



SingaRocka

Geology Student Peer Mentoring Programme

SingaRocka Geology Student Peer Mentoring Programme:

Handbook

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1. SingaRocka Geology Student Peer Mentorship Programme

1.1 Our Mission

SingaRocka is a student peer mentoring programme developed for the geology department to facilitate an exchange of professional and academic knowledge, expertise, insights, skills and experiences through dialogue and collaborative learning. As a student, it helps to have the support and encouragement of a near-peer with similar experiences. SingaRocka aims to provide point-ofcontact mentors for geology students during their undergraduate years and a mentoring directory for all graduate students in the department. Mentorship provides mentors and mentees with structured, relationship-building tools to develop and accomplish focused academic career goals and promote academic excellence.

1.2 Participants

- Mentors will be selected from students in their second year to Masters and PhD candidates in the geology department (or seasoned geologic professionals with years of experience).

- Mentees will be selected from current geology students from first-year to postgraduate candidates.

1.3 Timing

Recruitment for mentors and mentees will begin in March 2024 (*actual closing date for application is yet to be confirmed*). Once the selection of mentor-mentee match is complete, the programme will run from May to November 2024.

2. For the mentor

2.1 Mentor's journey

Mentoring is a mutually beneficial experience. It gives mentees access to support and opportunity, and mentors also gain the chance to build lasting connections and positively impact their peers' professional development. An effective mentor uses learning approaches most appropriate for the mentees. Asking questions, reformulating statements, observing, summarising, giving information, direction, and advice. These strategies should always be a part of the mentor's toolkit. Taking on the journey of being a mentor can be beneficial in many ways. For example, you can become recognised as an advisor, and gain new perspectives.

2.2 Mentoring approach

- *Be patient and understating.* Take time to understand your mentee's unique challenges, motivations, and goals. Please do not force them into decisions they are not ready for. Instead, be supportive and employ active listening techniques.
- *Be adaptable.*
- *Be approachable.*
- *Be knowledgeable.* Have knowledge on various topics, for example: learning tips and problem-solving strategies. Be sure to use your experiences to provide insightful strategies that will benefit the mentee in the long run.
- *Be open-minded.* When it comes to new ideas and approaches to problem-solving, be open to new possibilities and understandings. Think outside the box to be able to help your mentee find creative solutions that work best for them.

2.3 Asking effective questions

Questions help us to reflect, which promotes learning. A smart technique to assist mentees in expressing their ideas is asking questions that demand thoughtful responses. Use questions to engage

the mentee in the conversation. Remember: *ethical, role-appropriate questioning is a must*. When you stray outside these boundaries, it is easy to exceed limits of appropriateness and fairness.

- Ask questions that support and challenge.
- Ask questions to stimulate reflection—for example: "Could you tell me a little more about what you mean by...?" "Is there another way to look at this?"
- Ask specific questions that draw on your mentee's unique thinking and learning style—for example: "That seems logical, but let us take a moment to brainstorm some other possibilities." "It sounds like you have a lot of good options! Is there one that you resonate with?" "That's a great idea. How do you think we might put it into action?"
- Allow time for thoughtful reflection—for example: "It sounds as if we've only scratched the surface. Let's think about this some more and discuss it further in our next conversation."

2.4 Key Responsibilities

Be approachable, available, and willing to share expertise, knowledge, experiences, and your academic journey.

Build a relationship with the mentee based on mutual understanding and respect.

Define and describe your preferred mentoring and communication style with your mentee.

Commit to being a supportive peer as your mentee works on developing their academic skills.

Assist your mentee with identifying resources that would help them reach their goals (e.g. suggest relevant literature in the field to broaden the student's knowledge base).

Discuss and evaluate progress on the mentee's progress on their academic work and advice as per your experiences.

Offer insights about your university experience to prepare the student for potential challenges.

Establish and set up a work schedule with the student as a way to help them manage their day-to-day life.

Complete the evaluation form to assess your mentoring experience with the student and provide effective feedback to your mentee.

MENTOR SELF-EVALUATION			
Tick the appropriate box, where A=Definitely, B=Partially, C=Not at all			
	A	B	C
Do you understand your role as a mentor?			
Do you want to take on the role, and are you willing to make the necessary time available?			
Are you comfortable being asked to assess your strengths and weaknesses and relate them to the student's development needs so that you can guide them to other sources of help where appropriate?			
Are you sure you can invest time early in the relationship to establish a regular discussion schedule?			
Will you be able to keep the relationship on a professional level, particularly where there are gender differences (sensitivity to potential misinterpretation in language and behaviour will be important in these situations)?			
Do you understand the distinction between counselling and advising? Whenever possible, will you encourage the student to work out their own solutions with you acting only as a sounding board?			
Are you aware that you will be a role model, and that how you are seen to manage yourself in day-to-day situations will affect the relationship you have with the mentee?			
Are you sure that your feedback will be clear, honest, and constructive, designed to build confidence and ongoing commitment in the mentees?			
Will you be able to recognise when the time has come to end the relationship, and aim to end on a positive and supportive note by sharing the value you have both gained from the experience?			

3. For the mentee

3.1 A mentee's journey.

As a mentee, one of your main priorities is to be open to learning and growing.

Be prepared to engage in your mentoring relationship by sharing your thoughts, asking questions, and actively listening to your mentor's responses and advice.

Do not be afraid to be creative and innovative in your approach to learning – if you think of activities or exercises that you think will help you (e.g. job shadowing, attending talks or workshops together, etc.), it never hurts to ask your mentor if they would be open to participating.

Although you, as a mentee, are seeking guidance and support, you can also help your mentor help you by working with them to shape your shared mentorship experience.

Conversing with your mentor may seem unnatural or uncomfortable initially, but your mentor is there to support and guide you in any way they can! Start by getting to know each other – your goals, shared interests, and experiences.

Then, depending on what you hope to gain from your mentoring relationship, you might ask for advice, insight on how they would navigate a particular situation, help with networking or connecting with resources, support in developing or strengthening a new skill, or simply hear stories about their personal journeys and how they got to where they are now.

3.2 Key Responsibilities

As a mentee, you are most responsible for yourself and your academic progress.

Define and describe your preferred mentoring style and communication style.

Set up regular meetings, and be sure to come to meetings prepared. Have a list of questions or discussion topics beforehand.

Seek regular feedback from your mentors and respect your mentor's commitment. They are, after all, volunteering their time.

Be honest and self-critical.

MENTEE SELF-EVALUATION			
Tick the appropriate box, where A=Definitely, B=Partially, C=Not at all			
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>
Are your objectives clear and well-defined?			
Am I comfortable with asking for what I want to get out of the experience?			
Are you comfortable being asked to assess your strengths and weaknesses and relate them to your mentor so that you can get the guidance you desire?			
Are you sure that you can invest time early in the relationship to establish a regular schedule for discussions?			
Will you be able to keep the relationship on a professional level, particularly where there are gender differences (sensitivity to potential misinterpretation in language and behaviour will be important in these situations)?			
Am I receptive to constructive feedback when provided one? Am I able to show value and appreciation for the feedback?			
Will you be able to recognise when the time has come to end the relationship, and aim to end on a positive and supportive note by sharing the value you have both gained from the experience?			

4. Topics for discussions between mentors and mentees

To facilitate effective mentoring, mentors and mentees should discuss the best mentoring and communication styles:

- Get to know each other by sharing appropriate personal and professional information about each other.
- Discuss the primary goal of being part of the mentoring programme.
 - Do you require assistance in balancing your academic and personal lives?
- Discuss each other's preferred mentoring style.
 - What is your preferred approach? Will you prefer a hands-on, tough-love approach, or a more open-door approach?
- Discuss how often you want to meet up and by which method.
 - Do you prefer a flexible or a more rigid meeting schedule?
 - Do you prefer meeting face-to-face, or communicating via email or text?
- Before the end of every meeting, discuss when you would like to have the next meeting.

Guideline for giving constructive feedback:

Examine your motive for giving the feedback honestly. Ensure you have no ulterior motives (e.g. manipulation, revenge).

Examine your purpose and the outcomes you want. Think about the reasons you are providing feedback to your mentee. Why is the mentee or mentor asking for feedback?

Maintain an objective point of view.

Always remember that feedback is an opinion and not a fact. You will be wrong and may come off as ignorant in some circumstances. Allow room to grow.

Never make personal statements. Saying, "You made a fool of yourself yesterday!" would be unhelpful. Whereas "May we discuss how the presentation you gave yesterday was received?" could lead to a constructive dialogue.

Give specific and detailed feedback.

4.1 Mentoring Partnership Agreement

This form aims to ensure that the mentor-mentee match's initial and agreed-upon objectives are met. We suggest reviewing this agreement form on a regular basis to stay on track. It is important to remember that although this is a professional experience, it should also be enjoyable. The mentor-mentee relationship can benefit both parties and facilitate the development of long-lasting academic friendships.

Mentoring Partnership Agreement		
WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN OUR RELATIONSHIP AS A MUTUALLY REWARDING AND SATISFYING EXPERIENCE:		
1. Meet regularly. Our specific schedule of contact is as follows:		
2. Look for multiple opportunities and experiences to enhance the mentee's learning. We have identified the following opportunities for learning (e.g., projects, task forces, client teams, conferences):		
3. Maintain confidentiality of our relationship. Confidentiality for us means . . .		
4. Honour the ground rules we develop for the relationship. Our ground rules are . . .		
5. Provide regular feedback to each other and evaluate our progress. We will do this by . . .		
At least once during a semester, and again at the conclusion of the mentoring cycle, we agree to review this agreement and evaluate our progress and our learning. If we choose to continue our mentoring partnership, we may elect to do so, as long as we have discussed and agreed to the basis for that continuation. Should we conclude the relationship earlier than anticipated, we agree to do so with appropriate closure.		
Mentor	Mentee	Date

5. Mentor Guidelines and Code of Conduct

5.1 Scope

The scope of this code of conduct applies to collaborative interactions between mentors, mentees and programme facilitators, via one-on-one meetings, virtual meetings, group meetings, email communications and any other method of contact within the programme.

5.2 Expected discipline.

Respect is the foundation of a healthy mentor-mentee relationship. As a mentor, you are expected to treat your mentee with respect, understanding, and maintain confidentiality by influencing them through constructive feedback.

5.3 Intolerable behaviour

SingaRocka is aiming towards providing a safe and welcoming environment for students of all races, gender identities, socioeconomic backgrounds, life experiences and religious beliefs. Any discriminatory actions and harassment towards mentees, fellow mentors and facilitators are prohibited in our programme. The prohibited actions may include, but not limited to, intimidation, stalking, inappropriate recording, inappropriate or discriminatory comments and jokes, and unwelcomed sexual attention. Any violations of this code may result in removal from the programme.

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