

UVM ScholarWorks

Making the Most Out of Mentorship

Item Type	curriculum materials;article
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Download date	2026-06-08 04:46:21
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Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/5954



How to Make the Most Out of Mentorship

How to approach your first meeting

Think about how you'd like to work with your mentor. Would you like your mentor to:

- Help provide advice on career decisions?
- Provide tips on studying or academic success?
- Help get you involved in research?
- Connect you with resources or other people?
- Be someone who you can check in with occasionally?
- Be someone with whom you can talk about shared experiences?
- Provide emotional support?

Any of these are okay, just be aware of the different ways a mentor can support you.

When should I reach out to my mentor?

- Reach out to your mentor as often as you feel necessary. Your mentor is there for you to help guide you through medical school and you should not feel intimidated about reaching out. If your mentor is too busy and not able to address your needs, you can request another one.
- You should plan to meet at least a few times per year (1-2 times/semester) and communicate via email as needed, but this can be more or less frequent depending on your interest.

How to be a good mentee

- Be proactive and be prepared with questions or things you'd like to talk about,
- Be willing to learn, display a positive attitude, and have a desire for professional growth and development,
- Be open to suggestions by the mentor,
- Show gratitude, express your thanks,
- If you are interested in a particular specialty or deciding between a few, share that information early so your mentor can help connect you with opportunities, other faculty, or provide advice.

Team Sport

Think of mentorship as a team sport. There are many types of mentors. Think about what type of mentors you'd like to work with and don't be afraid to seek multiple.

- Mentor (traditional 1-on-1 relationship, helps guide your future, maybe you're involved in their research/project),
- Coach (helps you improve - provides targeted feedback on specific area),
- Sponsor (uses their platform to nominate you),
- Connector (helps connect you with others in the field).

Some Questions to Consider Asking Related to:

Career Decisions

- I'm having a hard time deciding between these two specialties. Do you have any advice when deciding between the two or know anyone I could talk with about it?
- Based on my interests, are there other things that I should consider getting involved in?
- If I'm interested in going into orthopedic surgery, what other things should I be doing?

Studying and Academic Success

- Do you have any advice about how I can study more effectively?
- Are there any resources you've heard of being particularly helpful or individuals you would recommend talking to?
- Is there anything I should be doing to stand out academically for residency programs?

Research

- Do you have any advice about getting involved in a research project?
- Do you know of anyone doing any particularly interesting research or know of how I can find out about what kind of research faculty are doing?

Wellness

- How do you balance your work with your personal life? How do you stay well?
- Do you have any advice you would have given yourself as a medical student?

Imposter Syndrome

What is Imposter Syndrome?

- Feeling like you're not good enough and don't belong,
- This is very common in medicine, and even more common among women and underrepresented minorities in medicine.
- It can help to talk with peers or mentors about this because nearly everyone experiences it,
- You may feel like you have to appear perfect and think that struggling or making any errors is a sign of weakness. This represents a "fixed mindset."

Some Advice to Move into a Growth Mindset

- Have confidence in yourself! You've done incredible things to make it where you are today and should be proud of that!
- The best learning comes from errors and mistakes! - It's part of the learning process
- Medical school is one of the only times when you can make a mistake and no one will be harmed. You are supervised closely and people double and triple check your work.