

# STC Carolina Mentoring Program

## Mentor/Mentee Guidelines

Updated September 2020

### Introduction

The Mentoring Program at STC Carolina was created to help students, recent graduates, and career changers enter the technical communication industry. A veteran technical communicator is paired with a mentee in a short-term, project based relationship intended to provide real-world experience, strengthen the mentee's candidacy in the local job market, and start the mentee's professional network. The mentoring program is also designed to develop the next group of enthusiastic and dedicated chapter leaders.



### Mentoring Committee

STC-Carolina created a mentoring committee to manage the mentoring program, liaise with local universities and the technical communication faculty, and maintain professional connections within the Research Triangle Park and Carolina regions. The mentoring committee is tasked with running biannual meet & greets, matching mentors and mentees, and facilitating relationships with industry and academia.

### Mentoring Guidelines

#### What Mentoring Is

Mentoring is a partnership between two individuals, with the more experienced individual taking the role of the coach, cheerleader, confidant, role model, sounding board, and devil's advocate. The mentoring program is about one person assisting in the development of another by providing guidance and sharing knowledge, skills, experience, and perspectives.

Our mentoring is:

- A development tool for learning and growing.
- A knowledge-sharing opportunity.
- A conduit to teach mentees practical skills.
- A support system to help bridge the gap between where you are now and where you want to be.
- A safe place to experiment with ideas, brainstorming, and creative approaches.
- Meant to challenge mentees.

## What Mentoring Is Not

While different mentoring programs are job-oriented, our mentoring program is designed to encourage organic growth in the profession.

Our mentoring is not:

- A guarantee of a job.
- Career coaching. While resume and cover letter discussions can be part of the relationship if the mentor agrees, it should not be the sole purpose.
- A way to get a quick and easy answer. Mentors don't have all the answers. Mentors will help guide the mentee in the process of diagnosing, planning, implementing, and evaluating.



## Expectations of the Mentor

Mentors are expected to create collaborative learning experiences for the mentees. The mentor must be fully committed to the agreed-upon timeline and project. This includes fully preparing for meetings, reviewing projects/deliverables, and being fully engaged throughout the mentoring relationship.

The mentor is also expected to:

- Respect the mentee's time.
- Build trust.
- Keep discussions confidential.
- Be an active listener.
- Share knowledge, experience, and lessons learned.
- Help identify the mentee's talents, strengths, and assets.
- Serve as a resource.
- Expose the mentee to your professional circle
- Guide the mentee to be the best version of themselves.
- Help the mentee create goals and encourage, inspire, and challenge the mentee to achieve his/her goals.
- Help the mentee see alternative interpretations and approaches
- Be spontaneous. Work beyond the planned meetings: write notes or emails of

encouragement or new information.

- Be a professional reference, if desired and warranted

## Expectations of the Mentee

The mentee is expected to take initiative and devote the necessary time to ensure the success of his or her own mentoring relationship. Mentees are to be proactive in scheduling meetings and keep those appointments. It is imperative that the mentees be open and honest about their goals, objectives, and expectations of the relationship. It is not up to the mentor to determine discussion topics or goals -**the burden of success lies heavily on the mentee.**



Mentees are expected to:

- Be respectful of your mentor's time.
- Be accountable, flexible, and prepared.
- Identify goals and desirable outcomes.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Seek feedback and keep an open mind to obtain more objective points of view.
- Discuss challenges and barriers to success.
- Follow through on commitments – regular and ongoing contact.
- Take the initiative and follow up on agreed upon goals.
- Actively listen.
- Be yourself.

## Chapter Membership

Mentees and mentors are not required to be members of STC or the Carolina Chapter, but it is strongly encouraged.



## Mentoring Activities

### Meeting Discussion Topics

- Principles of technical communication
- Career progression
- Industry changes
- Time management
- Listening skills
- Networking
- Leadership development
- Managing conflict
- Influencing others

### Project Suggestions

- Tool-focused: Learn a common authoring or publishing tool, such as Microsoft Word, Oxygen XML Editor, Lectora Publisher, Camtasia, or Adobe FrameMaker.

### Deliverable-focused

- Write or rewrite an end-user document.
- Co-author an article for an STC publication.
- Develop or assess websites for accessibility or user experience.

## Career-focused

- Resume improvement
- Cover letter writing
- Online applications
- Communicating with hiring managers

## Social Networking

- Proper Twitter etiquette.
- Start a blog or post series on LinkedIn.

## Networking

- Attend a networking event together.
- Facilitate introductions via email or LinkedIn.
- Coordinate meetings with other mentor-mentee pairs.

# Workflow & Timeline

## Mentoring Duration

The mentor-mentee relationship lasts for three months, but can continue longer if both parties agree. The mentor and mentee should decide the duration and meeting schedule at the first meeting.

## How Mentors & Mentees are Matched

Twice a year in the Spring and Fall, the Mentoring Committee runs a meet & greet for potential mentors and mentees to attend.



Because a mentoring relationship lasts around three months, mentors and mentees can return to the meet & greet to begin a relationship with a different person. There are no set criteria, but a mentor-mentee relationship requires a double match. That is, the mentor must choose the mentee, and the mentee must choose the mentor. If both people pick one another after

the meet & greet, a match is made. Matching is facilitated by the Mentoring the committee Chairperson. After the mentors and mentees are paired, they are notified by email and provided with this document along with one another's contact information.

**The mentee is expected to reach out to their assigned mentor to schedule the first meeting.**

## First Meeting

At the first meeting, mentors and mentees should get to know one another's background and career progression to-date. If you meet in person, choose a place that is conducive to conversation but also offers food and beverage comforts, such as a coffee shop or bookstore. Mentors and mentees should also discuss:

- Goals of the mentoring relationship. What skills does the mentee may need to acquire or improve to reach his or her goal?
- Future career goals.
- Mentoring relationship duration.
- Meeting frequency.
- Communication preferences (email, text, phone, Skype, etc.).
- Project ideas.
- Action plan:
  - Develop a timeline with appropriate milestones for accomplishing goals.
  - Establish metrics for tracking implementation and success.

## Subsequent Meetings

Depending on the duration and meeting frequency, you may have one to three more meetings. At subsequent meetings, discuss the following:

- Project progress:
  - What's going well?
  - What are some challenges?
  - How can the mentor help further the action plan?
- Re-evaluate timeline and goals, if needed.
- Other mentoring topics as listed above.

## Final Meeting

At the final meeting, the mentor should be prepared to give the mentee feedback on the project or goals according to the established metrics. What did the mentee do well? What can he or she work on going forward? Also, discuss continuing the mentoring relationship and next steps.

## Evaluation

After the mentoring session is complete, an evaluation form will be sent to the mentors and mentees. Both mentors and mentees should be prepared to provide as much information on their experience during the mentoring program as possible.