when applying for a job?
 - What terms or ideas should you remember when talking to people in this industry?
- Talk about the changing workplace: dress code, corporate culture, challenges in starting out, developing a career in the field, working remotely, etc.

- Ask for advice about graduate school application or academic careers, if you see this as a direction you want to go in. Learn the realities of building an academic career.
- Ask your mentor to describe how the actual workplace or graduate experience compared to their expectations as an undergraduate.
- Discuss how to deal with the transition from undergraduate to graduate school or the workplace

Toward the end of the year

- Ask for a critique of your résumé or grad school application.
- Arrange for any future follow-up you may wish to have, to share your progress, for example.

Tips

Additional ideas for actively engaging in the mentor relationship

- Always call or email to convey your thanks soon after meeting with your mentor, expressing your appreciation for their time and tell them how the meeting has been a benefit to you.
- Share or email an article that might be of interest to your mentor.
- Include in your email messages any news of your most recent successes (on a mid-term exam, extra-curricular activity, etc.).
- At the conclusion of the program in Spring 2025, send your mentor a formal letter of thanks or a handwritten thank-you card. This gesture reflects thoughtfulness and appreciation of your mentor's time, effort and willingness to help you out.

Essentials of correspondence

- Etiquette is vitally important in any professional relationship. The speed and convenience of email and messaging services can cause us to compromise the quality and care we would normally take in corresponding with professional contacts.
 - Slang, abbreviations, etc. are not an acceptable way to communicate with a mentor. Be professional, this demonstrates that you take the relationship, them, and yourself seriously.
 - Don't end something to your mentor that you wouldn't want their boss or colleagues to read.
 - Sign your name at the end of your emails.
- Take a moment to think about how to thank your mentor.
 - Be sincere and try to avoid telling your mentor what you think they want to hear.
 - Check to make sure you're correctly spell your mentor's name and title.
 - Be prompt in your responses. If you are thanking your mentor for a meeting or tour of their office, send it within a week of the meeting.
 - Be sure to highlight something specific that you enjoyed or learned from them.
 - If in doubt, you can email the draft to the Undergraduate Team for feedback.
- Be clear when calling and leaving voicemail messages.
 - State your name, and the name of the person who the message is for.
 - Briefly outline the reason for your call.
 - Leave a phone number for the person to call you at their convenience. Not everyone has call display, particularly when sharing a phone system.

Withdrawal from Program

If you do not initiate contact, or if you do not receive a response from your mentor, or if either you or your mentor feels that the mentor/student relationship is not beneficial, please contact the Psychology Undergraduate Assistant at psy.ug-assistant@utoronto.ca as soon as possible.

Questions?

Please reach out to us at psy.ug-assistant@utoronto.ca