

POLICY ON MENTOR AND MENTEE PROGRAMME

Introduction

The college life of students is changing very fast with pressures to achieve high in academics, secure jobs with respectable earnings, build their careers of their choice, and integrate learning of various skills with curriculum to ensure job security and to cope up with the information available on the social media. At the same time, with the fast advancement in international relations and developments in science and higher education is becoming more and more complex and challenging. All of this creates a lot of anxiety and uncertainties among college students about their success during and post-college. It is a well-established fact that the turning point in the career of students is not the curriculum topics but the relationship with the mentors who may be their peers or teachers or professionals. Khalsa College of Engineering & Technology, Amritsar admits students from all over India with diverse social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Hence, there is a requirement of continuous mentoring of students for academic, social, personal and career guidance. Looking at all these needs of students, the college instituted a Mentor-Mentee system where a group of students (Mentees) are assigned to a faculty (Mentor) from the different Departments, and this is one of the best practices which is going on in this college. The IQAC will hold sessions every year for faculty members on mentoring. The Following policy has been adopted by the college for its mentorship program.

Mentoring is a strategy to provide students with emotional and instrumental support they need to achieve learning goals. Direct academic issues e.g. selection of electives can be easily communicated to the student. But finer nuances e.g. career options or fear of a subject/course need greater involvement of the mentor.

In the context of higher education in educational institute, mentoring can be understood at two levels:

- Teacher to Student
- Student to Student

Objectives of Mentoring Policy

The purpose of this mentoring policy is to identify intervening mechanisms to improve the performance of the students. In this context, few objectives have been defined to achieve the desired result.

- To focus and motivate students to achieve learning goals and thereby improve their academic performance.

- To Guide, encourage, and advice the students about their upcoming student life, student health, mental and emotional well-being and listen to their issues with patience and help them solve their concerns with appropriate resources, support available.
- To generate interest in academics and other institutional activities amongst students.
- To provide students with information on preparatory courses such as bridge courses, skill courses etc.
- To imbibe the social and ethical values in the mentee.
- To make mentees emotionally strong enough to face the failures in life and to stand again for the further success stories.

Elements of Mentoring Policy

Under mentoring programs, certain important aspects have to be considered. They are as follows:

- Identification of weak students.
- Identification of mechanism to aid weak students.
- Identification of issues faced by students in their personal and institutional life cycle.
- Realization of desired outcomes post mentoring.

Mentor-Mentee Process Details

- Eligible faculty members are assigned a group of 13 to 14 mentee students whom they serve as mentors.
- The mentee preferably, as far as possible, be assigned to the same mentor throughout the program.
- The mentor shall be provided the basic data of the mentees through a list having Names, Roll No, Father Name, Batch etc. and mentor will enrich the data of mentees in due course of time.
- Proper confidentiality shall be maintained by the department and respective mentors to uphold the respect of individuals involved.
- The mentors shall be consulted/informed in case of disciplinary issues on code of conduct with a students

Role & Responsibility of the Mentor

A mentor should wear multiple hats. For effective mentoring, the mentor should embrace the ability and willingness to:

- Coach to advise the mentees on how to accomplish their goals.
- Provide guidance and help to increase the mentee's exposure to new experiences.
- Teach to provide learning opportunities.
- Counsel to enhance the mentee's self-esteem through supportive, non-judgmental discussions.
- Communicate through active listening. Focus fully on the mentee and show active verbal and non-verbal signs of listening.
- Share experiences and be open to sharing mistakes, failures and lessons learned.
- Maintain strict confidentiality of the information shared by the mentee.
- Be a role model to walk the talk and exhibit the behaviors essential for success
- If at any time, the mentor feel that the mentees need special counselling, the mentor may encourage the students to seek counselling with the professional expert - the Student Counsellor.
- If any student needs special academic tutoring, the mentor may direct the mentees to an appropriate faculty and may even ask the faculty to help their mentees in a particular area.
- Meet the group of students at least twice a month, through mentor mentee session.
- Continuously monitor, counsel, guide and motivate the students in all academic matters.
- Advise students regarding choice of electives, project, summer training etc.
- Contact parents/guardians if situation demands e.g. academic irregularities, negative behavioral changes and interpersonal relations, detrimental activities etc.
- Maintain contact with the students even after their graduation or pass out.
- Intimate HOD and suggest if any administrative action is called for.
- Maintain a detailed progressive record of the student.
- Maintain a brief but clear record of the notices and schedule of the meetings, that include discussions with students.

- Conduct at least one meeting (online/offline) in a month. In total each Mentor will spend at least 8 hours with mentees in a semester.
- Assess mentee's background, knowledge, skill, motivation, experience, hobbies, etc.
- Help to improve upon communication skills and shed hesitation.
- Counsel, guide and advice mentee to accomplish their goal in academic and career development.
- Help them solve their concerns with appropriate support and referral available.
- Encourage inquisitiveness and interest in academic, extracurricular and social works.
- Conduct discussions on socio-cultural aspect of the country to make good citizen.
- If situation demands, contact parent/guardians and provide the information about the achievements of their wards.
- Update them on various scholarships, fellowships, competitions, internships, research projects, job opportunities, etc.
- Develop leadership quality, team work among mentee.
- Develop a long-term relationship and keep in contact to see the effects of mentoring and the progression of the mentee.
- After completion of each session, submit the meeting records and a brief report to IQAC keeping the information and discussions with the mentees confidential.
- Consult the college psychologist about the needs of any mentee and take necessary action.
- Listen to the mentees, be flexible, be empathetic, be respectful and invest time and efforts
- Identify the learning abilities of their mentees and suggest necessary action programs to the IQAC e.g. requirements of any skill development programs, career counselling sessions from professionals, preparation for various entrance examinations, etc.
- Reaching out to other colleagues to request to conduct special/remedial classes for slow learners in the group.

Mentee's Roles and Responsibilities

- Mentee is responsible for initiating all contact with the mentor and should be prepared and punctual for the mentoring sessions.
- Mentee is responsible for establishing the agenda for the conversation. The student might even email topics to the mentor ahead of time. At the beginning of each session, the mentee should provide a brief update on progress since the last conversation.
- Mentee should share his/her ideas, concerns, and professional goals so that the mentor is able to place the situation in perspective.
- Mentee should establish a mutually agreeable plan for mentoring sessions. He/she should schedule the sessions on his/her calendar and build in enough time around the sessions to prepare. By ensuring that conversations start and end on time, the mentee will demonstrate respect and responsibility.
- Mentee should focus on the relationship, rather than outcomes. Mentor's role is not to provide a job; it is to share valuable experience with the mentee.
- Mentee should ask direct questions about what he/she most want to know and shouldn't be shy about asking. Mentee is responsible for ensuring, the conversation meets, his/her needs.

Major Pillars of Mentor and Mentee Programme

Mentor Mentee programme is a 2-way programme, which cannot be successful unless both the stakeholders (Mentor & Mentee) understand the intent of the programme. Following are some identified pillars that contributes towards success of the programme but only if religiously understood and practiced by both stakeholders.

- **Identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and biases:** Mentors and mentees experience mentoring relationships through their own personal lenses which include facets of identity such as disability, race, gender, class and sexual orientation; particularly when they are related to marginalization and privilege within a broader society. Before engaging in a mentor/mentee relationship, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and biases. Mentors need to be sensitive to the mentee's perspective. Mentees need to be clear about their needs and goals and be active participants in the relationship. Consider the assumptions about mentoring, how it should work, and whether or not these assumptions best serve the mentee's needs. Think of mentors you have had – Why were/are they great

or troublesome? How can you address the weaknesses/biases and be the best mentor or mentee possible?

- **Assess and build the communication and listening skills:** A major skill that cuts across all mentor relationships is the ability to communicate and listen. This is required in order to build trust and a productive relationship. Good communication skills involve the following at minimum:
 - The ability to give full attention when communicating.
 - Engaging in good listening skills.
 - Giving constructive feedback that includes both criticism and praise.
 - Clarifying mutual expectations for the relationship.
 - Being complete yet succinct in comments and explanations.
 - **Build productive mentor/mentee relationships:** Every mentoring relationship is unique and should be grounded in the mentor's strengths and the mentee's needs. No one mentor can meet all of a mentee's needs. The following steps are therefore recommended:
 - Clarify the mentee's expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship and their needs related to career development.
 - Establish clear, shared expectations for the relationship including time commitment, meeting schedule, and ground rules.
 - Discuss confidentiality and the extent to which confidentiality can and will be secured.
 - Negotiate and document short-term & long-term goals and outcomes.
 - Mentors should refer mentees to colleagues for expertise outside their purview. Recommend and facilitate ways in which to build on the mentor/mentee relationship with other career development resources. This requires knowing what resources exist or how to find out and developing a "mindset" or awareness of opportunities for the mentee.
 - Develop a mentoring plan that includes multiple "mentors".
 - Follow up regularly to help mentee keep on track.
 - Both mentor and mentee should provide feedback and modify the relationship, expectations, and strategies as needed.

For mentors: Assess and address concerns about mentoring

Common mentor concerns include not having enough time for good mentoring; uncertainty about how to be a good mentor; how to work with “difficult” mentees; and lack of compensation or rewards. Many concerns can be addressed through mentor orientations, workshops and networking. Opportunities for mentors to meet and exchange challenges and ideas are valuable. The following time-saver tips can help make mentoring manageable and therefore less stressful, more productive and more rewarding:

- Set specific goals and timelines with benchmarks/dates.
- Schedule regular time together – even if brief, over coffee, a walk around the building, or during a recreational activity.
- Have agenda items in mind – clear to both in advance.
- Use email for news of events, grant opportunities; deadline reminders; sending articles; encouragement and e-mentoring.
- Attend events together – workshops, lectures, and conferences.
- Share the load: refer mentee to other colleagues, peer groups, and networks.

For mentors: Fostering mentee career advancement

Promoting career advancement includes advising the mentee on ways in which to manage and excel at academic job responsibilities such as teaching, research, service, and administrative requirements. This can be achieved through the following activities:

- Advise on promotion requirements and processes
- Advise on time allocation across professional activities, for example research, teaching, service, and administrative duties
- Advise on committee choices and load
- Advise on University policies and practices
- Advise on strategies for effective teaching
- Observe classroom instruction and provide constructive feedback
- Review draft proposals and manuscripts and encourage submissions
- Provide targeted expertise on methodology or theory
- Direct mentee to relevant funding opportunities and appropriate journals
- Learn about resources and opportunities and communicate these to mentee

- It also involves nurturing the mentee's career through assisting him/her in identifying and choosing career development opportunities and linking to colleagues and professional networks. The following are examples of ways in which to do this:
- Collaborate on research projects, manuscripts, and
- Advise on key relationships to cultivate and facilitate
- Include mentee in organized
- Advise about key conferences your mentee should consider
- Assist mentee in developing a career
- Invite mentee to present at workshops or conferences.

For mentees: Fostering own career advancement

- Be proactive in developing the own professional career.
- See the mentor/mentee relationship as an important resource for career development and establishing a life-long colleague.
- Be open to mentor suggestions and actively practice what you learn.
- Recognize that one mentor can't meet all needs. Mentees should take responsibility for identifying gaps and building a network of multiple mentors with needed strengths.
- Provide honest, constructive feedback during evaluation process.

Faculty and college responsibility towards Slow learners

Slow learners cannot be defined as poor achievers or suffering from any kind of illness. The slow learning may be because of social background, lesser exposure to society, academic facilities, field, hesitation to ask questions in the class, medium of instruction, previous knowledge of the subject due to different curriculum in state boards, etc. mentors can help mentees to overcome many of their problems. The following strategies of more may be adopted by the faculty to motivate and guide slow learners.

- Making provisions of easy lecture notes/study materials.
- Recording their lectures and providing the same to the students so that the students can listen to the class content at their pace.
- Arranging special classes in the form of remedial classes.
- Peer education strategies can be used by following buddy system or peer mentors.

- Provide academic and personal counselling
- Encourage group learning activities.
- Encouraging the students to join or participate in Co-Curricular activities
- Teaching Learning through examples and case studies related to their social background.
- Encouraging students to be more inquisitive and to join the skill development courses on life communication skills.

Faculty and college responsibility towards advanced learners

Advanced learners are those students who have better Intelligence Quotient and faster understanding of the subject. Such students require to be groomed beyond curriculum to explore their full potential.

- Providing extra facilities and academic input for better career growth.
- Encouragement to join research projects run by the college to inculcate research orientation.
- Encouragement to write and publish research/popular/review papers or book chapters under the guidance of faculty members.
- Encourage to read research papers and make presentations before the class.
- Encourage to participate in National/International Conferences, Seminar and workshop so that they can present their works as well as interact with renowned academician.
- Provide scholarships/Awards to acknowledge their efforts and to enhance their performance.
- Encourage to join Online Courses offered by Swayam or other platforms for enhancing the knowledge horizon.
- Offer a range of texts with more difficult books than the peer
- Offer deeper questions with moving from factual to conceptual thoughts.
- Honour and support innovative thinking. Help nurture their innovative ideas into products or models.
- Consider the following general principles of teaching and learning of explore, create, envision, support, improve and exhibit.