

# e-Mentee's Toolkit

## A Resource for Mentees

First Edition

## Table of Contents

<i>About this Guide.....</i>	Page 3
<i>Privacy, Safety and Inappropriate Correspondence.....</i>	Page 4
<i>Mentoring—What a CanadaInfoNet Mentee Hopes to Gain.....</i>	Page 5
<i>Should I be a Mentee?.....</i>	Page 6
<i>Communication Skills for Mentoring.....</i>	Page 7
<i>Practical Mentoring Activities.....</i>	Page 9
<i>Partnership Agreements.....</i>	Page 11
<i>Customizing Your Partnership Agreements.....</i>	Page 12
<i>Sample Partnership Agreement.....</i>	Page 13
<i>Correspondence Guidelines.....</i>	Page 14
<i>Focusing your Correspondence.....</i>	Page 15
<i>Managing Constructive Feedback.....</i>	Page 16
<i>Additional Resources and Forums.....</i>	Page 17

## About This Guide

The CanadaInfoNet E-Mentee's Toolkit is a resource to help you make the most of your mentoring experience.

### *What is it?*

It's a step-by-step guide that prepares you for your mentoring experience by identifying some key considerations to help you succeed, some practical how-to suggestions for setting up your online relationship and possible shared activities to help identify the ways in which the program will enhance your abilities.

### *Why is a toolkit important?*

Mentees and mentors who can rely on some common guidelines and principles in the toolkit are better equipped to focus on the mentoring experience. Without structure, some participants might find it hard to achieve their mentoring goals. This manual is a guide only and provides suggestions that can be incorporated easily into the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program.

### *How do I best use it?*

The toolkit is your own document that enables you to customize your mentoring experience.

### *When do I use it?*

You should start reviewing your toolkit now and continue to refer to it during the program.

## Privacy, Safety and Inappropriate Correspondence

CanadaInfoNet provides a forum for you to communicate with your mentor while keeping personal details such as your last name and e-mail address in confidence. It is recommended that you do not provide your mentor with this information at any time during, or after your mentoring term.

Before submitting your application to become a CanadaInfoNet mentee, you were required to review the rules for mentees and mentors. If you feel, in any way, that the rules of the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program were unclear, please contact the mentoring coordinator immediately with your questions. [mentees@canadainfonet.org](mailto:mentees@canadainfonet.org)

### Remember to preserve your privacy and protect your privacy at all times:

- ⇒ CanadaInfoNet does perform reference checks on mentors. Although the mentoring coordinator reviews mentors and their references, there is no sure way to guarantee the credibility of the mentor's character. Therefore, as with all your communications with other people, you are advised to use reasonable caution when interacting with your mentor.
- ⇒ In addition, we recommend that you do not give out any personal information, such as your phone number, place of business, home address, etc.
- ⇒ Furthermore, it is recommended that you do not attempt to set up "in person" meetings with your mentor for any reason.
- ⇒ If you decide to continue correspondence with your mentor beyond the CanadaInfoNet program or share personal information, or engage in face-to-face meetings, CanadaInfoNet assumes no responsibility for any consequences resulting from such contact.

### *Inappropriate Correspondence:*

Remember, as outlined in the rules of conduct for mentees and mentors, **any comments that are hateful, racist or of a sexual nature are strictly prohibited.** Any inappropriate correspondence should be reported to the mentoring coordinator at [info@canadainfonet.org](mailto:info@canadainfonet.org). Such inappropriate comments will result in expulsion from the CanadaInfoNet program without exception.

## Mentoring—What a CanadaInfoNet Mentee hopes to gain

The CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program is essentially about helping newcomers and potential newcomers assume more responsibility for the effective management of their career and settlement in Canadian society. It is a relationship designed to build confidence and help you take increasing initiative for personal development. Mentoring differs from other forms of help, such as instructing, training or tutoring because it helps both partners learn, enjoy the learning and apply the learning.

CanadaInfoNet mentors are professionals, business and trades people who have achieved success in their careers and now they want to share their knowledge for the benefit of others. Mentors will support you in order to help you arrive at the best decisions. Mentors will help you understand what it's like to live and work in Canada, where the best place to live is, based on your career, where you can find services once you arrive in Canada and much, much more.

Mentoring is a high impact learning activity for everyone creating an opportunity to probe and practice critical success skills.

### *Mentoring is:*

- ☺ A balanced partnership requiring equal commitment and investment from both partners.
- ☺ A career accelerator for those who have already demonstrated the ability to invest in personal career achievement.
- ☺ A helping hand extended by people in the know to people who want to be in the know.
- ☺ A welcome to Canada for newcomers and potential newcomers.
- ☺ A process that helps new Canadians and potential new Canadians learn about living and working in Canada.

### *Mentoring is not:*

- ⊗ A one-way coaching initiative.
- ⊗ A forum for mentors to “toot their own horn.”
- ⊗ A job finding service for unemployed newcomers.
- ⊗ A process to encourage unmotivated people to take responsibility for self directed career management.
- ⊗ A process that will solve all your challenges.

**Mentoring requires commitment from both partners.** While it is an informal alliance, it is nevertheless, a professional undertaking. It is important to have realistic expectations at the beginning of the program in order to achieve the most benefits. No, the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program does not guarantee that mentees will find work as a direct result of the program. **As a mentee, it is important to understand that your mentor is one of many tools that will support your efforts to work and become settled in Canada. As a mentee you must understand that you own the outcome.** Ultimately, it is up to you to forge your success. A mentor is support for your efforts.

## Should I be a Mentee?

Here are some assessment exercises to help you determine your personal reasons for becoming a mentee.

### Individual Exercise

List some words and phrases that describe what the word "mentee" means to you?

---

---

---

List some of the people who have been mentees for you or for whom you have been a mentee. (Think of formal and informal mentoring.)

---

---

---

How could becoming a mentee help you to accomplish your professional and settlement goals?

---

---

---

Reflect on the mentoring relationships in which you have been involved. What has been satisfying for you about these relationships?

---

---

---

What has not been satisfying for you about these relationships? (Think about both the relationship and the outcomes.)

---

---

---

By considering these satisfiers and dissatisfiers, identify some expectations for your mentoring program that will contribute to making this a positive experience for you.

---

---

---

*"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."* - Mark Twain

## Communication Skills for Mentoring

You will employ a vast range of communication skills during your mentoring partnership. In fact, improving your business communication skills is one of the benefits of this program.

There are three fundamental skills that will contribute to the success of your partnership:

### *1. Questioning Skills*

Questioning skills allow you to understand the information and suggestions your mentor is presenting. They help you to understand responses and relevant guidance. If, at any time during your mentoring relationship you are unclear about what your mentor is expressing. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.

#### *Here are some important do's:*

- ☺ Ask questions to gain information, **not** to impress your mentor.
- ☺ Make requests for information as specific as possible.
- ☺ Use follow-up questions to probe for more information.
- ☺ When responding to a mentor's questions, repeat their question in your own words in order to identify what it is you are responding to and to ensure that you understood what the mentor was asking.
- ☺ Convey a sense of wanting the mentor's perspective, rather than a definitive answer.
- ☺ Ask open-ended questions, rather than ones that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
- ☺ Remember to ask for guidance based on your experience, not advice, or decision-making. Remember, the choice is ultimately yours and you own the outcome of this experience.

### *2. Active Listening skills*

Although the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program will be conducted on-line and it is unlikely that you will have the opportunity to meet your mentor face-to-face, you will still be employing "listening" skills. Listening refers to more than just hearing with your ears. Listening is understanding what is being communicated to you. In this program, you will be required to listen through reading. Listening skills are as important in this relationship as they are in any other, and most of us would benefit by developing active listening skills. Active listening requires you to ensure that you clearly understand the communication of your mentor. By asking open ended questions that explore your mentor's experiences, you will be better able to understand their guidance to resources and experiences.

#### *Here are some important do's:*

- ☺ Clarify and confirm your understanding of what a mentor has told you.
- ☺ Ensure that your writing conveys respect for your mentor's situation.
- ☺ Pay attention to how your mentor practices active listening. Can you help them to learn some valuable lessons?
- ☺ Remember that listening is a prerequisite for learning

### 3. Feedback Skills

Feedback skills are particularly important for both your mentor and you. The mentor is the ideal person to give you feedback about your career and settlement plans. Unlike other mentoring relationships you may have experienced previously, your mentor doesn't work with you and, therefore, is in a prime position to offer constructive observations.

Providing constructive feedback to your mentor is one of the best tools at your disposal. Feedback supports your mentor by helping them identify successful techniques and suggestions they've given you, compared to less successful approaches.

#### *Here are some important do's:*

- ☺ Remember that you are in an ideal situation to give your mentor some feedback about their mentoring efforts.
- ☺ Give your mentor permission to give you feedback as required.
- ☺ Talk about preferred feedback methods with your mentor.
- ☺ Enhance your opportunities for feedback by providing your mentor with examples of your successes and challenges.
- ☺ Use feedback for some discovery about why things went well, besides the outcome.
- ☺ Keep in mind that feedback has two fundamental outcomes:
  - a. To reinforce what you are already doing
  - b. To help you overcome challenges

## Practical Mentoring Activities

There are many ways in which you can enhance your professional development and success in Canada. Contact with your mentor need not be restricted to open-ended coaching or information sessions. It is important for a mentoring relationship to balance personal contact with practical activities.

Here are some suggestions about opportunities for enhancing mentoring effectiveness:

1. Introduce your mentor to a professional on-line newsgroup, threaded discussion or web community outside of CanadaInfoNet that you belong to. If you don't belong to one, explore some options for yourself and your mentor.
2. Ask your mentor to share a career, education or settlement success or challenge with you.
3. Share a career, education or settlement success or challenge you have experienced with them.
4. Send a copy of your resume to your mentor so they can offer comments and feedback.
5. Send your mentor a short update every month outlining your professional development and/or the progress of your immigration activities.
6. Take notes at a professional information presentation you attend and send them to your mentor for discussion and review in your next communication.
7. Use topical business articles or books as a platform for exchanging views.

*There are many other activities that can support your professional development that will occur to you as you and your mentor develop an open and positive relationship.*

## Practical Mentoring Activities — A planning guide

Here are some suggestions for creating your own opportunities for mentoring activities. Consider these examples and then get creative about your own plans.

Topic	Possible activities	Potential outcomes
Books and articles on job searching in Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for recommendations</li> <li>• Pass on books/articles that made an impression on you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in 2-way discussion about your impressions</li> <li>• Challenge each others' points of view</li> </ul>
Networking Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accompany your mentor to an online event.</li> <li>• Invite your mentor to an online event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and discuss what you each hope to get from an event</li> <li>• Create opportunities for follow-up</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss your mentor's credentials.</li> <li>• Send your mentor information about the institutions you studies at in Canada.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the possibility that, in Canada, you might be required to upgrade your skills.</li> <li>• Find out which credentials can be carried over to Canada and which need upgrading</li> <li>• Identify which institutions have accelerated programs for foreign trained professionals and trades people.</li> </ul>
Sharing your information network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles/interviews from subject matter experts</li> <li>• Articles/interviews about industry trends</li> <li>• Articles/interviews about specific job content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger scope of observations and suggestions for personal development</li> </ul>
Managing a project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer specific examples of your work for your mentor to review</li> <li>• Ask your mentor for examples of their work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A channel for each of you to comment frankly on good and bad techniques</li> </ul>
Online Job Fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite your mentor to an online job fair where they can have online interviews and see how employers respond to their experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the experience and suggest solutions to any challenges they perceive.</li> </ul>

## Partnership Agreements

It is advisable to set out, at the beginning of the relationship, some mutual expectations. This not only allows you and your partner to establish a business-like framework, it invites some good discussion about partners' hopes and concerns.

### Elements of a Partnership Agreement

The agreement should contain certain elements that will provide parameters for the mentoring relationship that are beneficial to both partners and are achievable.

#### *Why – the benefits of the mentoring relationship*

Discuss how an effective plan for the mentoring program will benefit the mentee and the mentor.

#### *What – the expected Outcomes of the mentoring relationship*

Discuss the concrete outcomes both the mentor and the mentee want to achieve through the mentoring relationship.

#### *How – the personal boundaries of the relationship*

Agree on how both the mentee and the mentor will work together to make this relationship a successful one. Some examples of discussion points are:

- ☺ When are the best times to exchange correspondence?
- ☺ How are we going to develop a professional relationship that will allow us to share with each other honestly and objectively?
- ☺ How will we deal with disagreement or what we perceive to be resistance?
- ☺ What mutual fears do we have about the relationship?
- ☺ What is it about me (the mentee), my way of viewing the world or my reactions that might block our relationship?
- ☺ What is it about me (the mentor), my way of viewing the world or my reactions that might block our relationship?

## Customizing Your Partnership Agreement

There are two kinds of conditions that should be addressed in a mentoring agreement:

**Professional norms**

**Personal behavior**

*Professional norms may include*

- ☺ Time commitments
- ☺ Frequency of meetings
- ☺ Punctuality
- ☺ Completing assignments or research

*Personal behavior may include:*

- ☺ Appropriate interpersonal behaviors
- ☺ Confidentiality
- ☺ Permission to give and receive feedback
- ☺ Defining areas that are not appropriate for discussion or disclosure.

*Refer to the partnership agreement on the next page to help you and your mentor prepare a simple, yet useful agreement.*

## Sample Partnership Agreement

Here is an example of a simple partnership agreement

CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program Partnership Agreement	
<i>To be completed by Mentor:</i>	
My primary expectations for my mentee are:	
<i>To be completed by Mentee:</i>	
My primary expectations for my mentor are:	
<i>Correspondence</i>	
Frequency of correspondence:	(Number of times per week)
Timeframe for responses:	(When mentee will respond to mentor)
Mentoring will start on:	(date)
Mentoring will end on:	(date)
I agree to conduct any research or follow-up as requested through our formal correspondence	
(Mentee's acknowledgement)	
(Mentor's acknowledgment)	
The initial correspondence will take place on:	(date)

## Correspondence Guidelines

*Following a set format that includes some, or all, of the following enhances mentoring correspondence:*

- ☺ Updates on action items
- ☺ Debriefing on problematic assignments since last correspondence
- ☺ Feedback by mentors on his/her observations of the mentee's progress
- ☺ Mentor's suggestion for development initiatives including reading and relevant forums
- ☺ Opportunity for the mentee to share success stories
- ☺ Mutually agreed homework assignments which cover both research and action items.

*Regular correspondence between the mentee and mentor will be enhance if:*

- ☺ There is a focus on one area of development
- ☺ The meeting ends with homework assignments
- ☺ Both sides practice active listening

Here is a sample of the structure you could use for your correspondence preparation

Meeting Planner
<b>Mentor:</b> <b>Correspondence Date:</b> <b>Respond by Date:</b>
<b>Mentoring Topics:</b>
<b>Relevant information/resources/materials that would benefit the mentor:</b>

## Focusing Your Correspondence

Mentoring correspondence is your opportunity to share your experiences with someone who has similar experiences and interests. The focus of the correspondence is for the two of you to decide.

### Here are some suggestions for focusing your discussion:

- ☺ Ask your mentor for their perspective on business and organizational trends in Canada.
- ☺ Developing a personal learning plan
- ☺ Asking your mentor to direct you to helpful services, government resources and organizations that specialize in helping newcomers settle in Canada.
- ☺ Asking your mentor to assist you in preparing resumes, getting ready for interviews and networking.
- ☺ Sharing specialized reading materials and online resources.
- ☺ Asking for constructive feedback on your resume.
- ☺ Preparing for the adjustments of coming to Canada.

### *The advantages of having a focus for your correspondence is:*

- ☺ You can research specialized information in advance, if appropriate.
- ☺ Your meeting will be directly related to your needs and interests of your mentor.
- ☺ You'll both be practicing the skills of developing an agenda and presenting information.

## Managing Constructive Feedback

Feedback is fundamental in order for you to be able to assess the success of the mentoring relationship. This mentoring program is a unique opportunity to receive some feedback from your mentor. You can use this feedback to take control of your future in Canada.

Feedback should be specific without sounding unsupportive, destructive, negative or imposing. It is important to remember that, ultimately; you are responsible for your own successes. It is also important to remember that it is not likely that you will make all the same career choices as your mentor has. The CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program is not about creating a replica of your mentor, or following in their footsteps.

Your mentor should never tell you that your choices are wrong. Like-wise, you should never tell your mentor that their suggestions are wrong. Instead, if you believe your mentor's suggestions and efforts are in opposition of how you would proceed, consider the following possibilities:

- ☺ Discuss other alternatives and share your knowledge of these options.
- ☺ Ask your mentor open-ended questions about their suggestions. It might be that the reason their approach is different from yours is because their goals are also different.
- ☺ Consider your mentor's suggestions. What are the possible outcomes? Is it possible that their suggestions, although different from your own, could yield success?
- ☺ Even if you are absolutely sure that their suggestion is not right for you, discuss the subject objectively and with caution. Express your reasons for believing the suggestion is not right for you. The final decision is ultimately yours. Remember, if you follow the suggestions of your mentor, against your own judgment, and fail to accomplish your goal, you still own that outcome. Make the choice that you believe is right for you.

Feedback should focus on actions and interests, not on your attitude. Your mentor probably respects your opinion and is happy to help you. Any forceful or destructive criticism could discourage your mentor and result in a breakdown of trust in the relationship. Consider all your correspondence carefully. Remember, the more often you share feedback, the better you become at it which prepares you for full and frank discussions with your professional peers and networks.

## Additional Resources and Forums

During your mentoring program, you should also take advantage of the numerous resources and forums provided by CanadaInfoNet.org. You could even participate in other CanadaInfoNet forums with your mentor:

### 1. CanadaInfoNet Resources:

The resource section of our site is an excellent place for both you and your mentor to find links to government websites, sites with services for newcomers, labour market information, job boards, education credential assessment centres cultural resources for newcomers and much, much more.

### 2. CanadaInfoNet Success Stories:

Here's an opportunity for you and your mentor to share your stories of success with our community of online readers. Success stories are a collection of inspiring true accounts of Canadian immigrants who have achieved success in the areas of employment, education and/or settlement.

### 3. CanadaInfoNet Ask an Expert:

Ask an Expert is an extensive database of questions commonly asked by newcomers and potential newcomers. Mentors and mentees can send their questions, via our online form, to be answered by our panel of experts.

### 4. CanadaInfoNet Discussions:

We also have interactive threaded discussion groups that allow our community of mentors and mentees to share ideas with each other via a public forum.

### 5. CanadaInfonet Video:

We utilize Streaming Video functionality in order to present information and training workshops to our online community.