

Mentoring Ground Rules

Establish the WHY for participation

Clearly identified goals and measures of success allow both parties to steer the mentorship in a mutually agreeable direction and ensures that both parties find value in the relationship.

For the mentee:

- Are you trying to determine the area of the law in which you want to practice?
- Do you want to gain more practical experience? In what areas?
- Do you need someone with whom you can discuss cases?
- Are you interested in refining your courtroom procedures?
- How much time do you have to commit to the relationship?

For the mentor:

- What do you hope to get out of the relationship?
- Can you share practice area related advice, or do you want to keep things more general?
- Are you comfortable offering advice on cases?
- How much time do you have to commit to the relationship?

Allowing the relationship to evolve organically is important, but having a general agreement that outlines the goals of the mentorship will help you progress together.

The mentorship is a two-way street

Mentee:

- Invite your mentor to events—mock trials, conferences, and presentations—that create an opportunity for your mentor to provide personalized and specific feedback.
- Initiate a meeting—do not wait for the mentor to contact you!
- Be clear about what your needs are.
- Be respectful of your mentor's time—be sure to keep meetings and arrive on time.

Mentor:

- Encourage your mentee to keep you abreast of what is going on in his or her life.
- Contact your mentee by e-mail or phone regularly; open communication is important.
- Build self-confidence in your mentee:
 - Allow your mentee to teach you a new area of technology or one in which he or she is more proficient than you.
 - Ask his or her opinion on a legal concept or situation in which you are struggling.
- Be respectful of the relationship and your mentee's time—keep your commitment to being a mentor and follow through.

The Basics

- Set regular meetings—not too often! Once a month, in addition to Inn meetings, is usually manageable.
- Be respectful of each other's times—keep appointments and be on time.
- Set boundaries to establish a level of comfort—know the line between personal and professional.
- Get together with other pairs or mentoring groups—share what you're doing and incorporate what others are doing.
- Write an article together!
- Acknowledge important occasions in each other's lives and make the relationship one that is valued mutually.

Thanks to Paige Carlos, an alumna of the George C. Young American Inn of Court in Orlando, FL for her insights. Check out Paige's article "Tools for a Fulfilling Mentorship" in our [Mentoring Resource Library](#).