



Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship

GW Mentor and Mentee Policies and Guidelines

Mentor Policy

Thank you for joining GW's mentoring program. By accepting this agreement, you are committed to being an active member in our mentoring program, and will adhere to the guidelines outlined here.

As a GW mentor you will be attending meetings at which confidential and proprietary information about ventures may be discussed. You agree that you shall keep such information strictly confidential and will not disclose it to other parties without written permission from the sources of such information.

You agree to respond to mentoring requests, and to schedule and attend meetings within the parameters and expectations that you set your profile.

It is GW's policy that mentors should not have any relationship with a GW-affiliated venture or team where there is any form of compensation, including but not limited to equity, options, deferred compensation, and commissions. As a GW mentor your primary interest in serving cannot be to scout for investment opportunities, new clients, or a job.

The key element of this policy is communication and transparency of information. Occasionally, there will be cases where mentors are so excited about a business that they would like to invest or join the team. If you are considering any form of formal relationship with a GW team or venture, you must notify the GW Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship immediately. You must recuse yourself from mentoring that team, and await a review by GW before proceeding with any action.

All mentors should be alert to the potential for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise at any stage of a venture's development. If you know you have a conflict, alert the GW staff immediately and recuse yourself from any dealings with the venture in question. If you think you may have a conflict discuss it with the GW staff immediately to arrive at the proper course of action.

Mentee Guidelines, Acknowledgements and Release from Liability

In order to participate in GW's mentoring programs, you must agree to the acknowledgements, release from liability, and guidelines provided here.

To work with a GW mentor is a privilege, and it is important to be gracious, thoughtful and professional toward your mentor. Your mentor is a successful, experienced entrepreneur, investor or business professional who has volunteered his/her valuable time to help you. We strongly recommend you follow these guidelines to get the most out of your interaction with your new mentor.

Before the First Meeting

Contact your new mentor. Place a phone call or send an introductory email right away. Be sure to identify yourself as a participant in a GW mentoring program (including the New Venture Competition, GWERT Mentors, or I-Corps.)

Be respectful of your mentor's time. Be sure to call during appropriate business hours or during times specified with your mentor. Identify a convenient time for your consultation. Don't forget to agree on an appropriate length for your meeting. Return phone calls promptly and be on time with commitments or meetings. If your mentor offers a specific time frame of availability, respect his/her wishes by following through.

Send an advance communication. Send your mentor a 1-page introduction. As concisely as possible, describe

- yourself and your team. Be sure to give your GW affiliation (student, faculty, staff, alumnus; undergraduate or graduate student; school; major; year of graduation).
- your venture and its current status
- what type of help you think you need.

Do your homework. Before your upcoming meeting, gather information on your mentor and his or her organization. Knowledge about your mentor's areas of expertise or organization will help you prepare more intelligent and productive questions.

At the Meetings

Show up on time. Be on time for conference calls and show up early for face-to-face meetings.

Ask questions. This is your opportunity to learn as much as you can from your mentor. Be prepared for your meeting with your mentor by arriving with a series of open-ended questions that will help stimulate your discussion and enable you to learn as much as you can about your mentor's profession or industry.

Be enthusiastic and engaged. Remember your mentor has volunteered his or her time to meet with you. Listen and take note of the experiences and knowledge your mentor is sharing with you.

Deal positively with all advice. Seriously consider all advice or suggestions you receive. It is fine to disagree with your mentor. He or she is an advisor, and you are ultimately responsible for your venture.

But be careful not to become argumentative. If you disagree with your mentor, do it with a smile, and state your objections clearly and dispassionately. Arguing about why the mentor's advice would not work, can be construed as rude and close-minded.

Make clear commitments for next steps. The mentor and mentee should agree on a couple action items in preparation for the next meeting to set reasonable expectations for mentee progress. Take time to make sure that everyone is clear about action items and next steps. Set the time and place for your next meeting. Recap the action items at the end of the meeting.

After the Meeting

Keep confidences. Don't be careless in discussing what you learned from your mentor. Be careful not to betray any confidences he or she may share with you. The very last thing you want to do is to lose the trust of your mentor.

Follow up and follow through. At the conclusion of each meeting, thank your mentor for his or her time. Be sure to follow up every meeting with a thank you note and a recap of the action items that were agreed to. Do everything you said you would do. Send deliverables on time.

Later on, be sure to demonstrate that you have followed advice and kept commitments for action at every opportunity, even if you have modified your plan. Pointing out that you used your mentor's help and sharing outcomes with him or her is important.

Unreasonable Expectations Regarding Mentors

There are some common unrealistic expectations of mentors that can cause irritation and disappointment on both sides. In general, the mentor should not be expected to

- Provide the mentee with personal introductions to other people unless they're comfortable doing so;
- Spend more time on the relationship than he or she is able to give;
- Take the lead in the relationship, setting up all meetings and driving the mentee's career development;
- Continue the relationship beyond the next round of the New Venture Competition.

Some General Tips for Mentees

Your mentor is a very experienced professional who has volunteered to help you. While it is critical that you interact with your mentor professionally, punctually, and respectfully, you as a mentee have the ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of the mentoring activities. You can use or not use mentor advice as you see fit, and as such, neither your mentor nor GW has any responsibility for your ultimate business decisions.

Acknowledgements and Release from Liability

GW mentors are uncompensated and can provide only educational support and that they cannot make business decisions for GW-affiliated entrepreneurs, and mentees release from liability, and waive all claims that they, their heirs, successors, and assigns may have against any GW mentor for any actual or claimed errors or other acts or omissions.

Mentees further acknowledge that GW does not control or direct its mentors in connection with services provided to entrepreneurs or their ventures, and they release from liability, and waive all claims that they, their heirs, successors and assigns may have against the GW and its directors and officers for any actual or claimed errors or other acts or omissions of the GW mentors.

Finally, mentees acknowledge that the mentorship activities from the GW Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (GW OI&E) are conducted largely by volunteers on a best-effort basis who are fully independent of and are not directed by GW OI&E staff. They release from liability and waive all claims against GW OI&E that they, their heirs, successors and assigns may have for any actual or claimed errors or other acts, or omissions, including, but not limited to negligent acts of the GW OI&E or its directors, officers, or mentors or anyone else connected with GW OI&E.