



# TA Training CoP: Mentorship

## Session Workbook

October 2021



## *Questions to Consider when developing a Mentorship Program:*

- What kind of Mentorship Program should we have? (Peer Mentorship or Faculty Mentorship? Etc. ) What are the benefits of each?
- What should the program look like?
- Who will be the mentors?
- What would be the role of Mentor?
- When should you implement a mentorship program?
- Other ?



## *Why would TAs need Mentorship Support?*

Incoming TAs might not have any experience in TA-related duties

To fill in the knowledge gaps

Someone they feel comfortable asking questions to (e.g. peer vs faculty member)

Low stakes feedback e.g. from a peer vs faculty which can be more intimidating

Unspoken rules/etiquette about TAing that aren't made explicit in TA training can be clarified by a mentor.

Shared experiences on similar courses, student experiences, instructor experiences can help structure TA expectations.

TA mentorship can feed into research and professional development advice.

Ongoing mentorship throughout the year allows for support as needed (i.e., when challenges arise)

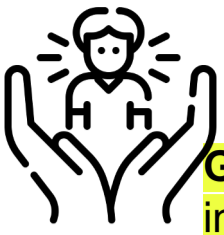
Offers support beyond TA training workshops (more individualized support as well)




# Sample Mentorship Program

## Group 1: Peer/TA-TA Mentorship → Developing Teaching skills & Marking support

Needed Support
What exactly do your TAs need support for? (i.e: how to do X task? How to improve on X task? Receive feedback on x task? etc.)
Marking (giving feedback, managing time/quality, leading tutorials (presenting/managing students/activities/approachability))
When is a good time for your TAs to receive that support? (when in the academic year/during their TAship)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of the year (first semester / but with some time elapsed, so they have something to reflect on -- e.g. marking mentor support happening mid-term) especially for incoming TAs</li> <li>• Beginning of a TA's "career"</li> <li>• Some options for continuing TAs</li> </ul>
The Structure of your Mentorship Program
Who will be the mentors? How will they be selected? (application? Recommendation? etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Second year grad students (still fresh and active grad students but have some TA experience, and other experience listed on their application)</li> <li>- Open call applications + reference (actively reach out to encourage recommended folks to apply)</li> </ul>
What would be the role of Mentor?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support TAs (what specific teaching and marking tasks are they supporting?)</li> </ul>
What should happen as part of this program: Meeting(s)? Observation(s)? Follow-up(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frequent Lab/tutorial observations (at least once a month)</li> <li>- One on one meetings (before to establish expectations and then after the observations to discuss what happened)</li> <li>- Attend a CTLT educational event together (beginning of term) -- gives structure / basis for discussions / food for mentoring thought</li> <li>- Marking: a) general tips and tricks, b) provide guidelines for discussing marking expectations with instructor, c) time management advice, d) have your Mentor as a wing person during tricky discussions with students (barring any privacy issues), e) concrete feedback on marking (what comments to leave and how much, tone check, color of pen used, etc.)</li> </ul>
What will be the format of the above (meeting(s), Obs, etc.): online? Face 2 face? Email? Formal? Informal?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-person or online meetings (easier to schedule)</li> <li>- In-person observations (unless teaching online)</li> <li>- Marking support in-person -- logistically easier</li> <li>- Attend a CTLT event in-person -- more relationship-building (before/after/during)</li> </ul>
What should happen in the meetings/communication?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentees should think about things in their teaching that they want feedback on before the mentor meeting (e.g. do I speak too quietly?)</li> <li>- Mentors will specifically look for those things during the observation</li> <li>- Goal-setting</li> <li>- Feedback given in the post-meeting</li> <li>- General check-in part way through the year (how are they doing, what issues might they have) at the start of the meeting</li> </ul>
What are the boundaries of this mentorship relationship (What will be the focus and what shouldn't happen in meetings, communication?) - (i.e.: focus on grading and not other TA tasks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentor can divert conversation if venting is not productive</li> <li>- Leave it open to allow for better relationship building/support</li> <li>- Too many constraints might impact that</li> </ul>
Time commitment: How many mentees per mentor?; Total time commitment per mentor-mentee; Duration and how often for each component of the program (if there are several components such as meetings and observations)
Training/Support/Compensation for Mentors
What kinds of training and/or support will be provided for Mentors?
How will you incentivize and/or compensate mentors?



# Developing a Mentorship Program

## Group 2: Faculty-TA Mentorship → How to structure tutorials and how to manage in class conflict (between faculty-TA and among students)

Needed Support
What exactly do your TAs need support for? (i.e: how to do X task? How to improve on X task? Receive feedback on x task? etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proactive tutorial/lab policies (tackles both in class conflict and establishes structure of tutorials early on)</li> <li>- Concretely suggest frameworks for tutorial structure (e.g., BOPPPS).</li> <li>- Divvying up TA-instructor responsibilities surrounding student intervention.</li> <li>- Different techniques to engage students with different learning styles.</li> <li>- How to solicit advice/approach the instructor of the course for clarification.</li> </ul>
When is a good time for your TAs to receive that support? (when in the academic year/during their TAship)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beginning of term (separate from initial meeting where class-based expectations are laid out)</li> <li>- Check-ins throughout the term</li> <li>- End of term reflection (helpful for early TAs to carry forward)</li> </ul>
The <b>Structure</b> of your Mentorship Program
Who will be the mentors? How will they be selected? (application? Recommendation? etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-selection to start (<b>how would they hear about this?</b>)</li> <li>- Rotation every few years so that everyone gets a turn (so people don't burn out)</li> <li>- Consider coinciding or not coinciding with teaching terms (so that people don't feel overwhelmed, but can also draw on fresh experiences).</li> </ul>
What would be the role of Mentor?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impartial sounding board for TA concerns</li> <li>- To share previous experiences with other TAs, different courses</li> <li>- Big picture recommendations about pedagogy philosophy, and specific recommendations within reason (so as not to step on anyone's toes)</li> <li>- Connecting mentees with relevant opportunities and resources both within and outside of the department</li> </ul>
What should happen as part of this program: Meeting(s)? Observation(s)? Follow-up(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dovetail with when to receive support</li> <li>- Meeting at the beginning of term, meeting(s) (and if agreed upon, observation) throughout term, follow-up at the end of term</li> </ul>
What will be the format of the above (meeting(s), Obs, etc.): online? Face 2 face? Email? Formal? Informal?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal, to balance power dynamics affecting the mentor-mentee relationship</li> <li>- Online or in-person seems like a decision for the mentor and mentee</li> </ul>
What should happen in the meetings/communication?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up an agenda to start, and follow-that going forward for remaining meetings, amend where necessary</li> <li>- End of term reflection to be used as debrief (useful for next mentor-mentee relationships).</li> </ul>
What are the boundaries of this mentorship relationship (What will be the focus and what shouldn't happen in meetings, communication?) - (i.e.: focus on grading and not other TA tasks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whatever was laid out in the initial meeting.</li> <li>- Emphasis on TA development (one person shouldn't dominate)</li> <li>- If this there is an instructor-TA conflict, the faculty mentor should be impartial, not take sides, not step in where unnecessary.</li> </ul>
Time commitment: How many mentees per mentor?; Total time commitment per mentor-mentee; Duration and how often for each component of the program (if there are several components such as meetings and observations)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3-4 mentees (safety in numbers) for sharing experiences with one faculty mentor.</li> </ul>
Training/Support/Compensation for Mentors
What kinds of training and/or support will be provided for Mentors?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recommended CTLT workshops.</li> <li>- Financial support (department subsidized coffee fund for meetings)</li> </ul>
How will you incentivize and/or compensate mentors?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have mentorship count as service portion for faculty members</li> </ul>

# Icon Attributions

 An icon showing a stylized human figure with arms raised, enclosed within a larger, rounded shape that resembles a heart or a protective shield. The figure has a simple face and torso.	<pre>&lt;div&gt;Icons made by &lt;a href="https://www.flaticon.com/authors/wanicon" title="wanicon"&gt;wanicon&lt;/a&gt; from &lt;a href="https://www.flaticon.com/" title="Flaticon"&gt;www.flaticon.com&lt;/a&gt;&lt;/div&gt;</pre>
 An icon depicting four hands, two on the left and two on the right, reaching towards a central heart shape. The hands are stylized with simple lines.	<pre>&lt;div&gt;Icons made by &lt;a href="https://www.freepik.com" title="Freepik"&gt;Freepik&lt;/a&gt; from &lt;a href="https://www.flaticon.com/" title="Flaticon"&gt;www.flaticon.com&lt;/a&gt;&lt;/div&gt;</pre>