



Guide to the CABE Mentoring Program

Expanding Your Horizons

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Mentoring Program

Mentorship pairs will be arranged through a team of Chapter Liaisons from across the country and will meet either in person or by telephone over a set period to exchange ideas. During the initial exchange, they will agree, either formally or informally, on how best to structure the relationship (e.g., frequency of meetings and topics of interest). National and Chapter members are encouraged to apply to become a mentor or mentee. The application form for the program is available on the CABE website. Please note that mentees must be currently employed with a minimum of two years of experience.

The Initiative and its Goals

- to create an informal mentoring program to facilitate the transfer and exchange of information between members through one-on-one relationships, thus contributing to the professional development of both parties
- to provide a confidential, efficient process to match members
- participation is voluntary, and matches will be arranged outside of one's organization
- mentees are encouraged to visit their mentors at convenient locations (e.g., places of work, coffee shop); in the case of long-distance relationships, participants will determine the mode of communication
- there are no costs or financial benefits associated with the program; the main tasks (providing matches, updating lists, and conducting occasional surveys) will be carried out by a group of volunteers
- besides submitting an application and curriculum vitae, mentees will be required to sign a waiver form releasing CABE and the program administrators from any liability
- mentees are encouraged to use the program for its intent and not as an opportunity to source employment

Motivation: Helping the Leaders of Today and Tomorrow

Business economists are leaders in the world of commerce, government, and the non-profit sector on several levels. Most are concerned with the practical applications of economics and work for a variety of organizations. They probe issues such as energy costs, financial investments, inflation, employment levels, income inequities, pollution, taxes, consumer demand, sales, and business cycles. They tend to perform similar analytical tasks, whether they work for a research firm, a corporation, an educational organization, or government. Those who decide to become members of CAFE do so for a variety of reasons, including the opportunity to expand their learning experiences, build a network, obtain additional perspective, and advance their careers.

Today's workplace is exciting, vibrant, and constantly changing. As markets become globalized, the risks faced by the Canadian economy are more complex and externally oriented than ever before. For business economists to remain competitive and thrive, they must respond to this changing environment.

The CAFE mentoring program is designed to broaden the benefits and services to members, thus encouraging a more interconnected community of professionals. Matches occur outside of one's organization, potentially consisting of individuals from various demographic groups, occupations, sectors, and regions. This allows your mentor to focus on the broader issues, since he/she will be removed from your day-to-day work. A key goal of the program is to provide participants with a broader perspective of their careers.

Objectives of the Mentoring Program

The CAFE mentoring program is designed to achieve multiple objectives.

Benefits to those being mentored:

- allows them to tap into a wealth of knowledge and experience from an objective third party
- develops a broader view of one's choices by increasing exposure to different ideas and experiences
- improves performance in their current position or aids them in moving into uncharted territory
- provides a sense of connection to a broader workplace
- provides an opportunity to build a network of professional relationships
- exposure to leadership and more senior business economists
- offers feedback without formal evaluation and competing motivations

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- provides a different perspective: on business and economic developments; on work demands at more senior levels, and on various options to navigate through one's chosen career

Benefits to mentors:

- allows them to crystallize and reflect on their own experiences and career lessons; enabling them to build on their experience
- provides an opportunity to develop other business economists
- greater exposure to new trends and economic concepts/techniques
- provides an opportunity to expand networks and foster professional relationships
- provides an environment to build and enhance coaching and mentoring skills
- requires no formal evaluations or managing responsibilities
- exposure to the culture and practices at other organizations (e.g., within or outside one's industry, or academic environment)
- offers an opportunity for professional growth from sharing what you know and providing perspective

Benefits to CABE and its Chapters:

- provides a means of communication among practicing business economists or those interested in economics
- builds a strong membership base and supports the formation and strengthening of CABE Chapters across Canada
- enhances the professionalism of members
- establishes a network with other applied economists, or those interested in business economics, for discussing common issues, and for learning the views of colleagues throughout Canada
- increases membership, Chapter participation, and informal exchanges between members
- fosters a dynamic environment that connects members from various demographic groups, occupations, sectors, and regions
- encourages a more connected community of professionals and strengthens CABE/Chapter events

Program Design and Matching Process

The purpose of the CABE Mentoring Program is to assist members in their career development. Its design is unique in that matches are made outside of one's organization, and all participants are volunteers. In this type of environment, being cognizant of workloads and respecting people's time and effort is paramount. It should be noted that the job of a mentor is not to intercede on behalf of a mentee in situations or to actively promote the mentee for jobs.

Program Design

The program is designed to create opportunities for members, at various stages of their careers, to participate in a mentoring relationship. The needs of the mentee will determine the objective of the relationship and the direction of the discussions. Goals include: establishing larger networks, offering avenues for support and advice, and opening two-way lines of communication between members.

Mentoring can take place in many settings and incorporate many styles of interaction. A flexible approach is a distinctive characteristic of CABE's program and, according to research, a key factor in successful programs. In other words, members should mutually decide how best to structure their relationship. Some mentoring programs advocate the use of 'mentoring agreements' (i.e., predetermining the duration of the relationship and the frequency/length of meetings) and 'mentee development plans' (see Appendix). This approach may be useful for some mentoring relationships, but not others.

The Mentoring Committee is a group of volunteers who organize and coordinate the program. The Committee consists of a national program coordinator designated by CABE's executive and a liaison(s) designated within each Chapter (see the CABE website for a list of members). Given the organizational context of the program, members of the Mentoring Committee have limited time for ongoing support. Hence, this guide provides a comprehensive framework to establish and maintain a mentoring relationship, including roles and responsibilities. It is intended to orient mentors/mentees regarding their expectations.

Besides senior-level support from CABE and Chapter executives, there are three key players in the mentoring program: the mentor, the mentee, and the liaison. The roles of each are as follows:

The Mentor

- Volunteer
- Dedicated – understands the role and meets regularly with his/her mentee
- Guide – provides ideas and suggestions to consider as options to help mentees to achieve their goals and to keep focused
- Counsellor – listens to the needs of the mentee from an unbiased perspective

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- Responsible – understands the distinction between mentor and supervisor and is responsible for ensuring that the mentoring relationship respects that distinction

The Mentee

- Volunteer
- Dedicated to the program – sets up appointments and meets mentor at a convenient location
- Drives the mentoring relationship and ensures that clear goals for the relationship are set and revisited as warranted
- Will have a career-related purpose in mind for the mentoring relationship
- Responsible for own career
- Performs well in current position

The Liaison

- Volunteer
- Member of the Mentoring Committee
- Matchmaker – introduces the mentor and the mentee
- Actively promotes the program
- Monitors and evaluates the program

Matching Process

- the Chapter liaison will accept and assess applications for mentees and mentors (via online application)
- based on the submitted information, the Chapter liaison determines an appropriate mentor (possibly in collaboration with the program coordinator and/or other liaisons)
- when a potential mentor is identified, the liaison will approach them in confidence; the mentor can accept or decline
- if the mentor accepts, the liaison will speak to the mentee applicant and suggest a first exploratory meeting
- after the initial meeting, participants should decide whether or not to pursue a mentoring relationship
- if the initial exchange is positive, the mentor and mentee will agree either formally or informally on how best to structure the relationship (e.g., frequency of meetings, duration, and topics of interest)
- the program runs for a maximum duration of 12 months

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- confidentiality will be respected (however, under no circumstances will CAFE, its Chapters, the program coordinator, or Chapter liaisons be held liable); mentees will be required to sign the attached waiver form
 - mentoring relationships are unique, and flexibility is key to success; however, certain guidelines can be helpful:
 - establish well-defined objectives (such as “obtain contacts that allow one to do one’s current job better” or “gain a richer understanding of the profession to assist in navigating a career path”) or an agreement to guide the relationship
 - commit to meeting regularly for a specified length of time (an hour or two every month or so)
 - developing trust and maintaining the confidentiality of the information exchanged are paramount
 - exchanges can be more fruitful when mentees suggest topics to be discussed before the meeting, which allows mentors to prepare more adequately (mentee-driven agenda)
 - mentoring pairs should review their relationship and their progress towards objectives
 - terminating a relationship or switching to a different mentor are not signs of failure
 - if the relationship is not working; first review the agreement/objectives and try to come up with a mutually satisfactory go-forward solution
 - terminate the relationship if it is no longer meeting the requirements of the mentee

Mentoring is a partnership through which both the mentee and the mentor learn and develop. Most pairings are expected to be made within one’s Chapter, whereby participants can arrange face-to-face meetings. Sometimes the best mentor for a perspective mentee may be located elsewhere—even on the other side of the country.

Once thought to be a unique and undesirable arrangement (compared with same-location pairing), remote mentoring is becoming commonplace in several organizations and can be used to good advantage, provided participants work hard to keep connections stimulating and productive. In doing so, they should set up regularly scheduled telephone meetings just as they would for face-to-face meetings. Participants should call (or be ready to receive the call) exactly on time, and have their agenda, points, and questions in front of them. More structure is likely needed in these relationships. Emails and spontaneous calls can also be useful. Mentors and mentees can get to know each other on an entirely different level through these creative

communications. The goal is to keep in contact and convey the message: this mentoring relationship is on my mind and it is important.

This guide provides a national standard with respect to general procedures and approach of the CAFE Mentoring Program. Chapters and their regions, however, have particular cultures and demographics that may encourage them to use the program in their own way. For example, it may be possible for some Chapters to network with other mentoring programs, where there is a cultural or functional compatibility (e.g., share resources or create a larger pool of mentors).

Mentoring – Q & A

1. What is mentoring?
2. What is the goal of CABE's Mentoring Program?
3. What are the features of a successful program?
4. How do I become a mentor?
5. How do I find a mentor?
6. What are mentors and who can get one?
7. Is mentoring really worth the time commitment?
8. What should I do if the mentoring relationship is not working?
9. What would be expected of me as a mentor?
10. What is the ideal mentoring relationship like? For example, what do the mentor and mentee discuss, and how long does the relationship last?
11. What is the etiquette of mentoring?

1. What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a bona fide career development activity and should be recognized as such. For the purposes of this program, mentoring is broadly defined to include activities such as information sharing, informal teaching, and general career advice rather than job-specific coaching.

2. What is the goal of CABE's Mentoring Program?

The goal of the program is to enhance the career development of members by:

- providing a better understanding of the different work practices of business economists in Canada;
- offering avenues for support and advice;
- increasing networks; and
- opening the lines of communication between members.

Mentoring should be viewed as part of an overall strategy to encourage members to reach their full career potential. On its own, mentoring cannot meet all career-development needs.

3. What are the features of a successful program?

There are a number of features that help to make a mentoring program successful. CABE has tried to take as many of these into account as possible. The literature suggests that the main features of a successful mentoring program are:

- commitment from the mentors;
- clear definitions of the roles of mentors, mentee, and liaison;
- flexibility in design and structure;
- good communication of the program; and

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- the understanding that mentoring provides long-term, rather than immediate, benefits.

The breadth of knowledge and experience within CABE is significant. In most mentoring programs, the shortage of mentors is a key and constant issue. Literature on mentoring, however, suggests that the mentors themselves were motivated by the experience; they felt that they were making a contribution, and that their expertise and experience were being well used.

4. How do I become a mentor?

Those interested in becoming mentors, should fill in the online application located on the CABE website. A Liaison may also contact a potential mentor. Mentors, under acceptable conditions, may be interested in multiple-mentoring relationships.

5. How do I find a mentor?

Complete the online application. Mentee candidates should identify their reasons for wanting a mentor and attach their curriculum vitae. Information that can assist the Liaisons include the following:

- What particular goal(s) do you hope to achieve through the mentoring program?
- What type of work, field, and/or industry would your ideal mentor be in?
- Would you feel more comfortable dealing with a mentor of the same gender?

6. What are mentors and who can get one?

Mentors, in general, act as guides, advisers, and sounding boards. Mentors are people who wish to support other members and to help them in their career development. To do so, they draw largely on their own experience.

If you want to enrich your work-life experience, discuss options with someone who will listen without judgment, and gain feedback from someone with a different perspective, mentoring offers an opportunity that should be given serious consideration.

Being a mentee means you are in the driver's seat. You must initiate your participation in the mentoring program. Your comments enable a Liaison to assist you in finding a mentor. Once matched with a mentor, you have the freedom and responsibility to raise issues that are important to you. Open communication can result in a mutually satisfying relationship.

7. Is mentoring really worth the time commitment?

Mentoring takes very little time—usually one meeting per month.

The benefits of mentoring are far-reaching. By mentoring, you can develop a richer understanding of other individuals and their work environments and contribute to a workplace culture of openness, both of which lead to better work outcomes and a motivating environment in which to spend your workday.

Potential participants often have the perception that the activity will require too much of their time. In fact, this is generally not the case. The most important element is the quality (not the quantity) of time the mentee spends with the mentor.

8. What should I do if the mentoring relationship is not working?

First, review the agreement you had with your mentor/mentee and try to see why it is not working. Were the objectives of the relationship clearly laid out? Had you and your partner agreed on outcomes, the frequency of meetings, and the likely duration of the relationship? If not, asking these questions is a good starting point for isolating the problem.

If you had a detailed agreement that simply derailed, you could initiate a conversation with your mentor/mentee about where and why this happened and try to come up with a mutually satisfactory go-forward plan. If the relationship still does not work, you may need to consider ending the relationship.

Keep in mind that mentoring relationships often move towards a point where most of the value has already been shared. The CABE mentoring program provides a yearly review, whereby participants should feel comfortable proposing that the relationship be ended.

If you need help or are unsure about how to proceed, please speak with your Chapter Liaison.

9. What would be expected of me as a mentor?

According to a study of seventeen mentoring programs, the most common responsibilities of mentors include:

- acting as an adviser;
- establishing an atmosphere of trust;
- facilitating the exploration of choices and possibilities;
- providing information and instruction; and

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- acting as a role model.¹

Because of their work experience and knowledge, mentors can provide judicious and informed advice on career choices that can assist mentees meet their medium- and long-term objectives. Availability and openness are other qualities that make a good mentor.

10. What is the ideal mentoring relationship like? For example, what do the mentor and mentee discuss, and how long does the relationship last?

Since each mentoring relationship is unique, flexibility is key to the success of the relationship.

However, certain guidelines can be helpful. Generally, in an ideal mentoring relationship, mentors and mentees should:

- establish well-defined objectives (such as “seek advice on career prospects”, “gain a better understanding of a particular work environment”);
- discuss objectives and come to an agreement on what can be realistically achieved; and
- commit to meeting regularly for a specified length of time.

The literature suggest that pairs usually meet, on average, for about an hour or two every month or so. Venues include, for example, offices, coffee shops, cafeterias, or restaurants. Exchanges also seem to be more fruitful when mentees suggest the topics to be discussed before a meeting, which allows mentors to prepare more adequately.

Mentoring pairs should occasionally review the state of their relationship and their progress in reaching their objectives. Mentoring relationships should have run their course after 12 months.

11. What is the etiquette of mentoring?

Since all mentors and mentees come to a relationship with different styles and expectations, one should be aware of the etiquette that exists in mentoring relationships. As with all interpersonal relationships, this means showing kindness, flexibility, and appreciation. More specifically, the following are some suggestions for successful mentoring partnerships.

¹ Cuerrier, Christine. Best Practices of Mentoring Programs in Canada. Entrepreneurship Foundation, Montreal, 2002.

Suggestions for Mentees:

- take the initiative in the relationship (suggest topics to discuss and ask for advice)
- be considerate of your mentor's time
- listen attentively to all your mentor has to say, storing what seems irrelevant for some future use
- be complete yet succinct in your comments and explanations
- seriously consider all the advice you receive
- show evidence that you've utilized the help; even if you used a different alternative, point out how the mentoring process helped you make your choice
- show appreciation for every form of assistance your mentor gives you
- make it easy for your mentor to give you constructive feedback (ask for it early)
- assume that the relationship will be strictly professional
- make only positive or neutral comments about your mentor to others
- be prepared to move out of the relationship (at least the mentor-mentee aspect) after a period of time
- keep the door open to return to your mentor at some point for advice or help

Suggestions for Mentors:

- be proactive and engaged in the relationship (provide time to interact and suggest topics to discuss)
- respect your mentee's time as much as your own
- be explicit about your own needs and limits (e.g., time constraints, style of interacting)
- expect mentees to move towards their (not your) goals
- recognize and work through conflicts in caring ways
- keep your relationship on a professional basis
- make only positive or neutral comments about your mentee to others
- be prepared to end the relationship (at least the mentor-mentee aspect) after a period of time
- keep the doors open for your mentee to return in the future

Finally, being involved in a mentoring relationship is a *privilege* for both participants, so you should go out of your way to be gracious and thoughtful to each other.

Appendix – Sample Development Plan

My Development Plan

My purpose in being mentored is _____

My goals are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

My actions: what, how, and when I will achieve my goals

Goal 1

	What	How	Timeline	Completion Date
Action 1				
Action 2				
Action 3				