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# Mentorship Program

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# About The Program

The Local Government Mentorship Program pairs current MPA students with experienced Alumni mentors currently working in the field of Local Government.

The program gives students an opportunity to create connections that will develop their skills, expand their professional networks, and prepare them for their future careers. It also provides an opportunity for Local Government Alumni to develop their capacity as mentors.

The mentorship relationship is professional and confidential, with participants committing to meeting once per month from December to June.

Students and mentors will be matched based on their educational backgrounds, personal interests, and career goals. Geographical location will also be taken into consideration. Often, however, mentoring partners will often not be close together, making telephone or web meetings necessary.

The program follows the academic year, and mentorship relationships start once students are settled in and the school year is underway. The official mentorship relationship will last until students graduate, but could continue informally if both parties agree.

### For more information:

[Mentorship Program - Mentorship Program - Western University (uwo.ca)](https://localgovernment.uwo.ca/resources/alumni%20conference/mentorship_program.html)

<https://alumni.westernu.ca/connect/shared-interest-groups/local-government-alumni-society/>

<https://alumni.westernu.ca/>

# Mentors

### Mentor Eligibility

Mentors must be Alumni and working professionals in the field of Local Government who are interested in providing support and guidance to current students. Mentors must be available to meet and keep in contact with their mentees on a monthly basis. While a mentor shares their experiences and knowledge of the industry with the mentee, the relationship works best when there is a genuine commitment and openness to learning from both parties.

### Why Mentor?

* Gain satisfaction helping a student succeed
* Enhance your coaching and listening skills
* Get to know upcoming talent in the field
* Learn from students about recent research in the field of Local Government
* Stay connected with the Alumni Association and events

### Mentor Responsibilities

* Share experiences working in the field of Local Government
* Provide a realistic view of life after graduation
* Help students develop career goals
* Introduce students to industry related organizations, networks, and volunteer opportunities
* Support and guide students, acting as a positive role model and coach
* Give thoughtful and constructive feedback
* Assist in recruiting other Alumni mentors

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# Mentees - Students

### Student Eligibility

Students must be current full-time or part-time students in the MPA program. If there is a shortage of mentors, full-time and final-year part-time students will be prioritized.

### Student Responsibilities

* Initiate and maintain contact with mentor throughout the duration of the program
* Prepare questions and topics for discussion at each meeting
* Share relevant knowledge and experience
* Support the mentorship program by providing feedback on their experience at the conclusion of the program
* “Pay it forward” by considering volunteering as a mentor in the future

### Why participate in the program?

* Gain tools and connections to support your transition to a career after graduation
* Learn about being a professional in the field of Local Government through the first-hand experience of your mentor
* Expand knowledge of career options
* Develop workplace skills such as communication and time management

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# Program Commitments

The Local Government Program Alumni Mentorship program will be overseen by the Alumni Executive Committee, as part of the Local Government Program and the Western Alumni Association.

### The Local Government Alumni Society Commits to:

* Recruit volunteer mentors from a variety of professions and backgrounds
* Match mentors with student applicants, taking into consideration student preferences, professional and personal interests, as well as geographical location
* Act as the Mentorship Program administrator
* Create a framework of expectations for both mentors and students
* Check in with participants periodically to make sure things are running smoothly
* Communicate helpful resources and events to participants to help facilitate mentorship experience

### The Local Government Program Commits to:

* Communicate the Mentorship program to all MPA students in the fall
* Forward any feedback regarding the Mentorship Program to the Alumni Executive
* Support safe learning environments

# Getting Started

To be considered for the program, please applicants are requested to supply the following information:

* Name
* Email
* Interests in the field
* Mentees: Skills you are looking to develop
* Mentors: Areas of interest to support and/or learn about

Sign-up webform is available here:

<https://forms.gle/q1EYxKt2hiYaXz2Z6>

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# Next Steps

During November, the Mentorship Program will solicit interest from mentors and mentees. In late November the mentors and mentees are matched, and monthly mentor-mentee meetings follow monthly from December-June. The mentorship program coordinator will check in with participants from time-to-time to evaluate progress and offer assistance if required.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| November | November | December-May | June |
| Recruit mentors & mentees | Application review and matching | monthly meetings and mentoring | Wrap-up and program review |

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# Sample Meeting topics

The following is a sample of discussion topics students can use to generate ideas for monthly meetings. Participants are not limited to the topics outlined. Monthly meetings should be used to discuss information that is of value to both participants. Mentees should take the lead on identifying topics of interest to them and mentors should provide insight into topics that mentees may not be aware of.

* **Introductions**: Backgrounds, research interests, work experience
* **Mentorship Program:** What do you hope to get out of the program? What do you hope to learn? What can you contribute to your mentor/mentee?
* **Academics:** Term papers, MRP ideas, emotional support
* **Job Recruitment:** Internship applications, resumes, cover letters, how to find positions, interview tips
* **Professional Associations**: What associations are you involved with? What value do you get from associations? What skills development opportunities/events are available?
* **Job Skills**: Policy development, clear writing, presentation skills, navigating bureaucracy, how to present new ideas, risk management, technical skills related to fields of interest (e.g. finance, land-use planning, emergency management)
* **Networking Opportunities**: Information interviews, suggestions for other contacts, professional events
* **Resume / Cover Letter Review**: Discuss resume strategies, framing experience in job application context
* **Professional Experience:** Career progression, setting professional goals, what do you do in your office? How do you identify good career opportunities?

# Change Management

While mentor-mentee relationships can be very fruitful for both parties, there are times where either party may no longer want to or be able to participate in the program. This could be due to changes in life circumstances, schedules, or a misalignment between the mentor and mentee. If issues such as these arise, please contact the program coordinator immediately for assistance: [lgmentorship@gmail.com](mailto:lgmentorship@gmail.com).

# Frequently Asked Questions

* Do I need to be a student at Western to participate in this program?
  + Yes, the mentorship program is only available to Local Government MPA program students.
* How long does the program run?
  + The program runs from November to June each year.
* Can I continue my mentoring relationship after the end of the formal program?
  + We encourage it, if you both agree. Be aware however, that the formal program support is only in place for the nine months that the official program runs.
* When does intake for applications open?
  + Intake is open during November each year.
* Is there a charge to participate?
  + There is no charge to participate in the program.
* Can I apply to the program and ask for a person specifically?
  + We will only consider matching people together if both parties have agreed to work together.
* Will I get a match?
  + We cannot guarantee that you will be placed in the program due to limited mentor or mentee capacity.
* What if I am matched with a person who is not a good fit for me.
  + The program coordinator will do their best to find you the best match possible given the pool of mentors.
* Why am I not able to be matched in my region?
  + The main factor for matching applicants is based on suitability as opposed to location.
* Can I mentor more than one mentee?
  + The program matches one mentor to one mentee to ensure individuals can dedicate enough effort to ensure program success.
* Who do I reach out to for questions?
  + The Mentorship Coordinator is your first contact: [lgmentorship@gmail.com](mailto:lgmentorship@gmail.com)
* How often should I meet with my mentor/mentee?
  + You should meet at least monthly, but can meet more often or adjust the schedule as mutually agreed. It is important to meet regularly to maintain contact and develop the relationship appropriately. Video conferencing can make the best use of time to limit travel commitments.
* What kinds of things can I do with my partner?
  + There are many possibilities but the activities will depend on both parties’ availability. Most people are very busy but try to schedule an informal social activity such as a virtual coffee meet-up. It is important to discuss boundaries at the outset, to ensure both parties are comfortable with the approach.
* What do I do if my partner shares very serious problems with me?
  + You may suggest that your partner speak to a professional or other contact for assistance.
* What do I do if there is a lack of interest?
  + If it becomes clear that the relationship will not work, contact the program coordinator to explore solutions. If solutions are not possible, we may be able to re-match you with another partner.