



# **Mentorship Handbook**

## SSE MSc Mentorship Program 2021/2022



All over the world, students from top business schools need help with the transition to professional life. The SSE MSc Mentorship Program seeks to provide that help through connecting our Master students with alumni. This brief guide provides information about what you can expect from your mentorship experience and how to make the most of this opportunity.

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## Welcome to mentoring!

### What is mentoring?

Mentorship is a supportive relationship established between a mentor and a student where knowledge, skills and experiences are shared. It is a relationship designed to help the student build confidence and realize their potential, so that they are able to take control of their own career/personal development.

Mentorship is a clearly structured, time-bound and self-managed process with clear, mutually agreed-upon roles and goals. A successful mentoring relationship is based upon encouragement, constructive feedback, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn from and share with each other. Therefore, both mentor and student need to be active and thoughtfully contribute their time, experience and opinions.

The MSc Mentorship Program is interdisciplinary and collaborative by definition. As mentors and students, you will learn and develop together. Let mentorship become a journey for personal development and learning, laughter and reflection.

Feel free to use this handbook as a practical guide to a successful mentorship. As you are already aware, no two mentoring relationships are identical: students have different needs, and you and the student you are matched with will build your own mentoring relationship with a structure that works for your both.

### The benefits of being a mentor

- Share your talents, experiences, and professional wisdom with our future leaders
- Broaden your leadership, communication, and mentoring skills.
- Better understand the realities and challenges of the next generation
- Make a critical contribution to your alma mater
- Develop new networking and collaboration opportunities
- Learn about the latest research topics from SSE
- Make an impact and influence young aspiring minds.

## The role of a mentor

### What is mentor?

A mentor is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as an “experienced and trusted adviser”. The mentor’s role is to provide support, knowledge, encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback that will guide the student in the achievement of their own objectives.

As a mentor you will have the opportunity to use your experience and knowledge in a facilitative manner to support the personal development of the student. It is important that you as a mentor always start from the student’s needs, not your own, and the situation the student is in. It’s a rule of thumb in functioning mentoring relationships.

### Your role as a mentor will cover at least some of the following:

- Engage in discussion by asking relevant questions to help develop your and the student’s understanding of a situation or problem
- Model professional behavior
- Provide information and knowledge and share your networks
- Provide advice on career development: serve as a resource for career readiness questions, i.e. resume, cover letter, interviewing, how to search for a career
- Provide support and encouragement
- Share professional experiences and provide an insight into your work and career
- Help the student set clear goals and identify areas for professional development
- Hold the student accountable by providing ongoing and constructive feedback
- Suggest tasks or activities that challenge the student’s understanding of their own abilities while promoting growth
- Be a sounding board
- Encourage self-reflection

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*“Being a mentor is a great opportunity to reflect and be a coach. That is to say, we have to ask questions back to the mentee rather than just offering a strong point of view. To me, it also means to help mentees get perspective of their situation, and provide examples that hopefully are relevant to them. ”*

*Anita, Mentor*

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## Skills and experience required to be a Mentor

- ✓ **Enthusiastic** – you show genuine interest in the student’s growth and development
- ✓ **Active Listening** – give the student your full, undivided attention, focus on what the student is saying before giving your opinion. Query them on their point of view.
- ✓ **Open** – you commit to an open dialog and to sharing your experience of similar issues, including both setbacks and successes. You are also open-minded and non-judgmental
- ✓ **Accessible** – you are willing and able to commit sufficient time to your student to offer support and guidance
- ✓ **Flexible** – you should be flexible in your approach and adjust to the needs of the student
- ✓ **Empathic** – respect and appreciate how the student thinks, feels and behaves
- ✓ **Communicative** – you need excellent communication skills, particularly listening, questioning and giving constructive feedback
- ✓ **Understanding** – You are prepared to try to understand different perspectives, approaches and backgrounds of different students.
- ✓ **Empowering** – you should help the student feel confident to try out different things and contribute in different ways.
- ✓ **Challenging** – you are able to challenge assumptions, encouraging the exploration of new ideas and innovative thinking

## Practicalities

### Structure of the program

We host the formal programming from October 4, 2021 to June 2022. The mentor and student should meet at least **4** times during the academic year but can meet more frequently if they choose. Meetings can be in-person, via telephone or by other virtual means.

### How often should you meet?

Students should reach out to mentors for first point of contact **no later than October 15, 2021**.

You make the decision together on when and how often to meet. Generally, every 6-8 weeks is a good rule of thumb. It is highly recommended that the mentor and the student develop a meeting schedule for the 8-month period at their first meeting.

### How long should a session last?

A mentoring session is not just two people having a conversation. It is a process that has a structure and needs time for talking through ideas, issues and situations. Therefore, the suggested meeting length is 50-90 minutes, including time to agree on action points for the next meeting.

Both mentor and student should respect each other’s time and other responsibilities, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.

## Suggested program framework

It is wise to make an overall plan for the mentoring process and to agree on an approximate structure, as it creates a clear focus for the program and also makes it easier for both mentors and students to engage. We recommend setting goals and expectations during the first meeting and then outlining different areas to focus on during subsequent meetings. However, do not be afraid to let the relationship flow naturally, for example do not feel bound to talk about something outlined at a previous meeting if a more interesting subject or focus has come up.

The following program is a suggested framework for mentoring pairs to follow throughout the Mentorship Program. Participants may choose to follow part of the framework or may choose to create their own.

Meeting	1	2	3	4
<i>Discussion points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Getting to know each other</li> <li>-Review past experiences</li> <li>-Explain your roles</li> <li>-Identify goals, objectives and expectations</li> <li>-Agree on the format and focus areas of the meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Student's agenda and questions</li> <li>-Discuss personal/professional strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>-Identify areas of development</li> <li>-Coach on specific areas if required</li> <li>-Explore options for actions</li> <li>-Agree on an action plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Follow up on goals, objectives and expectations</li> <li>-Student's agenda and questions</li> <li>-Coach on specific areas if required</li> <li>-Activities/exercises for the student to gain experience</li> <li>-Make adjustments and set new targets if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow up on goals, objectives and expectations</li> <li>- Self-reflection and review on the effectiveness of the relationship by both parties</li> <li>-Identify and discuss the next steps for the student</li> <li>-End of the program and keep in touch!</li> </ul>
<i>What mentors could do?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ask open questions</li> <li>-Actively listen</li> <li>-Clarify the aims and objectives of the mentoring</li> <li>- Help your student to arrive at his or her own answers</li> <li>-Recognize personal/professional strengths and weaknesses the student shows</li> <li>-Give information and advice</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Share experiences and tell stories</li> <li>-Monitor progress</li> <li>-Provide feedback</li> <li>-Encourage new and creative ways of thinking</li> <li>-Share your network</li> <li>-Summarize key learnings and results</li> <li>-Support and encourage personal growth</li> </ul>	

## Tips for a successful mentorship

There is no “right” way to mentor. The best technique is the one that is right for the individuals involved – that helps the mentor understand the student’s needs and concerns and allows the mentor to effectively share their knowledge and expertise.

Here are some suggestions to help ensure that the mentoring process is as effective as possible:

### Have a clear structure and purpose

Having a clear structure and purpose in mind will be the best and most efficient use of both parties’ time. These should be agreed upon during the first meeting.

### Start with practical goal setting

Discuss expectations and goals in the first meeting and review as meetings progress. At every stage of the relationship, make sure the goals for both parties are clear and realistic and include timelines for established benchmarks.

### Identify potential obstacles

Identify in advance any obstacles that would prevent the implementation of the established goals, such as limitations in time, organizational change, commitment issues and personality differences.

### Be curious about each other and seek common areas of interest

Engaging with the Mentorship Program will expose you to people with entirely different skills, experiences, and interests. It is important to take a genuine interest in each other and look to find common interests that can bring yourselves closer and enable a mentoring relationship built on trust and personal support.

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*Recognize the difference between each student you meet. There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach, and one needs to understand each student’s background and align on the expectations students have about the mentorship program so that you can best facilitate the learning and knowledge sharing.*

*Sherry, Mentor*

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*I would suggest mentors to answer two questions first:*

- What can you offer and how will you go about making that happen?*
- What do you expect for your part of the program? How can you influence it?*

*Johan, Mentor*

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### Document your meeting

It is recommended that you keep simple meeting notes to help keep track of what you have talked about and agreed to do the next time you meet. Feel free to spend a few minutes at the end of each meeting to sum up together what you have discussed and what the next action points are.

### Create a psychologically safe environment

The responsibility to build a relationship with mutual trust and psychological safety rests with both parties, but especially with the mentor. It is about creating a space for honest, open and close dialogue to exchange a diversity of viewpoints.

### Focus on what the student needs to achieve

Avoid making assumptions about what the student needs. It is the mentor's responsibility to break through common assumptions by asking questions and digging deeper.

### Let your student make their own decisions

Giving the student some responsibility and allowing them to make their own decisions will encourage them to think for themselves and improve their confidence by trial and error. You can foster your student's autonomy and independence by encouraging your student to "own" the mentoring relationship by coming prepared to your meetings, setting the agenda, doing the follow-up, and so on.

### For a successful mentorship both the mentor and student must...

- Maintain a friendly and approachable demeanor and respond in a timely fashion.
- Be respectful of each other's time and make sure they are both on time for virtual or in-person meetings.
- Be open-minded and non-judgemental.
- Be generous with your time, attention, and resources.
- Keep commitments to attend all prearranged meetings.
- Communicate with the Mentorship Program Project Manager at [mentor@hhs.se](mailto:mentor@hhs.se) if there are any questions or concerns.

### Share your network

Developing a professional network takes time and years of practice, but you can accelerate the process for your student by making relevant introductions. You might have connections your student could benefit from in your network, and can put your student in contact with people already established in the labor market.

### Provide feedback that can be heard

When giving feedback, try to be as concrete as possible, as then the feedback is easier to embrace. Strive for a balance between feedback that highlights what works and feedback on what could be improved. Remember to occasionally seek feedback yourself from your student.

### Recommended topics and activities

Below are some recommended topics or activities to address during your meetings:

- Review the student's CV and personal letter and offer suggestions for improvements.
- Discuss personal/professional strengths/weaknesses and how one can develop/overcome them.
- Identify career role models you and your student have and discuss what characteristics you find admirable in these individuals.
- Discuss the dynamics needed to work in a team, share your experience of adaptation for different cultures, teams, workplaces, etc.
- Discuss potential job possibilities and the skills needed for each. Talk about how the student can seek out additional skills while at school.
- Discuss books to read/potential courses which could be useful for the student.

## **Code of Conduct**

The SSE MSc Mentorship Program Code of Conduct ("Code") aims to define and maintain a standard of behaviour that is expected of participants in the program as mentors and students.

- All participants are expected to treat others with respect and consideration, keeping relationships free of discrimination and harassment in all their forms.
- Participants shall not disclose, share, duplicate or distribute each other's personal information without consent; unless otherwise agreed to, all information shared in the course of mentorship discussions shall remain strictly confidential.
- Participants in a mentoring relationship may develop friendships over time. However, it is important to maintain professional boundaries throughout the entire mentorship program.
- Participants must ensure all communications and interactions are pursued at all times in a professional, business-like and respectful manner.
- Exploitation of the relationship in any manner to seek an inappropriate advantage is strictly forbidden.
- All participants have a duty to report to the Mentorship Program Project Manager if they notice any breaches or violations of the Code.