



Student Guide to Academic Mentoring

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

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Need help? Got questions?

Send us a message via [this form](#) and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

For more information, visit the [Academic Mentoring website](#).

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What you need to know



What is Academic Mentoring?

Academic Mentoring has the potential to **transform your uni experience**. In a **30-minute meeting**, your Mentor will listen and share tips that support your learning and success. And having a friendly face on campus who understands makes all the difference.

Mentoring is not just about imparting knowledge — it's about creating an space where both the mentor and mentee can **learn, reflect, and develop** together.

In a 30-minute meeting, you can:

- Gain **new perspectives** and develop **critical thinking**
- Talk about **YOUR experiences** in a student-centric program
- Develop **tools** to further your career and academic journey
- Use it for **self-reflection** and gain **diverse perspectives**
- Get **career insights** from someone working in your industry day-to-day
- Figure out what you want by looking at **possibilities** with honest guidance
- Grow your **professional network** with connections that lead to opportunities beyond uni

What are the key features of Academic Mentoring?



Tailored to diverse goals

Mentoring spans various fields and disciplines, offering **personalised guidance** to your **academic journey** at the University of Melbourne. Mentors act as **facilitators**, helping mentees **identify their goals, explore opportunities, and overcome obstacles.**



Reflective and self-developmental journey

Encourages mentees to engage in **self-reflection**, fostering a deeper understanding of their strengths, **areas for growth, and potential pathways forward.**

Mentors support this **reflective process** by asking thought-provoking questions, sharing experiences, and providing constructive feedback.



Educational and learning skills

Academic mentoring equips individuals with **work-ready soft skills**, such as **time management, critical thinking, and problem-solving**, helping mentees navigate academic challenges and reach their potential.

Two-way informal conversations

It's a **collaborative conversation** where mentors and mentees exchange diverse perspectives, creating a **rich learning experience that benefits both.** These conversations are often informal and flexible, fostering a comfortable space for **honest communication, creativity, and idea-sharing.**



Networking

Academic mentoring serves as a platform to **develop essential networking skills**, such as effective communication, relationship-building, and professional etiquette.



By building these skills in a **safe and supportive space**, students are **prepared for future networking opportunities**, helping them to **accelerate career growth and academic development.**

What do I get from Academic Mentoring?

- ✓ Expanded perspectives
- ✓ Consistent and individual attention
- ✓ Encouragement to challenge your comfort zones
- ✓ Convenient and structured
- ✓ Develops critical thinking
- ✓ Opportunity to gain a reference for jobs or grad school
- ✓ Builds professional relationships and networks
- ✓ Enhances personal wellbeing



“

I wanted to keep going back so that I would have the same person constantly throughout the three years to talk to ... and to support me at the university ...

Where I needed a letter from someone, they would be a really good person to have because they've seen the continuity of my studies and they've kind of gotten to know me.”

Darcy

BACHELOR OF ARTS STUDENT

Student tips for an effective meeting



Pre-meeting preparation

Prepare for your first meeting, then follow these steps each time you meet your mentor.

Step 1:

Learn about your academic mentor

- Research your assigned academic via their professional platforms such as:
 - [Find an Expert](#)
 - LinkedIn

Note: Key experiences which they have had which appeal to you. This can include their education/study, volunteering, global experiences and, if relevant, supervision.



Step 2:

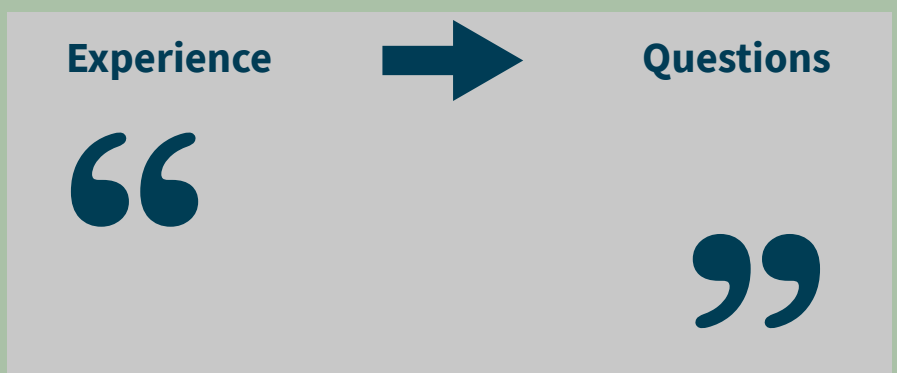
Find topics to discuss with your academic mentor



- Devise some questions for your mentor to find out more about their experience. This can be **research, industry or discipline specific** questions.

The most important thing is that it draws on the experience of your academic mentor/can be specific to them.

Sample questions can follow this structure:



Step 3:

Adopt a “mentoring mindset”



- Review and select which benefits of Academic Mentoring you want to pursue
- Set specific goals for your academic mentoring meeting

Remember, you get this unique opportunity to take part in Academic Mentoring as a core part of your student experience, so enjoy the ride :)

If you are unable to attend your meeting, remember it is courtesy to let your Academic Mentor know via email you will not be able to attend. Their contact details can be found on the appointment reminder email you’ll receive, or via your Academic Mentoring portal.



During the meeting advice

Communicate in a professional manner in an academic setting.

Step 4

Talk about yourself



- Be prepared to share your own story with your Academic Mentor - or even practice your elevator pitch. Start building your connections. Practice your communication skills.



To build your confidence and skills, check out the [Academic Skills youtube channel](#).

Step 5

Engage in “curious questioning”



- Find out how uni is for someone who did not just survive it, but is working in it!

Your Academic Mentor can offer advice about student life and share what strategies help current students succeed at uni



Ask your mentor about the ‘other side’ of things such as what being a student was like for them, why they work at the university, or even what their research interests are!

Step 6

Maintain active listening and answer questions effectively



Answer questions directly and straight to the point. Let go of any performance bias and aim to be authentic, yet professional with your Academic Mentor.

Weave in and clarify your personal and professional goals in the conversation. You can even take notes on any tips your mentor gives you!

Step 7

Maintain professional communication



- It's important to remind ourselves that this is a professional setting for networking and building a long-term connection.

Maintaining professional communication can look like:

- Asking your Academic Mentor what is appropriate to call them and their preferred title
- Writing clear emails which include your name, student ID, degree and contact details
- Starting emails with “Dear” or “Hi” and their name
- Closing with “Many thanks” or “Best regards”



Post-meeting tips

Build rapport with your Academic Mentor to form a long term professional connection

Step 8

Follow up with your communication



- Send your Academic Mentor a follow-up email. The email should thank your mentor for their time and dedication, and reflect on the ideas discussed during the meeting

Learn more about how to [communicate with academics](#). This can help with your classes, too!

Step 9

Reflect and set goals for your next mentoring meeting

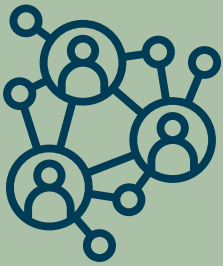


- Reflection is key to reinforcing your understanding of what your mentor has said in the meeting. Reflect on any notes taken.

Think of questions you can ask your mentor at the next Academic Mentoring meeting - this can help strengthen the relationship and keep you focussed.

Step 10

Expand your network



- Use this experience to reach out to new people in your Mentor’s network (with your Mentor’s permission) or connect via LinkedIn to build your own professional network.

Step 11

Request a reference



- If you’ve attended more than one meeting, your Academic Mentor will start to know more about you as a student at the University, as well as you as an individual.

Being able to ask them for a reference when you need a part-time job, your first career step, or an application for a graduate program can be very valuable.



Remember that your Academic Mentor can only write a reference if they know you, so make sure you book and attend!

“

My Academic Mentor provided me with support like time management, creating a schedule to balance out all the studying with all my extra-curricular activities and taking care of my health.”

Udita

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE STUDENT

Frequently asked questions

Common student questions

Can I only talk about things related to my major/career with my Academic Mentor?

No! Academic Mentoring is a flexible, open space where you can discuss topics beyond your major or career, such as personal goals, study strategies, or general academic advice. It's also a space to discuss your wellbeing and experiences.

What are the differences between Academic Mentoring and Peer Mentoring?

Think of it this way: Academic Mentoring is where you get the bigger-picture professional guidance and personalised support from someone who's been on the journey you are now on. Peer Mentoring is a student-to-student program that offers relatable advice and support from someone with recent shared experiences. Both are solid options to help you feel connected and supported throughout your degree.

Is Academic Mentoring the same as CAPS (Counselling and Psychological Services)?

No, Academic Mentoring focuses on conversations about your learning, experiences and personal and professional goals with an academic staff member who may teach or research at a uni. CAPS provides confidential counselling and psychological services with a registered counsellor.

What can I do if I've missed a meeting with my Academic Mentor?

Don't worry! You can book a meeting during semester with your Academic Mentor through my.unimelb.edu.au.

What should I expect from Academic Mentoring?

Expect a supportive space for meaningful conversations, tailored guidance, and a chance to build skills and confidence. It's a collaborative journey where your mentor helps you work towards your personal and academic goals.



Thank you!

Let us know your thoughts about your Academic Mentoring meetings.

Contact



academic-mentoring@unimelb.edu.au



students.unimelb.edu.au/studentlife/academic-mentoring



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