Guide to Help You Find Appropriate Mentors & Sponsors

- **Identifying potential mentors/sponsors**
  - Check with section chief/department chair/current mentor for mentors/sponsors outside your section/department/institution
  - Check BU Profiles ([http://profiles.bu.edu/search/](http://profiles.bu.edu/search/)), enter keywords to identify additional potential names
  - Make sure your BU Profiles page is up to date; if not click **Edit My Profile**

- **Targeting mentors & sponsors**
  - Area of expertise
  - Ability to provide insights into your career/project/dilemma
  - Interest in your career
  - Constraints
    - Availability of time
    - Meeting location/in person/skype
  - Compatibility

- **Have mentor/sponsor identify other**
  - Resources – both within and outside institution
  - Potential colleagues, collaborators, or mentors

- **If you both think it would be mutually beneficial to meet again**
  - Establish preferences for meeting frequency, times, and communication

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**Suggested questions for your informational interview**

**Succinctly** describe purpose of meeting

- Who you are (give your elevator pitch - LINK)
- What is the meeting’s purpose or what you seek mentoring on (e.g., research project, career advice, specific dilemma)
- I am seeking you out because of...
  - Engage your mentor around the specific area you are seeking mentorship in
    - How did he/she become interested in a particular field?
    - How did he/she end up in a particular professional role?

Describe your goal or dilemma and your potential approaches.

Does mentor/sponsor have observations about potential unseen challenges?

Does mentor have suggestions for additional resources – both within and outside institution?

Does mentor have suggestions for additional potential colleagues, collaborators, or mentors?

Does mentor think they are a good match for you (expertise/interest/bandwidth)?

Does mentor have constraints or preferences for meeting (location/in person/skype)?

Does mentor have preferences for communication between meetings?

Does mentor have expectations for follow-through, progress, agendas, etc.?

If potential match, set up next meeting. Ideally set up all meetings for academic year as early as possible.
Tips for Productive Relationships with Your Mentors & Sponsors

Programming for Success with your mentor/sponsor

A. Get to know your mentor/sponsor’s interests so you can tailor questions to his or her strengths.
B. Suggest to your mentor that you will send agendas to him/her prior to your meetings as an organizing principle. Send your current CV/biosketch prior to the first meeting.
C. Arrive at each meeting with an explicit goal you would like to achieve.
D. Leave space at the beginning of each meeting for your mentor to articulate what is on his/her mind.
E. Summarize next steps at the end of the meeting.
F. If appropriate, schedule f/u appointment with mentor/sponsor (consider making this the last item of your agenda).
G. Email afterwards succinctly summarizing big takeaways, and expressing thanks.
H. Record and follow up on suggestions from mentoring sessions.

If a longitudinal relationship:

I. If suggestions do not work out, present your mentor/sponsor with several potential alternative strategies.
J. Use your mentor’s/sponsor’s preferred form of communication.
K. Be respectful of your mentor’s/sponsor’s time – arrive on time and prepared for meetings, share progress and challenges on goals relevant to your work together.
L. Establish a timeline for project and/or career milestones, and share the timeline with your mentor/sponsor.
M. Keep your CV updated and share new accomplishments (e.g., grants received, new leadership positions) with your mentor/sponsor.
N. Say, “Thank you.” If your mentor deserves praise, write a letter expressing your gratitude to his or her department chair.