

# Guidelines for Mentors and Mentees

International Actuarial  
Association Actuaries Without  
Borders Section (AWB®)

Global Mentorship Program  
(including Actuarial Exam  
Tutoring service)

Effective January 2017

## *Introduction*

The remote mentoring program pairs up an experienced actuary (mentor) with a less experienced person such as actuarial student (mentee) across geographical locations.

The definition of a mentor is a trusted counselor or guide. Mentors help foster the actuarial development and professional growth of mentees by sharing knowledge and insights that he or she has acquired over his or her actuarial practice. A mentor has the ability to lead, inspire and motivate his or her mentee by expanding his or her awareness, insight, and perspective. Mentors are a powerful force for developing successful actuarial professionals.

The mentoring process consists of two-way dynamic and it requires that the mentor and the mentee work together to reach specific goals. In order to set and manage appropriate expectations, mentor and mentee should provide each other with routine and sufficient feedback to ensure that those mutually agreed goals are reached within a reasonable timeframe.

## *Commitments*

The most successful mentoring relationships develop as a result of participants devoting quality and productive time together.

Mentors and mentees are free to choose the activities in which they participate, however, standards of professionalism must be adhered to at all times. In the interest of facilitating the mentoring relationship, it is suggested that the following meeting strategies be followed:

## *Continuous Improvements*

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Mentors and mentees work in partnership with Actuaries Without Borders (AWB) to ensure the success of the global mentorship program and gain support for their respective roles. Toward that end, mentors and mentees will evaluate and give feedback to AWB through the program manager about the mentorship program and their experiences. Program participants are encouraged to share any ideas, opinions and concerns directly with the program manager or with the AWB Executive Director.

- mentees are expected to take the initiative to schedule meetings
- mentees should be sensitive to their mentor’s availability and preferred method of scheduling
- it is recommended that mentors and mentees interact in appropriate length such as 30-60 minutes each time (to provide sufficient time to have an in-depth conversation but not too long to become a burden for either person)
- it is recommended that mentors and mentees interact in a mutually agreed frequency such as once every 2 weeks, once a month, or once every 2 months; nonetheless, mentees should be allowed to contact their mentors between scheduled meetings, when appropriate

### *Best practices*

Although each mentoring relationship is different, there are certain common characteristics exhibited by the most successful ones.

The following are universal best and worst practices of mentorship:

#### MENTORS

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Ask your mentee to have an agenda of questions or discussion topics prepared for your next video conference</li> <li>♦ Maintain a friendly tone and be positive</li> <li>♦ Be aware mentee has different cultural background</li> <li>♦ Encourage development opportunities for your mentee as opposed to focusing on immediate problem solving</li> <li>♦ Bring the focus back to relevant topics when the conversation veers away</li> <li>♦ Share pertinent work/actuarial practice experiences with your mentee</li> <li>♦ Give positive reinforcement when your mentee is doing something right</li> <li>♦ Serves as a sounding board for ideas</li> <li>♦ Set goals with your mentee</li> <li>♦ Immediately communicate offensive messages to AWB and AWB will rearrange another mentorship arrangement for you and inform such mentee about the termination of his or her mentorship arrangement with you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Don't allow your mentee to have unrealistic expectations without explaining <i>why</i> they are unrealistic</li> <li>♦ Don't take over the conversation; give your mentee ownership of the conversation as well</li> <li>♦ Don't provide commercial services or advices which normally require fees</li> <li>♦ Don't use words others might find offensive and avoid personal attacks or name-calling</li> <li>♦ Don't attempt to resolve your mentee's problems yourself instead of leading your mentee to find answers on his or her own</li> <li>♦ Don't attempt to solve or assist mentee to solve his or her personal or financial problems, especially those beyond actuarial nature</li> <li>♦ Don't allow the focus of the conversation to get away from you</li> <li>♦ Don't discuss confidential information and don't share private information</li> </ul>

## MENTEES

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Take responsibility for scheduling regular video conference with your mentor</li> <li>◆ Acknowledge how busy your mentor is</li> <li>◆ Be on time</li> <li>◆ Be prepared</li> <li>◆ Be honest</li> <li>◆ Be receptive to feedback</li> <li>◆ Not afraid to tactfully and respectfully disagree with his or her mentor</li> <li>◆ Follow through on commitments and goals set during the mentoring sessions</li> <li>◆ Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them</li> <li>◆ Be aware mentor has different cultural background</li> <li>◆ Have a goal/goals in mind</li> <li>◆ Stay focused on your goals</li> <li>◆ Discuss whether your mentor's suggestions were helpful and what positive effects they have had on your career</li> <li>◆ Thank your mentor</li> <li>◆ Immediately communicate offensive messages to AWB and AWB will rearrange another mentorship arrangement for you and inform such mentor about the termination of his or her mentorship arrangement with you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Don't wait for your mentor to schedule your mentorship video conference</li> <li>◆ Don't come unprepared to discuss your questions or topics</li> <li>◆ Don't be too focused on immediate problem solving as opposed to development opportunities that will help get you there</li> <li>◆ Don't talk about inappropriate topics</li> <li>◆ Don't use words others might find offensive and avoid personal attacks or name-calling</li> <li>◆ Don't be unreceptive to suggestions offered by your mentor</li> <li>◆ Don't discuss confidential information and don't share private information</li> <li>◆ Don't be negative</li> <li>◆ Don't play the victim</li> </ul>

### *Length*

Very few relationships live up to the promise of a long-term relationship. Maintaining a remote relationship for long-term is even more difficult. The expectation is that each mentorship relationship will last for 6 to 12 months. Mentee will submit a new request for mentorship service based on his or her needs at that time. Mentor will be re-assigned to a different mentee, if the mentor would like to continue his or her participation in this program.

Mentee's circumstances will evolve along with his or her professional growth. A qualified mentor to assist in one period may not be the best person to assist in a subsequent period. However, the mentor and mentee should not quickly declare failure without devoting sufficient efforts into the relationship. Hence, it is recommended that the mentor and mentee maintain the relationship for 6 to 12 months. This

timeframe provides sufficient time to set achievable goals and pursue the required professional development. With the awareness of a finite duration of relationship, the mentor and mentee will treasure the time they spend together. At the end of the period, mentee may request renewal of existing relationship or the program can review mentee's new request and assign a different mentor for another 6 to 12 months.

### *No liability*

AWB is not liable for the accuracy or the appropriateness of the information given by the mentors. AWB is not liable for how mentees interpret and utilize the information.

AWB's remote global mentorship program provides a platform to match mentors and mentees. AWB does not monitor the information or advice given by the mentor or the discussion topics between mentors and mentees. AWB cannot ensure the advice is accurate or appropriate for the mentee's circumstances. Mentee should apply his or her own judgement upon receiving mentor's information and advice. If appropriate, mentee should seek a third party opinion before adopting the mentor's information or advice. If either mentor or mentee feels uncomfortable with the mentorship relationship or any of the discussion between them, they should suspend the dialogue and bring it to the program manager's immediate attention.

### *Technology*

This program is offered in a remote basis which means mentors and mentees often reside in different countries. They are encouraged to use free computer software or free apps for mobile phone to communicate and to hold video conference. Free tools should be used to avoid expenses. AWB and IAA will not provide reimbursement.

It is suggested that each video conference be held in an environment that is quiet and comfortable, so that both parties have each other's exclusive attention. For mentees residing in less developed countries, internet service may be limited so mentors should be aware that mentees may take several attempts to find and test a suitable location for holding a smooth video conference.

### *Sample steps*

Mentoring relationships generally progress through a series of steps leading to greater understanding between individuals. They all involve shared experiences that lead to a special connection.

Mentoring relationships may be fostered by the steps and topics included below. The list provides you with an idea so that you may customize your own list that is suitable for your circumstances. Each relationship is inevitable diversified and, therefore participants should be flexible.

## **Step 1: Building a Relationship**

### 1.1 Defining your relationship

- 1.1.1 Schedule appointments
- 1.1.2 Availability to meet
- 1.1.3 Expectations

### 1.2 Getting to know each other

- 1.2.1 Personal and cultural background
- 1.2.2 Professional background

### 1.3 Understanding the cultural differences

- 1.3.1 Ethics, rules and regulations
- 1.3.2 What it takes to be successful

## **Step 2: Taking Control of own Career**

### 2.1 Identifying opportunities for development

- 2.1.1 Assess your present skills and list your desired skills
- 2.1.2 Discuss strategies to achieve desired skills
- 2.1.3 Develop a plan to leverage existing skills
- 2.1.4 Identify assignments to broaden your skills
- 2.1.5 Market your skills

### 2.2 Evaluating and prioritizing goals

- 2.2.1 Evaluate short and long term goals
- 2.2.2 Create an action timeline
- 2.2.3 Milestones
- 2.2.4 Criteria for success

## **Step 3: Implementing Developmental Strategies**

### 3.1 Pursuing short and long term goals

- 3.1.1 Getting started
- 3.1.2 Doing research
- 3.1.3 Managing your time

### 3.2 Taking advantage of development opportunities

- 3.2.1 Participate in relevant activities

## Step 4: Feedback and Refinement

### 4.1 Getting and giving feedback

- 4.1.1 Review progress
- 4.1.2 Lessons learned
- 4.1.3 Impact of mentoring relationship

### 4.2 Refine your strategy

- 4.2.1 Adjust your plan as needed
- 4.2.2 Refine goals based on progress and experience
- 4.2.3 Reevaluate priorities

### 4.3 Exit

- 4.3.1 If the relationship isn't working, don't be afraid to ask for a new mentor or mentee
- 4.3.2 When goals are achieved, submit a new request for next mentorship relationship

*The mission of Actuaries Without Borders is to promote the public good globally, focusing on countries that lack the actuarial resources needed to create productive, sustainable, and stable markets for insurance and other risk mitigation, and the means to develop the actuarial profession, in particular in support of a strategic objective of the International Actuarial Association to support the development, organization and promotion of the actuarial profession in areas of the world in which it is not present or is not fully developed.*

*This remote global mentorship program is a very meaningful initiative to the global society. With increasing talent mobility, leveraging of cross-border expertise, and harmonization of global best practices, there exists a tremendous opportunity for international subject matter experts to empower people in local, overseas and/or actuarially developing countries.*

*Initially, this program is rolled out in a limited scale and it will focus on actuarially developing countries. Once the infrastructure is established, this program will be expanded globally to cover many countries in the world.*

*This remote global mentorship program is not intended to provide free consulting service, executive coaching, nor personal life coaching, etc. It is restricted to non-commercial use.*

*To find out more information about this initiative, please contact the AWB Executive Director, Renata De Leers ([awb-ed@actuaries.org](mailto:awb-ed@actuaries.org)), or the program manager, Bosco Chan ([bosco.chan@prudential.com](mailto:bosco.chan@prudential.com)).*