

EPFL

Alumni

Mentorship Guide

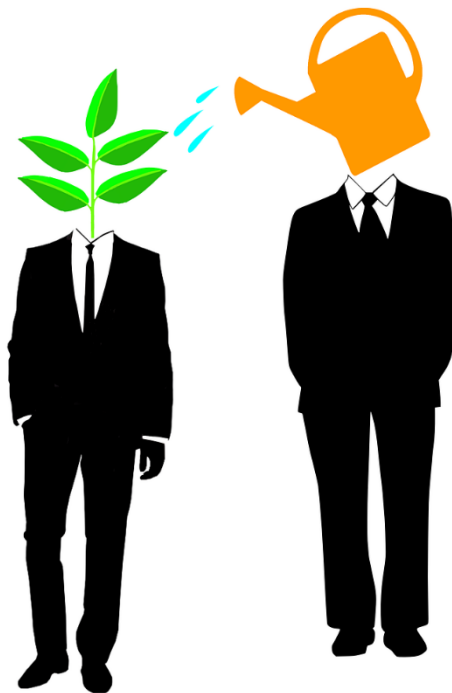


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EPFL Alumni : Our mission

The mission of EPFL Alumni is to provide graduates of the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne with an exclusive and international network, as well as a strong and lasting connection with their school. To achieve this, EPFL Alumni offers graduates access to an electronic directory with over 40,000 contacts of EPFL graduates worldwide, exclusively available to them. It also provides opportunities for networking, training, and advice. Lastly, EPFL Alumni offers a platform for exchanges and services on various topics such as careers, expatriation, research, entrepreneurship, or volunteering.

In this context, our mentorship programs aim to strengthen ties within the EPFL community among students, alumni, and the school, offering opportunities to exchange, share, and bring new perspectives and ideas.

What is mentorship ?

Mentorship is a developmental relationship based on a voluntary and confidential exchange where a mentor invests their time, expertise, and experience to benefit a mentee, helping them develop specific skills and knowledge and contributing to their professional and personal growth. Mentorship is based on sharing experiences and advice.

It is usually a long-term relationship lasting several months or even years.

Mentorship is :

- ✓ Support.
- ✓ Sharing and exchange.
- ✓ Listening.
- ✓ Advice.
- ✓ A long-term relationship.
- ✓ Based on mutual trust and respect.
- ✓ Development-oriented.

Mentorship is not :

- × Coaching.
- × One-sided.
- × Directive or hierarchical.
- × Psychoanalysis.
- × Performance-oriented.
- × A means to get connections in a company or a job/internship in the mentor's company.

What is expert advice ?

Expert advice is based on the same objectives and principles as mentorship but for a specific and occasional need that can be addressed in a single session.

The benefits of mentorship

As a mentee

- Access to experience and knowledge.
- Gathering information on sectors, companies, continuing education, etc.
- Active listening and support.
- New perspectives and informed advice.
- Support to frame and define your goals and direction.
- Encouraging support and confidence-building.
- Expanding your professional network.
- Sharing best practices.
- Facilitating integration and/or professional transition.

As a mentor

- Valuing your skills and highlighting your expertise.
- Developing your listening skills, empathy, leadership, and communication skills.
- Strengthening your professional network.
- A meaningful and rewarding experience.
- (Re)connecting with the EPFL ecosystem and its community.
- Learning from your mentee.

The role of the mentee

Your registration is 100% voluntary and non-binding. If you take this step, it's because you see an interest and are motivated. By registering, you benefit from the free support of a volunteer mentor. We want to remind you that the mentorship relationship belongs to you, so it's up to you to communicate your goals, needs, and expectations to guide your mentor.

Your responsibilities :

- Identify and communicate your goals.
- Collaborate with your mentor to establish a development plan.
- Be receptive to feedback and show a willingness to learn.
- Take initiatives.
- Communicate openly.
- Respect your mentor's time and commitment.
- Provide feedback on the program.

Best practices :

- ✓ Be proactive and motivated.
- ✓ Treat your mentor with respect, recognizing their commitment and expertise.
- ✓ Use respectful and courteous language during exchanges.
- ✓ Prepare questions and topics before each meeting/exchange with your mentor.
- ✓ Be clear and precise in your requests and expectations towards your mentor; communicate your needs, expectations, and limits.
- ✓ Clearly define your goals and share them with your mentor to get appropriate advice.
- ✓ Respect appointments with your mentor and notify them in case of an impediment.
- ✓ Be open to feedback and new ideas.
- ✓ Take responsibility for your decisions.

- ✓ Respect the confidentiality of exchanges.
- ✓ Consider the mentorship relationship as a partnership where both mentor and mentee can learn from each other.
- ✓ Report any problems, doubts, or questions to the coordinator.
- ✓ Share your impressions and improvement suggestions about the program.

What not to do :

- × Register without real motivation.
- × Cancel appointments at the last minute or miss appointments without notifying.
- × Expect your mentor to open their network or find you an internship/job.
- × Consider your mentor as a coach or career expert.
- × Seek to solve significant personal problems; your mentor is not a psychologist or life coach.
- × Demand immediate and/or unrealistic solutions from your mentor.
- × Be passive and expect your mentor to manage the relationship and find all the answers for you.
- × Hold your mentor responsible for your decisions.

The role of the mentor

As a mentor, you voluntarily support your mentee throughout the relationship according to their needs and expectations. Your role is to question, listen, challenge ideas, and advise your mentee to help them achieve their goals. You share your expertise within your competencies and share your network only if you wish. You commit to supporting your mentee in their journey without an obligation of results.

Your responsibilities :

- Share knowledge and experiences.
- Guide your mentee in defining and achieving their goals.
- Practice active listening to understand your mentee's needs, challenges, and aspirations.
- Ask the right questions to help your mentee progress in their reflections; trust in their ability to find solutions.
- Suggest concrete actions for your mentee to take between each session.
- Provide moral support and encouragement to overcome obstacles.
- Offer constructive feedback.
- Provide feedback on the program.

Best practices :

- ✓ Treat your mentee with respect and without judgment, regardless of their age, experience, knowledge, or any other characteristic.
- ✓ Use respectful and courteous language during exchanges.
- ✓ Understand and clarify your mentee's framework, expectations, and goals.
- ✓ Be attentive to needs and limits, and show patience and kindness, even if your mentee struggles to express their thoughts or goals.
- ✓ Respect your mentee's pace, context, and decisions.
- ✓ Transparently set your boundaries.
- ✓ Respect the confidentiality of exchanges.

- ✓ Be flexible and available to respond to your mentee's needs and questions, and honor your commitments.
- ✓ Respect appointments with your mentee and notify them in case of an impediment.
- ✓ Consider the mentorship relationship as a partnership between equals where both mentor and mentee can learn from each other.
- ✓ Report any problems, doubts, or questions to the coordinator.
- ✓ Share your impressions and improvement suggestions about the program.

What not to do :

- × Conduct the mentorship in a formal and directive manner.
- × Position yourself as a “Savior” or “Leader.”
- × Overstep your competencies or pretend to be a psychologist.
- × Cancel appointments at the last minute or miss appointments without notifying.
- × Impose your opinions or experiences as the only way to proceed or do things “for” your mentee.

The role of the program coordinator

The program coordinator ensures the proper organization and success of the program. They are your point of contact throughout your participation in the mentorship and are available throughout the program to answer any questions or problems.

Their responsibilities :

- Recruiting qualified and interested mentors.
- Offering resources and continuous support to facilitate relationships.
- Structuring the program while maintaining some flexibility.
- Monitoring and evaluating the program.
- Resolving any conflicts or issues.
- Open communication and support to participants throughout the program.

Mentorship process

1. Online registration on our platform epflalumni.ch.
2. Online search for mentors or mentees.
3. Contact and proposal to start a mentorship relationship.
4. First contact : Get to know each other and complete the “mentoring agreement” document together.
5. First session : Get to know each other more deeply, take time to create a space of confidentiality and trust, clarify respective goals and expectations (see Resources Mentor Guidebook / Mentee Guidebook).
6. Following sessions : We recommend an average session of one hour per month, but it remains flexible and up to you to decide. The mentee decides the topic of each session and prepares it in advance. Ensure to end your sessions by setting a concrete action for the mentee to accomplish.

7. Last session : Summarize your learnings and identify the program's highlights, evaluate the achievement of your goals based on your success criteria, prepare feedback for your mentor or mentee, and agree on the next steps.
8. Share feedback on your relationship and the program with the mentorship coordinator.

In case of conflicts

A lack of affinity or problems may arise during mentorship. If this happens, you must inform the program coordinator as soon as possible. They are always available to discuss and find solutions to help you progress in the mentorship. Don't hesitate to contact them !

Mentoring charter

By joining the EPFL Alumni mentorship program, you agree to the following conditions :

- **Voluntary Commitment:** This mentorship program is based on the voluntary commitment of both parties, excluding any promotion of products or services and any financial compensation.
- **Trust and Respect:** The mentorship relationship is based on mutual trust and respect and must honor each person's integrity. The absence of judgment and benevolence are integral to the relationship.
- **Confidentiality:** Information shared remains strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties at any time during or after the relationship.
- **Absence of Conflict of Interest:** Any conflict of interest must be identified and communicated before starting the mentorship relationship and, depending on its significance, may lead to not commencing the relationship. For example, in the case of startup mentorship, the mentor should not be an investor or a board member.
- **The Mentee Commits To :**
 - o Responding to messages in a timely manner.
 - o Proactively managing the mentorship relationship: organizing regular exchanges and being present, preparing the objectives for each mentorship session, investing seriously, showing curiosity and openness, providing constructive feedback, and keeping the mentor informed of progress.
- **The Mentor Commits To :**
 - o Responding to requests in a timely manner.
 - o Supporting the mentee by being available for agreed sessions, sharing experience and knowledge, being attentive, guiding, encouraging, and advising while always allowing the mentee to make the final decision, and providing constructive feedback. In the case of startup mentorship, the mentor commits not to taking on a managerial role.
- **Feedback and Information:** You agree to provide necessary information for the proper functioning of the program and to give regular feedback on the mentorship program to the EPFL Alumni department.

- **Right of Exclusion:** EPFL reserves the right, without justification, to deny access to the mentorship program to any member who does not adhere to the terms of use, the charter, or applicable law, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the severity of the violation.

Tools and resources

Available for free online here : <https://epflalumni.ch/page/mentorat>

Contact

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<https://epflalumni.ch/>