

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF NUS LAW ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAMME (LAMP)

What are your objectives as a Mentee?

- To seek guidance, advice and information in order to make informed choices about diverse legal career paths
- To seek personal guidance to navigate law school
- To gain exposure to positive role models and access to the professional law community in Singapore

Setting Expectations and Understanding Roles

Mentoring is a relationship. Fundamental to successful mentoring is a common understanding of the roles and expectations you and your mentor have for the relationship.

A Mentee's role

- **Take an active role.** Be proactive, ask questions. Take initiative to do your research before meeting your Mentor. Listen attentively and be open-minded.
- **Know yourself.** Be aware of your strengths, weaknesses, and what you hope to accomplish through LAMP. Share this information openly with your Mentor.
- **Be prepared.** Come to meetings prepared with topics and questions for discussion.
- **Be respectful.** Be respectful of your Mentor's time and schedule. Once you have established contact with your Mentors, consult them on the appropriate frequency and means of keeping in touch.
- **Be professional.** Dress appropriately and always conduct yourself in a professional and mature manner.
- **Show your appreciation to your Mentor.** Send him/her a thank you note. Share with your Mentor how his/her advice has been of assistance.
- **Be dependable, honest and trustworthy.** Do not change meeting dates/times and always be on time. Do also respect any confidences shared with you.

A Mentor's role

- To share his/her experience and provide information and advice.
- A Mentor's role is NOT to find you a job, circulate your resume or share his network of personal contacts.
- A Mentor will help guide you, so you can make choices or take action on your own to work towards your desired career.

Before your first meeting with your mentor, reflect on your expectations for the relationship.

For example, what mentors and mentees could expect include:

Mentors expect mentees to be:	Mentees often expect mentors to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive, responsible, respectful, and honest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guide and direct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committed to building the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be genuine, open, and transparent
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aware of their own expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be willing to invest time, resources, and share the benefit of their experience

How To Initiate Your Relationship

Determine an appropriate way to stay in touch once the Mentoring relationship has started but be polite, patient and non-intrusive.

First Contact or Meeting after the Launch Event

You may feel awkward and hesitate to initiate contact with your mentor. This is natural – remember your mentor has volunteered to help you and he/she wants to talk to you.

Before contacting your mentor, do some research and start thinking about some topics and questions for discussion. During your meeting, break the ice by sharing some of your background, experiences, and goals. Refer to the list of useful conversation topics.

Here are some suggested things to discuss with your mentor during your first meeting:

- Define your roles in the mentoring relationship.
- Share your objectives and what you have to offer in the relationship, i.e., knowledge, skills, resources, etc.
- Review the specific information you hope to gain.
- Clarify any limits that you may have for the relationship.
- Discuss your preferred ways of interacting: phone calls, email, or face-to-face. Exchange email addresses and/or phone numbers.
- Agree on the appropriateness of when to call/contact.

Both you and your mentor might be busy at times – do make it a habit to check-in with one another regularly. It is also a good idea to talk about when and how often you might schedule contact or a meeting with your mentor. Offer to share your academic timetable or schedule with your mentor.

Some Useful Conversation Topics

Here are some discussion points you could share to help your mentor learn about you:

Academic

- Which modules have you taken so far? Any elective modules you are interested in?
- What modules you liked best or least and for what reasons?
- What sort of research are you involved with?

Activities

- What activities are you involved in, including recreation, community service, clubs, societies, and jobs?

Career ambitions

- Have you thought about life after graduating from law school?
- Do you want to work for a big or small firm/company, government, or academia?
- Any particular practice areas you are interested in? If not, are there any information you would like to know?

Some discussion topics you might ask your mentor about:

- What do you find most exciting or rewarding about your area of specialisation?
- How did you settle on your area of specialisation?

- Please share what you do now. How did you know what area of law you wanted to practice and where you wanted to work?
- What courses did you take in law school that are very useful in the practice of law?
- What is legal practice/being an in-house lawyer like – what do you enjoy most and what are the pitfalls?
- What should I do, to get internships / practice training contracts? How many internships should I do during the holidays? Do they make a difference?
- What are your hours like and how to achieve some semblance of work-life balance after graduation?
- Besides the practice of law, what other professions were available to you after graduation?
- What do you wish you knew back when you were a law student? What advice would you give to your younger self? If you could do it all again, what would you do differently?
- What is the most important lesson you've learned as a working lawyer and how is it valuable?
- What skills or characteristics have been most important to you in your career, and how did you develop them?
- What is the one mistake you find that young lawyers make more often than others?
- What trends do you see developing in the legal profession over the next few years and how can a young lawyer get out in front of them? What skills do I need to do well in legal practice?
- What does a day in your life look like?
- What goals have you set for this year and how are you working to achieve them?
- What are you best at and how did you become competent in this area?
- What were some of your former weaknesses? How did you overcome them?
- What are some lessons you've learnt the hard way?
- Was there ever a job position you were given or task you received that you felt you weren't 100% qualified for?
- How did you land your current role?
- How did you learn to embrace failure?

Resources for Help

For tips to help you approach networking, you are encouraged to read these articles:

- <https://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/law-solicitors/advice/440179-top-networking-tips-for-aspiring-lawyers>
- <https://lawgazette.com.sg/feature/mentoring/>

If you are facing difficulties in contacting your mentor, please do contact the LAMP Programme Administrators at lawcareers@nus.edu.sg.