



TIPS TO FIND AND CONNECT WITH A MENTOR

Mentoring is a professional relationship in which a more experienced person assists a less experienced person in developing specific skills or gaining knowledge to enhance their professional growth and development.

Mentors can act as a resource to introduce you to new networks and provide guidance and advice in your professional life. Different types of mentors may be relevant for different goals (i.e. career development, research, volunteer or employment opportunities, how to attain school/work-life balance, etc.).

Who can be your mentor?

- Faculty, staff, club advisors, colleagues, bosses, practicing and retired DVMs, other professionals, fellow students, etc.



Prepare for a Mentor

- Define what you are looking for.
 - Are you seeking a specific piece of advice? Trying to find avenues to meet more professionals? Wanting to learn more about a specific (or different) career field(s)? Looking for opportunities to volunteer or do research? Wanting to get involved in clubs? Looking for a summer externship, internship or job?
- Think about who might be the best person to answer your questions or be your mentor - would it be a faculty member, a practice owner, or a peer?
- Write down questions you'd like to ask or things you'd like to share about your goals and experiences thus far.

Find a Mentor

- Search the **Mentor Network** on [VetMedJobs](#). The professionals in the searchable database have personally agreed to participate and assist you in your veterinary endeavors. *They are excited about helping students and waiting to be contacted!*
 - Use keywords that represent your interests to search their profiles.
 - View their background information and send an introductory email.
- Email professors or approach them in person to see if they have time to talk with you. Perhaps they have a suggestion of a faculty member or professional who more closely aligns with your interests and needs.
- Consider asking a current or past supervisor.
- Listen to your professors or peers as they talk about professionals in the veterinary field.
- Ask Janel in the Career, Leadership and Wellness Center if she knows of a good connection for you or schedule a time to meet with her if some of your questions are around professional development, career exploration or job search.



Initiate a Connection

- Tell them a little bit about yourself – craft your introduction.
- Tell them about your experiences/goals (explain if you are unsure about the path to get there).
- You can include some of the questions you have, but not too many on your first contact – more can follow once they agree to connect with you.
- You could also ask them about their career path and any lessons they have learned along the way. (Possibly scheduling a short informational interview would be a good first step.)
- Explain why you reached out to them – what about them interested or impressed you?
- You can also express what you are hoping to gain by connecting with them?

SAMPLE EMAIL

Dear Dr. Smith,

I took your ____ course last quarter, and I really enjoyed learning about _____ and _____. I wanted to thank you for your great lectures, as well as ask if you might be able to provide me with additional insight regarding what it is like to work in the field of _____. As I move forward in my second year here, and from my experiences in the _____ club, I really believe that _____ is a career field I'd be interested in. I would love to talk with you more about it if you have any time available in the coming weeks. If not, might there be someone else who you could refer me to?

Thank you so much for your time; I really appreciate it!

Sincerely,

Annie Anderson
Class of 2020

Maintain the Relationship

- Do your own research about career paths and opportunities, and approach your mentor with questions.
- You can expect guidance or recommendations as you ask specific questions or for advice when making academic or career-related decisions. However, do not expect them to solve your problems.
- Make an effort to continue communication (unless you received the information you were seeking and not needing or wishing for a continued mentoring relationship).
 - It's important that you reach out to them to keep the relationship going.
 - You can communicate via email, phone, Skype or meet face-to-face, if amicable.
 - Consider connecting on LinkedIn.
- Approach this as a genuine mutually beneficial relationship, and work to build rapport.
- Be professional in your interactions and respectful of their time.
- As you express your academic and professional goals to your mentor, ask if they have advice on next steps or if they know of someone else you could contact.
 - The goal is to continue to increase your knowledge and build your network.
- Follow-up. Let your mentor know if you acted on a suggestion they made.
- Last, but not least – thank them and let them know if they've influenced you in a positive way.