



**University of New Hampshire**  
Cooperative Extension

# **Mentoring Program Handbook**

## **Administrative Guide**

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**University of New Hampshire**  
Cooperative Extension

## **UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program**

Welcome to UNH Cooperative Extension! The mentoring program described in this handbook has been developed to facilitate support to you throughout your first year with UNH Cooperative Extension through the assignment of a mentor (an experienced colleague who doesn't supervise you). We know there will be questions and concerns that arise that you may not always be comfortable discussing with your immediate supervisor. So you've been assigned a mentor to answer questions, provide advice when you ask for it and to be a support to you.

This program was originally developed by two dedicated staff members who have since retired from UNH Cooperative Extension – Maryann Kasprzak, former 4-H Youth Development Program Coordinator for Animal and Agricultural Sciences and Sally Barney, former 4-H Youth Development Program Team Leader. They provided the research and leadership in developing this program.

Best of luck in your career with UNH Cooperative Extension!

Lisa Townson  
Assistant Director, Program Support

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# **Mentoring Program Handbook - Administrative Guide -**

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## Goals

1. To support the new staff member in understanding UNH Cooperative Extension's mission, vision, values and goals.
2. To share the skills and knowledge of successful Extension professionals with new employees.
3. To provide support in locating and accessing Extension resources and resource persons.
4. To foster open communication and dialogue.
5. To provide motivation for job performance, creativity, and the acceptance of responsibility with confidence.
6. To bring employees together to establish a network of professionals within the organization.

The UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program is designed to provide a professional, educational and personal support system for the new employee. When the mentoring program goals are met the new employee should experience an easier transition into their position with UNH Cooperative Extension and earlier productivity.

## Mentoring Program Overview

A review of literature and personal interviews with mentoring program administrators indicate that mentoring is more successful when:

1. Supervisors select the mentors
2. Mentors are provided training
3. Mentors are successful employees who are supportive of the organization
4. Mentors initiate contact early
5. Face-to-face meetings, initiated by the mentor, occur within the first month of the new staff member's employment
6. Regular structured interaction takes place
7. Mentors and protégés have similar program responsibilities
8. Mentors are willing to share both organizational and program knowledge
9. Mentor and protégé have regular communication
10. Confidentiality is maintained
11. Mentor has no supervisory role with the protégé
12. Mentor or protégé can request re-assignment without blame being assigned
13. Goals and expectations for the relationship are mutually set
14. Mentor and protégé clearly understand their roles and responsibilities
15. The relationship is not overly burdened by distance or time
16. Mentors and protégés are able to establish a friendship
17. Extension administration is supportive of the program and the program becomes a formal part of the organization's operating structure

## **Mentor Selection Process**

1. The Program Team Leader/Supervisor selects the mentor candidates keeping in mind the suggested qualifications and characteristics.
2. Mentor candidates are provided training.

### **Qualifications**

Every successful Extension employee is not necessarily destined to be a successful mentor. There are qualifications that experience indicates are important for mentors; these qualifications include the following:

- A commitment to the mission, vision and values of UNH Cooperative Extension
- Skills in program development and implementation
- Subject matter expertise
- An appreciation for staff diversity and skill in delivery of programs to diverse audiences
- Knowledge of the policies and procedures of UNH Cooperative Extension
- A minimum of 4-5 years' experience with Extension

### **Desirable Characteristics of a Mentor**

In the mentor selection process you will want to consider carefully individuals who possess the following characteristics:

- Has a positive attitude toward the organization and its programs
- Appreciates and encourages diversity
- Is a team player
- Is respected by their co-workers and respects others
- Shows flexibility
- Listens effectively
- Is self-confident
- Is culturally competent
- Recognizes and encourages excellence
- Is trustworthy
- Is patient
- Will make themselves available
- Is a good communicator
- Practices life-long learning
- Is able to teach
- Will give honest feedback
- Willing to share credit

# **Mentor Training -Outline**

## **I. Mentor Program Overview**

### A. Goals and Objectives

1. Skill development, career development, organizational/cultural development
2. Benefits of mentoring for mentor, protégé and organization

## **II. Communication**

- A. Active listening
- B. Ways of communicating - verbal; non-verbal
- C. Constructive feedback
- D. Frequency of contact

## **III. Mentoring 101**

- A. Qualities of a mentor
- B. Expectations - mentor initiated
- C. Needs Assessment
- D. Skill building/resources
- E. Adult learning styles
- F. Diversity, culture and heritage
- G. Why a facilitated mentoring program
- H. Mentor/Supervisor - Who's Who – roles

#### **IV. Guidelines for Mentoring**

- A. Bio-sketch shared
- B. Sample letters and/or phone calls
- C. Confidentiality
- D. Job shadowing
- E. Responsibilities and pitfalls

#### **V. Problem Solving**

- A. Role play
- B. Case studies
- C. Conflict management



## **Matching Mentors and Protégés**

1. The Program Team Leader/Supervisor of the new employee matches the mentor and protégé and provides confidential support for both mentor and protégé.
2. Before assigning a mentor the Program Team Leader/Supervisor should ask the mentor if they are currently willing to mentor a new staff member.
3. Mentors are assigned before the new employee starts employment.
4. Mentor and protégé should be from offices close enough geographically that distance is not an issue. They should not be from the same county office.
5. Mentor and protégé should share similar programmatic responsibilities.
6. Once a mentor is matched with a new staff member, the Program Team Leader/Supervisor sends the mentor a confirmation letter, a Bio-Sketch, UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program Handbook and the name of their protégé with their starting date.
7. The Program Team Leader/Supervisor sends the protégé a mentoring program welcome letter, the name of their mentor, a Bio-Sketch, and a UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program Handbook

## **Mentor and Protégé Responsibility to the Program**

1. Each completes their Bio-Sketch within two weeks of the new staff member's employment. Forward the Sketch to your mentor/protégé.
2. Mentor shall initiate contact within the first two weeks of the staff member's employment.
3. Protégé shall complete the New Staff Needs Assessment and bring it to the first mentor/protégé meeting.
4. Mentor and protégé meet face-to-face and together set goals for future meetings - the Needs Assessment may be used as a guide.
5. Meet regularly face-to-face and/or by phone or e-mail. Be flexible in setting meeting dates but keep appointments as scheduled.
6. Mentor and protégé complete and return the 6 month and final evaluations.
7. Let the Program Team Leader/Supervisor know from time to time how the mentor relationship is progressing.
8. Occasionally poor matches between mentors and protégés happen. If you would like to discuss your mentoring relationship feel free to call the Program Team Leader/Supervisor. Concerns can be addressed and, if necessary, relationships re-built without blame being assigned.

## **Responsibilities of a Mentor**

Mentors must be willing to accept the commitment of time and energy to provide support for a new employee during their first year. A clear understanding of the mentoring process will go a long way toward assuring success. You will need to maintain support and open communication. You will also:

- Initiate contact with the protégé.
- Be a good listener.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Give constructive feedback.
- Promote protégé creativity and skill development.
- Meet at scheduled times.
- Share the organization's mission, vision, values and culture.
- Help the protégé to develop goals, access resources and build a professional network.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Encourage independence; not dependence.
- Remember there is most often more than one way to reach a goal. Support the protégé to the best of your ability, but remember the program success or failure of the protégé is their responsibility.

### **Avoid these pitfalls:**

- Don't give advice unless asked.
- Don't take responsibility for your protégé's program or duties.
- Don't allow the protégé to be "apron strings" dependent on you.
- Don't complain about your own problems.
- Don't do your protégé's work for them.

## **Responsibilities of a Protégé**

You will find that having a supportive mentoring relationship will benefit you as you learn the ins and outs of your new position. Your mentor is a support, but not your supervisor. Be receptive to what the mentor has to say and be clear in asking for assistance when you need it. Protégé responsibilities include:

- Assume personal responsibility for your professional growth.
- Listen and consider alternatives.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Accept constructive feedback willingly.
- Be willing to take risks, be open to new ideas.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Demonstrate initiative.
- Respect your mentor's time.
- Notify your mentor of problems, concerns or questions.
- Remember, there is more than one way to reach a goal.

### **Avoid these pitfalls:**

- Don't rely on your mentor as your only source of information.
- Don't expect your mentor to give you all of the answers - think of your mentor as suggesting alternatives.
- Don't ask your mentor to do your work for you.
- Don't cancel meetings at the last minute.

**- Sample Letter -**

**Supervisor's Letter to the Protégé**

Dear (Protégé),

Once again, welcome to UNH Cooperative Extension. As a part of your orientation to UNH Cooperative Extension you have been assigned a mentor. (Mentor Name, County) has been assigned as your formal mentor.

Enclosed you will find two documents. The Biographical Sketch is to be completed and sent directly to your mentor within your first two weeks of employment. Your mentor will, in turn, send their sketch to you. The UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program Handbook contains the resources needed to support the development of a positive, confidential mentoring relationship through your first year. Be sure to read through the Handbook carefully.

You will find the mentoring relationship to be a very important part of your orientation. Should you have any questions or concerns about the UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

(Protégé's Supervisor)

7/02

**- Sample Letter -**

**Supervisor's Letter to the Mentor**

Dear (Mentor's Name),

Thank you very much for your willingness to take on the role of mentor to new staff. Your protégé is (Protégé Name). You have the expertise and experience necessary to support this staff member through their first year with UNH Cooperation Extension. Your involvement in the UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program is appreciated.

Enclosed is a UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program Handbook. You will find the handbook contains resources and materials which support the development of the mentoring relationship. If you need additional support or resources, or if you would like to discuss your mentoring relationship, please don't hesitate to contact me. While mentoring relationships are confidential, I am in a position to support you and your protégé.

Also enclosed is a Mentor/Protégé Biographical Sketch. Please complete this sketch as soon as possible and send it to your protégé. They will send their sketch to you prior to your first meeting. Successful mentoring relationships are established early in the employment cycle; please contact your protégé within the first two weeks of their starting date of employment. Your protégé begins work on (Date).

Thank you again for your willingness to help a new staff member get off to a great start. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

(Protégé's Supervisor)

7/02

**- Sample Letter -**

**Mentor's Letter to the Protégé**

Dear (Protégé's Name),

Welcome to UNH Cooperative Extension. I have been selected to act as your mentor during your first year. I am looking forward to a positive relationship that will be a solid support for you both professionally and personally.

During our time together we will have an opportunity to discuss the mission of UNH Cooperative Extension, to explore resources and resource persons available to you as an Extension professional, and to share program and Extension skills, knowledge and ideas. We'll also have time to discuss any concerns or questions you may have. Let's strive for at least three face-to-face meetings during our year with frequent contact between times by E-mail, phone or fax.

I would like to set our first face-to-face meeting. I am available on the following dates: Please check your calendar and get back to me with a convenient date and time. I look forward to meeting with you and to getting to know you better.

Sincerely,

(Mentor)

7/02



**Mentor/Protégé Biographical Sketch**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **County:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Immediate Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational Background:**

Undergraduate Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Graduated: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Graduated: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Training: \_\_\_\_\_

**Program/Work Experience:**

Years with UNH Cooperative Extension: \_\_\_\_\_ Years in Current Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Relevant Work Experience:



Major Areas of Interest/Expertise (Program Focus):

My Strengths:

My position with UNH Cooperative Extension interests me because:

**Protégé Only:**

Topics I would like to discuss with my Mentor include:

Personal Interests (optional):

Hobbies/Leisure Interests:

Community Activities:

Family:

The purpose of sharing the Biographical Sketch is to provide basic information upon which the Mentor/Protégé team can develop a successful relationship. If at all possible, Mentor and Protégé should exchange their Biographical Sketches prior to their first meeting.

7/03: new logo 2015

## **Meeting Your Protégé**

### **Suggested Guidelines to Mentors for Meetings**

#### **Initial Meeting:**

- Introduce yourself ask questions to learn more about your protégé. The BioSketch will provide some background information. Share information about yourself.
- Check to see that the protégée has received important information such as: their orientation briefcase, Personnel Directory, Orientation Handbook, Mentor Program Handbook, etc. If they have not received the information, encourage them to contact their Program Team Leader/Supervisor.
- Explain your role as mentor.
- Review the list of responsibilities and pitfalls for mentors and protégés. These are listed in the Mentoring Program Handbook.
- Identify best times to make contact and preferred contact methods (phone, e-mail, etc.).
- Use the Needs Assessment completed by the protégé to outline meeting topics. Mutually set goals for the mentoring relationship.
- Schedule a second face-to-face meeting within the next two to three weeks. Encourage your protégé to contact you if they have any questions or concerns before you meet again.

#### **Second Meeting:**

- Check how things are going. Ask about stumbling blocks.
- Have there been surprises? What has been great; what has been challenging? Help them by giving them ideas of resource persons they can contact to get their questions answered.
- Discuss the topics outlined for this meeting.
- Review some of the items in the Orientation Handbook and welcome briefcase.

- Encourage the protégé to look at the web-based fact sheets and resources for new staff.
- Schedule a third meeting within 4-5 weeks. Encourage the protégé to contact you with questions or concerns. Review the topics to be covered at the next meeting (Needs Assessment).

**Third Meeting:**

- Share important up-coming events such as in-service opportunities, program area meetings, staff conferences, etc. Encourage participation as appropriate.
- Review and discuss items selected for discussion at this meeting.
- Check to see how the protégée is doing. Answer their questions or refer them to an appropriate resource.
- Ask about balancing work and family. Is the protégé concerned with being able to strike an appropriate balance? Refer them to their supervisor if needed.
- Continue to set meeting topics so meetings will be productive. Continue contact by phone, e-mail or face to face.

Adapted From Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program



**New Staff Needs Assessment**  
**UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program**  
(To be completed by new staff member)

In this assessment the new staff member will prioritize areas of need as a means of facilitating discussion with their Mentor. This is solely a discussion tool and is not an assessment that will be utilized for evaluation purposes.

In each section rank from highest to lowest  
1 = greatest need to discuss

**Communication Skills:**

- writing newsletters/newspaper columns \_\_\_\_\_
- interacting with the media \_\_\_\_\_
- presentation skills \_\_\_\_\_
- presentation skills - radio/TV \_\_\_\_\_
- dealing with conflict \_\_\_\_\_
- teamwork skills \_\_\_\_\_
- computer skills \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Development:**

- writing annual program plans \_\_\_\_\_
- program ideas \_\_\_\_\_
- marketing programs \_\_\_\_\_
- resources for programming \_\_\_\_\_
- understanding the annual Plan of Work process \_\_\_\_\_
- program evaluation \_\_\_\_\_
- grant writing/resource development \_\_\_\_\_
- working with committees/councils \_\_\_\_\_
- program area/Extension calendar of events \_\_\_\_\_
- securing state specialist support \_\_\_\_\_

**Organizational Structure/Culture:**

- UNHCE mission, vision, values \_\_\_\_\_
- organization of Extension - county, state \_\_\_\_\_
- informal/unwritten rules \_\_\_\_\_
- Extension lingo - acronyms \_\_\_\_\_

**Career Guidance/Professional Development:**

- professional associations \_\_\_\_\_
- in-service opportunities \_\_\_\_\_
- other professional development opportunities \_\_\_\_\_
- professional awards \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Development:**

- time management \_\_\_\_\_
- balancing work and family \_\_\_\_\_
- maintaining a schedule/prioritizing needs \_\_\_\_\_
- protocol - chain of command \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Needs:**

**What are the most important things you would like to get from this relationship?**

**Preferred method of learning? (Listening, hands-on, shadowing/observing, reading/research)**

## **Mentors and Protégés As Good Listeners**

### ***Tips for Being a Good Listener***

- Stop talking to others and to yourself. Learn to still the voice within. You can't listen if you are talking.
- Imagine the other person's viewpoint. Picture yourself in his/her position, doing his/her work, facing his/her problems, having his/her values, etc.
- Look, act and be interested. Don't read your mail, doodle, shuffle or tap papers while others are talking.
- Observe non-verbal behavior to glean information beyond what is said to you.
- Don't interrupt. Sit still past your tolerance level.
- Listen between the lines for implicit meanings as well as explicit ones. Look for omissions - things left unsaid or unexplained and ask about them. Listen for understanding. That's different than listening for agreement.
- Speak only affirmatively while listening. Resist the temptation to jump in with an evaluative or critical comment or a story of your own at the moment a remark is uttered. Confine yourself to constructive replies until the context has shifted and criticism can be offered without blame. "Put down" phrases discourage sharing. People tend to react negatively when someone implies a judgment or criticism, especially at the beginning of the relationship.
- To ensure understanding and shared meanings, rephrase what the other person has just told you at key points in the conversation.
- Stop talking. This is first and last, because all other techniques of listening depend on it.

Adapted from: *Mentoring, Investing in our Future*, Mentoring Sub-Committee of the New Personnel Orientation ADHOC Committee, Ohio State University

**Six Month Evaluation  
UNH Cooperative Extension  
Mentoring Program**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Protégé: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How often do you meet with your mentor/protégé?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What has been the most valuable aspect of the mentoring program?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Has the mentoring program met your initial expectations?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Do you have any questions or concerns related to the mentoring relationship or mentoring program? Please explain briefly.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Additional comments:

Send to: \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Evaluation**  
**UNH Cooperative Extension**  
**Mentoring Program**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Protégé: \_\_\_\_\_

Your evaluation of the Mentoring Program will be kept confidential. Your responses will be used solely for the purpose of improving the program.

1. Briefly describe your mentor/protégé experience and the effectiveness of the relationship.

2. What was most helpful in developing the mentor/protégé relationship?

3. What did you perceive as barriers to the development of a successful mentor/protégé relationship?



4. In what ways did the mentoring relationship help you to succeed in your role with UNH Cooperative Extension?

5. How would you improve the UNH Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program?

6. Do you feel your mentor/protégé was committed to the mentoring relationship?

Send to: \_\_\_\_\_

7/02

## Case Study #1

You are feeling overworked. Your county fair is next week and the work ahead of you is overwhelming. Everyone is running around trying to "fight fires" that seem to pop up everywhere. You know you will have to stay late to get caught up.

Although you have support staff in the office, the administrative assistant must leave early every day before 5:00 PM to pick up her daughter at day care; she is unable to stay late on any evening. You know she has worked through her lunch hour on several occasions, but you are still feeling annoyed that she is leaving.

All of the program staff in the office also work long hours. You have been employed in the County for 5 months and up to now you have enjoyed working with this group; but today you could just SCREAM! You are tired, angry and never want to hear about a county fair again.

You call your mentor.

Adapted From: Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program

## Case Study #2

You are a new Extension Field Specialist with three months on the job. There had not been a previous Extension Field Specialist in the role for almost a year. Old mail had been stacked and was waiting for you. Old phone messages were still on those pink slips supposedly waiting for call backs. There is no apparent filing system; you have been unable to find a way to retrieve information when you needed it and you have not been able to figure out the best way to deal with all of the mail you have gone through.

You know other Extension Field Specialist have filing systems that allow them to retrieve information whenever you have asked questions of them, but you can't figure out how to do it. You feel that filing should be a simple matter, and are confused by the amount of difficulty you have had in managing access to information. What is the best way to handle this? Can you get control over all of the "stuff" that comes across your desk?

You call your mentor.

Adapted From: Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Mentoring Program

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