

Structured Meetings

Structured meetings are essential for efficient and successful mentoring. Elements of structured meetings include setting ground rules for how the meeting times will be spent, establishing expectations for each meeting, and having an overall agreement on expectations for giving and receiving feedback.

a. Establish ground rules for structured meeting times

Determine how to use your time together. One suggestion is the “5/20/30/5 Rule” that will help you to establish a solid partnership and address mentoring goals and everyday issues. For a meeting of about 60 minutes split the time roughly as follows:

- First 5 Minutes: Engage in person/professional check-in
- Next 20 minutes: Focus on front burner issues (upcoming presentation, manuscript revision, etc.)
- Next 30 minutes: Discuss current and long-term goals and priorities
- Last 5 minutes: Summarize discussion, clarify tasks, schedule follow-up meeting

b. Discuss expectations

- How you will schedule meetings
- Frequency and mode of communication between meetings
- Responsibility for rescheduling any missed meetings
- Confidentiality
- “Off-limit” conversations
- Giving and receiving feedback (see below)
- Establishing goals for the mentorship relationship (what mentee needs)

c. Discuss giving and receiving feedback

Engage in reciprocal and on-going feedback is a vital component of a mentorship relationship. Effective feedback is timely, focuses on specific behaviors, acknowledges potential outside factors that may contribute to behavior that could improve, emphasizes actions, and draws mentorship partner out to strategize a solution.

