



# SPH Mentor Program

## 2021-2022 Guide

*The SPH Mentor Program connects students with alumni and other public health professionals to provide students with the opportunities to explore career possibilities, network, and enhance their skills.*



SCHOOL OF  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# About the SPH Mentor Program

## Background Information

The School of Public Health (SPH) Mentor Program connects current public health and healthcare administration students to professionals to help with career discernment, networking and professional development. Our program serves more than 400 students and mentors annually with special events and helpful resources for mentor pairs.

The SPH Mentor Program runs from October through April of each academic year. Applications for the current year open in late summer with matches being announced via email in mid-October. The program formally kicks off at the end of October with a kick-off event, providing pairs with the opportunity to connect with each other and other program participants, as well as learn about the program. The year formally concludes with an appreciation dinner. At the beginning of the relationship, mentoring pairs decide together how often they will connect and what they will cover during their meetings. We encourage connecting at least once a month. Tools and resources are provided to help guide these conversations.

Most mentoring relationships will consist of one mentor and one mentee. However, mentors have the option to mentor two students. When deciding who to pair for the program, we work to make strong matches based on interests, experiences and preferences selected on the applications. However, it is important to note that all individuals in the SPH Mentor Program have a passion for public health and/or health care, and this alone is enough of a similar interest to build a mentoring relationship.

All public health and healthcare administration professionals are welcome to apply to serve as a mentor, including those who do not live in the Twin Cities and those who did not receive a degree from SPH.

## Diversity & Inclusion

At SPH, we believe that everyone has the right to live a healthy life. We recognize that systemic racism and oppression has led to health disparities, and we commit to making diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice central to our mission. This comprehensive approach is intended to influence every aspect of our school including education, hiring, fundraising, research, and community engagement. Learn more:

[sph.umn.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/](http://sph.umn.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/)

## Important Dates

Mentor Recruitment	August 12 – September 25
Student Recruitment	August 25 – September 20
Matching Selection Period	September 23 – October 11
Match Notification	October 12
Virtual Kick-Off Event	October 28
Mentor Appreciation Dinner	April 7
Program Wraps Up	April 30

# What is Mentoring?

## Mentoring IS:

- a commitment
- developing trust
- being open-minded
- gaining and sharing experiences
- strengthening communication skills
- gaining perspective
- an opportunity for growth and learning.

## Mentoring IS NOT:

- a guarantee of a job, internship, or job recommendation for your mentee
- just a resume-builder
- therapy or counseling
- supervision
- tutoring
- effortless.

## MENTEES

### Do

- set specific goals for the year
- prepare for your monthly meetings/contacts
- be explicit about your needs, limits, and time constraints
- be receptive to constructive feedback and advice
- ask your mentor about staying in contact after the end of the formal program, or, be prepared to end the relationship at the end of the program
- communicate with the Mentor Program Coordinator if you have any concerns.

### Don't

- ask your mentor for a job, internship, or job reference
- be shy - mentors love to hear from you!
- assume your mentor has unlimited time for you - if you need feedback by a specific date, give your mentor advance notice and provide the date in your communications
- end the mentoring relationship prematurely.

## MENTORS

### Do

- provide support for your mentee as they work towards their goals for the year
- help your mentee take initiative with the mentoring relationship
- listen to the needs of your mentee
- be explicit about your needs, limits, and time constraints
- ask before making a suggestion or giving feedback
- be prepared to end the mentoring relationship at the end of the program
- keep the door open for your mentee in the future
- communicate with the Mentor Program Coordinator if you have any concerns.

### Don't

- assume that your advice will be followed
- expect that your mentee will be enrolled in the major or program you graduated from
- expect that your mentee hopes to have the job or exact career path that you have or have taken
- expect that your mentee knows exactly what type of career path they wish to explore
- assume that your mentee does not need encouragement or reinforcement
- end the mentoring relationship prematurely.

# Suggested Activities & Topics

## First Meeting: Getting Acquainted

- Discuss your backgrounds, interests, and mentee's career goals
- Discuss your goals and expectations (use the action plan on page 6 as a template)
- Establish a schedule for future meetings and discuss preferences for communication in-between (phone, email, text, etc.)

## Conversation Topics

- Talk about the student's skills and talents and how these can be applied in the industry
- Explore the needs and current trends of the industry and discuss qualifications for different types of positions in the field
- Talk about how your values have impacted your academic and career choices
- Discuss work/life balance
- Talk about the training and skill development that would be helpful
- Explore professional associations and relevant organizations
- Discuss employers and work environments
- Talk about the transition from school to work

## Networking Opportunities

- Attend a conference or professional association meeting together (when/if possible)
- Mentor can help arrange virtual meetings/coffee/lunch with mentor's colleagues, either informally or as informational interviews
- Connect with fellow students, alumni, and colleagues via LinkedIn or
- Attend a virtual lecture or event.

## Skill-Building Ideas

- Conduct an informational interview and/or a practice interview
- Mentor can provide feedback on resume or cover letters
- Attend a webinar together and discuss learnings together afterwards
- Search the internet together for job resources and other information related to your field
- Review a class project or assignment and talk about applying the content or skills to the workplace
- Practice for a class presentation
- Check out SPH Career & Professional Development Center website for additional resources: [sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/](http://sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/)

## Examples of Mentee Goals

- Learn about at least three careers in my area of interest and speak with people in these positions.
- Attend one "industry event" with my mentor by the end of the year either in person or virtually.
- Get my mentor's feedback on one class project/presentation by the end of spring semester.
- Update my resume for summer internship or job application based on input from my mentor.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Can I participate in the program as a mentor or mentee if I don't live locally in the Twin Cities?**

Yes. Many of our mentees and mentors do not live locally in the Twin Cities. Mentors who live outside of the state of Minnesota, or even outside of the United States, are encouraged to apply.

## **What is expected of mentor pairs?**

Mentors and students who apply should be committed to engaging with their match and developing a professional mentor/mentee relationship. This includes communicating on a monthly basis. The mentor program is NOT a job placement program for students. There are no expectations that a job or internship will develop out of this experience.

## **I just received my mentee/mentor information. I don't think I have anything in common with them. What do I do?**

When making matches based on the available pool of mentors and mentees, the matching volunteers do their best to make appropriate matches based on interests, experiences and preferences selected on the applications. However, it is important to note that all individuals in the Mentor Program have a passion for public health and/or healthcare, and this alone is enough of a similar interest to build a mentoring relationship. We encourage matches to go in with an open mind and see what you might have in common. If any issues arise, please contact the Mentor Program Coordinator, who will work to resolve the situation.

## **My mentee/mentor is not responsive. What should I do?**

Please let us know of any communication issues. Sometimes it's as easy as an email falling into a SPAM folder or correcting a phone number with a typo. No matter the issue, we want to facilitate easy and open communication between mentors and mentees. Set expectations early to avoid any problems with communication during the year.

## **How can mentors help expand the mentee's network?**

Introduce the mentee to colleagues and provide their contact information so the mentee can follow up and set up informational interviews with them. The mentor can also set up a virtual group lunch or coffee meetings with colleagues.

Mentors can invite mentees to conferences, professional association meetings, or trainings.

Attend SPH and University events and lectures. SPH alumni activities and events can provide great opportunities for you to network.

## **I'm having problem with my mentor/mentee. What should I do?**

If you're unable or uncomfortable having a conversation with your mentee/mentor about the situation, please reach out to the Mentor Program Coordinator at [phmentor@umn.edu](mailto:phmentor@umn.edu) or 612.626.7405 to discuss the situation.

## **Where can I find more resources on resume and cover letter-writing, networking, informational interviews, etc.?**

Visit the SPH Career & Professional Development Center website for these resources and more: [sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/](http://sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/)

# Action Plan

## Contact Information For Mentee/Mentor:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Time commitment of the mentoring relationship (ex: meet once/month for one hour):

\_\_\_\_\_

## Communication preferences (email, cell phone, work phone, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

## What are the mentee's goals this year?

*For example: Learn about three new careers in my field, attend an industry event, or get input on my job or internship application materials.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## What resources can the mentor provide to assist in reaching these goals?

*For example: Introduce mentee to five colleagues, review mentee's application materials and conduct practice interviews, or provide feedback on academic projects.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Plan your next two meetings:

1. Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_



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# Contact Information & Resources

## Mentor Program Staff

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## Mentor Program website

- [sph.umn.edu/current/mentor/](http://sph.umn.edu/current/mentor/)

## Additional SPH and University Resources

### SPH Career & Professional Development Center

- [sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/](http://sph.umn.edu/current/careers/students/)

### SPH Student Resources (including major guidebooks and University resources)

- [sph.umn.edu/current/resources/](http://sph.umn.edu/current/resources/)

### Report an Incident of Bias or Discrimination

- [sph.umn.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/report-incident/](http://sph.umn.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/report-incident/)

### Gold Mind (a collection of University faculty and expert talks)

- [umnalumni.org/Goldmind](http://umnalumni.org/Goldmind)

### Graduate School Diversity Office

- [grad.umn.edu/diversity](http://grad.umn.edu/diversity)

### Office for Equity and Diversity

- [diversity.umn.edu/](http://diversity.umn.edu/)