

A MENTOR'S QUICK GUIDE TO



MENTORING AROUND CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Mentoring Resource Center | mentoring.opcd.wfu.edu
Global Wake Forest | global.wfu.edu

Introduction

As our students engage in cross-cultural experiences both within and outside of the University, we know that the presence of formal and informal mentors provides rich relationships and conversations for reflecting on lessons learned and personal growth and development. A mentor can help foster a sense of belonging for students adjusting to a new culture and a new campus, especially for international students. This guide is intended to provide a brief overview for how to engage in mentoring relationships and conversations with Wake Forest students around their cross-cultural experiences. For more in-depth information, reach out to Global Wake Forest, which provides support, educational opportunities, and resources for both domestic and international students at Wake Forest University.

What is Mentoring?

A mentoring relationship involves a more experienced person having intentional conversations with a less experienced person to foster their personal growth and development. The duration of each mentoring relationship depends on the needs and goals of that particular relationship. A skilled mentor creates opportunities for learning and reflection at all stages of the experience. They give the student the appropriate tools and cultivate an environment that is safe for them to unpack their experience. Effective mentors:

- Display a sincere passion to support the growth of their mentee
- Ask thoughtful and thought-provoking questions to guide their mentee through decision-making and problem-solving processes
- Actively listen to their mentee in regular, meaningful conversations
- Model their guidance through words and actions
- Provide objective feedback when appropriate
- Help their mentee cultivate self-reflection and self-development practices
- Dedicate time, energy, and enthusiasm to their mentoring relationship

Learning From Cultural Experiences

Whether a student is studying abroad outside of the United States, an international student coming to Wake Forest, or participating in cultural organizations and events on the Wake Forest campus, any experience that facilitates a student's engagement with cultures outside of their own has the potential for meaningful growth and learning.

It's also important to recognize that simply being present in other cultural spaces does not necessarily lead to the development of cross-cultural skill-building and learning. First and foremost, effective mentors teach students how to engage with other cultures in a respectful

manner and with cultural awareness and humility. They also impart on the student understanding of cultural appreciation and its distinction from cultural appropriation.

As a mentor, you should be prepared for the student to make mistakes as they build cross cultural awareness and humility. Help them to reflect on the challenges they are facing and the new skills and knowledge they are gaining as a result., including:

- Deeper understanding of self, identify, and values
- Greater empathy and perspective for others' values and cultural norms
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Managing conflict
- Greater proficiency in another language
- Problem solving and decision-making skills
- Navigating uncertainty
- Understanding and valuing cultural differences

Tips on Navigating Your Mentorship

1. Develop the relationship

Developing rapport and trust with the student is critical to any effective relationship. Sharing personal stories of a time when you were faced with challenges and uncertainties will make it more comfortable for your student to share some of their own.

2. Create a Plan

Set expectations for the course of the relationship. How often will you meet? How long will this relationship last? How will you contact each other? Will your conversations be confidential? These are all important expectations to discuss at the start of your relationship. Encourage the student to set some goals for the experience to encourage intentional learning.

Questions to Help Plan for Experiences:

- What is your goal?
- What do you hope to achieve from this experience?
- What steps can you take to achieve that goal?
- What skills or knowledge do you hope to gain from this experience?
- What do you think will be most challenging or rewarding for you?

3. Facilitate Intentional Conversations

Effective mentoring relationships are built around intentional conversations that connect the action or experience to the learning because of that action or experience. In addition to setting a

regular schedule to check in on these learning moments, look for opportunities to provide objective feedback, guidance, encouragement, and accountability for next steps.

Questions to Help Unpack Experiences:

- What steps did you take toward accomplishing your goal?
- What did you learn?
- How did you reflect on those learning moments?
- How will you use that new knowledge, skill, or ability in the future?
- What was the most challenging or rewarding aspect of the experience for you?
- How are you different now than you were at the beginning?
- What do you still need/want to learn?
- How can you describe this experience and the insights gained to a potential employer or graduate school?

4. Create Growth Opportunities

In addition to engaging your student in conversation about their experience and pushing them to reflect on what they are learning, you can also create opportunities for further learning. Consider what opportunities you can make accessible to the student based on their interests and goals. This may look like suggesting events for them to attend, choosing relevant books and articles to discuss together, or providing introductions to individuals in your network who might help them achieve their goals.

5. Celebrate and Come to Closure

Mentoring relationships do not have to last forever. Take time to celebrate your successes and bring the relationship to appropriate closure when the time is right, which might align with the end of the cross-cultural experience. This is another opportunity for growth and reflection and for you and your student to discuss how you each will use what you have learned from the mentoring relationship in the future.