

“Rules of the Road” for the Mentoring Process

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a process by which a mentee (protégé) strives to set and achieve professional goals under the guidance of another person with special expertise (the mentor).

What is a mentee (or protégé)?

The mentee is someone who proactively seeks a relationship with a more experienced person, or a person with special expertise, in order to strengthen skills and build on current knowledge for professional growth.

What is a mentor?

A mentor is an individual committed to serving as a role model or teacher for a mentee. They are committed to the confidentiality of the relationship and can provide support in many areas, including specific job responsibilities and career direction.

Who are the mentors in ABSA's program?

The mentors are experienced biosafety professionals (ABSA members) who have volunteered to share their experience and insights with less experienced ABSA members.

Who are the mentees in ABSA's program?

A mentee can be any ABSA member who wants to learn new skills and have a friendly, non-judgmental, non-work related relationship with another biosafety professional. It may also be an experienced person who wants to learn a new area of expertise from someone with experience in that area.

How does the process work?

The mentor list is in place – various areas of expertise are associated with each volunteer. The mentees will fill in an application form, including areas of interest, and forward that to the ABSA office. The ABSA office and Mentoring Committee will suggest a match based on areas of mutual interest – both parties will be contacted to determine their availability, willingness, etc. Either party can decline the match, with no questions asked. Another match will be suggested at that point, until a match is made. The mentor and mentee will sign the Confidentiality Form and return it to the ABSA office. From that point on, they are free to develop their relationship – see suggestions below. After 6 months in a relationship, the “Progress Report” should be completed by both parties and returned to the ABSA office.

Rules of the Road:

- Involvement in the Mentoring Program is voluntary. Either party can terminate the relationship if the goals are not being met.
- Aim for realistic, focused goals – establish expectations of each other in the initial contacts.
- Discuss and agree upon means of communication (telephone, e-mail, site visits) and frequency of contact.
- Complete “Progress Report” to provide feedback on the Mentoring Process (and documentation for possible recertification points).

Suggested responsibilities

Mentee

- Directs the relationship by proactively setting up interaction sessions and creating an agenda or questions to be covered.
- Communicates developmental needs and goals (written goals suggested, e.g., answer the question, “What do I hope to gain from this relationship?”)
- Maintains confidentiality and integrity in the partnership.
- Seeks and responds positively to the mentor’s feedback.

Mentor

- Commits to and takes an active role in the relationship. Keeps appointments with the mentee.
- Shares insights, experience and expertise with the mentee.
- Fosters an environment where the mentee is free to share concerns.
- Asks good questions and provides straightforward feedback to mentee.