

# University Mentorship Program Toolkit and Resources (2021)

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## Introduction

The Canadian Institute of Actuaries developed this mentorship toolkit in response to a survey of new members in 2016. The results indicated a need for increased connection with university groups, and opportunities to find roles for new members to volunteer. After surveying representatives of actuarial departments and student clubs at universities across Canada about the presence of mentorship programs, the CIA's New Members Advisory Group collaborated with student actuarial clubs to provide content, mentors from our pool of new members, and help to establish or improve such a program.

## Administration content

### Welcome memo for prospective administrators (clubs, faculty, etc.)

Hello (prospective mentoring program administrator),

On behalf of the Canadian Institute of Actuaries (CIA), the broader actuarial profession, actuaries who may support your students as mentors, and, most importantly, your actuarial students, thank you for your time and consideration regarding potentially administering an actuarial mentoring program for your students.

#### Background

The CIA's New Members Advisory Group (NMAG) has the mandate to identify, create, and facilitate volunteer opportunities for new Associates (ACIAs) and Fellows (FCIAs) interested in supporting the actuarial profession. The NMAG identified new CIA members mentoring university actuarial students as a fantastic volunteer opportunity.

Mentoring provides benefits to the mentee, mentor, organization running the program, and the overall profession. Appendix A describes the value of mentoring to each of these groups. This mentorship program package can help university actuarial clubs, university administrators or faculty, or anyone else interested in actuarial students, implement and administer a mentoring program.

#### The ask

We are providing you with an opportunity to support your students through a mentoring program. Our vision for this program is that actuarial professionals (e.g., ACIAs, FCIAs) would mentor your actuarial students by sharing their experiences and knowledge. We envision this program would last a semester or two providing multiple opportunities for the mentee and mentor to meet to discuss topics of interest to the mentee.

#### Support from the CIA

The NMAG created this package to help you facilitate and administer a mentoring program. The CIA Head Office through its various departments will offer the following support:

- The CIA Education Department will:
  - Promote the Mentorship program and toolkit to the various universities and
  - Respond to any questions related to the mentorship program and toolkit.
- The CIA Volunteer Services Department will:
  - Provide assistance in finding mentors through communications to new members on our distribution list and through our network of actuarial professionals.

The CIA is unable to act as the administrator for your program, but we can support you in your role as the mentoring program administrator.

#### Getting started

Review the materials in this package and feel free to use whatever material you want, replace/edit where appropriate, and disregard any material you do not need.

The CIA would appreciate hearing from you, especially if you are interested in creating a mentoring program. To reach the Education Department, please contact [education@cia-ica.ca](mailto:education@cia-ica.ca). If you need mentors for your program, please contact the Volunteer Services Department at [volunteer@cia-ica.ca](mailto:volunteer@cia-ica.ca).

## Supporting Document A: The Value of Mentoring

***“One of the greatest values of mentors is the ability to see ahead what others cannot see and to help them navigate a course to their destination.” – John C. Maxwell***

***“Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.” — John C. Crosby***

1. Value to the mentee:
  - a. Educated on the different avenues open for them to explore, help with determining the best fit given their interests, strengths, and skills, including educating on different actuarial organizations/paths to Fellowship.
  - b. Support for emotional, professional, and attitudinal development.
  - c. One-on-one guidance on how they can use resources and skills they have to find *their* path (as opposed to generic advice towards the most trod path that may have worked for others, and noting that some students are more comfortable meeting one-on-one than through speaking up in a collective setting).
  - d. Opportunity to start building a network in the actuarial community.
2. Value to the mentor:
  - a. Fulfilling/sense of purpose when they provide mentees with guidance contributing to the growth and maturity of students.
  - b. Participate in shaping the next generation of actuaries.
  - c. Embark on a student’s actuarial journey with them and build new, meaningful personal relationships with the mentee.
  - d. Build or strengthen existing relationships with the group administering the program.
3. Value to the group administering the program:
  - a. Connect actuaries and actuarial students in a meaningful way.
  - b. Add to group's resources for actuarial student support and receive feedback from actuaries in the profession on how to improve group’s services to students.
  - c. Students have the option to have a more holistic educational experience beyond classroom learning.
4. Value to the profession:
  - a. Connects individuals in the actuarial profession at various levels, allowing the profession to achieve more as connected/pooled resources are used more efficiently and effectively.
  - b. Students entering the workforce have greater ability to add value to the profession immediately, as they have been nurtured and developed through mentorship and guidance during their time in university.

- c. Introducing/retaining top talents in the profession, as mentoring helps pass on hard-to-teach skills such as leadership, ethics, and people skills, which are significant in the growing actuarial profession.

## Supporting Document B: Potential checklist/timeline for administering a mentoring program

The following is a suggested list of steps (and optional examples) and timeline for the mentoring program administrator.

1. Create mentor and mentee applications (use or customize the forms included in this package), matching criteria, and communication strategy **(1 week)**.
2. Advertise the program, solicit applications from mentors and mentees, and review prior to matching **(approximately 2–3 weeks)**.
  - a. Could involve discussions with the NMAG to identify potential mentors.
3. Match mentors/mentees **(1 week)**.
4. Communicate matches to mentors and mentees **(1 week)**.
5. Mentoring sessions **(remainder of mentoring term)**.
  - a. Consider running the program for a minimum of three months; ideally five to six months.
6. Check in with mentors/mentees to request feedback halfway through term **(allow 1–2 weeks to respond)**.
7. Closing communication, soliciting feedback **(allow 2–3 weeks to respond)**.

## Matching Content

### Mentee Application Form Template

As an upcoming actuary, learning from someone who was once in your position can help as you prepare to enter the workforce.

This mentorship program can help you meet the right person to offer guidance on your actuarial journey. To ensure the best match, please answer the following questions.

Please note that if accepted, your name and contact information will be shared with your assigned mentor.

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#### 1. Contact information

Full name:

Preferred name (if applicable):

Email address:

Phone number:

#### 2. What is your level of study?

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year

#### 3. What are your industry preferences?

(You may select more than one option.)

- Life and health insurance
- Property and casualty insurance
- Reinsurance
- Pension
- Investments

- Unsure
- Other (please specify)

**4. How many CIA or SOA examinations have you successfully completed?**

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

**5. Have you worked as an intern/co-op in an actuarial role?**

- Yes
- No

**6. How would you be willing to communicate with your mentor?**

(You may select more than one option.)

- In person
- Email
- Telephone
- Other (please specify)

**7. Please list any topics/areas which you hope to develop through this mentorship program. Rank them in order of preference, where rank 1 indicates greatest interest.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**8. Have you volunteered for the actuarial profession in any capacity? If so, please describe.**

## Mentor Application Form Template

### 1. Contact information

Full name:

Preferred name (if applicable):

Email address:

Phone number:

### 2. Work location (city, province)

### 3. Current role

### 4. Current industry type

(You may select more than one option.)

- Life and health insurance
- Property and casualty insurance
- Reinsurance
- Pension
- Investments
- Other (please specify)

### 5. How many students would you like to mentor?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

**6. What academic experience would you prefer to mentor? (Check all that apply.)**

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year

**7. Are you willing to meet in person with your mentee(s)?**

- Yes
- No

**8. How would you like to stay connected with your mentee(s)?**

(You may select more than one option.)

- In person
- Phone
- Email
- Other (please specify)

## Matching Mentors and Mentees

Matching mentors and mentees will likely be one of the hardest parts of administering a mentoring program. This task will be even harder if you have more mentees than mentors, which should be expected.

We recommend that formal matching criteria be developed before reaching out to mentors and mentees. That will allow you to customize the mentor and mentee application forms to ensure you request all necessary information from both parties to properly match.

One criterion you may find helpful for matching is the industry/practice area information provided in the mentee and mentor application forms. For information about different areas of practice for actuaries, you can read more on the CIA website [here](#) in addition to its subpages.

Regarding the matching criteria, we encourage you to be as fair and impartial as possible. Furthermore, we recommend more weight be given to students with the following characteristics, since this may indicate a greater commitment to the actuarial profession:

- Further in their studies
- Have volunteered for the actuarial profession in some capacity
- Passed more exams/worked in an actuarial internship
- Previously applied to the mentoring program but were not matched

**Communication Content**

**Email to Prospective Mentors: Describing mentoring program, expectations, and timeline**

Hello,

My name is <sender’s name> from the <department/club name> at the <school name>. I hope you are well.

I am pleased to invite you to be a mentor in our mentorship program. The initiative offers you a volunteer opportunity to mentor actuarial university students and help them develop knowledge of the actuarial profession through one-on-one, in-person, or virtual interactions.

**Who are the mentees?**

The program is aimed at connecting you with an aspiring actuarial student.

**What’s in it for you?**

During the time with your mentee, you will have the opportunity to:

- Develop mentoring and coaching skills that you can use during future leadership roles as you progress in your career.
- Help build the actuarial community by sharing your professional experiences, personal insights, and employment advice with a future actuary interested in your field of expertise.
- Gain a new perspective on numerous topics during the discussions with your mentee, such as the challenges they face as new actuaries.

To help you decide if you are ready to be a mentor:

- Think about how your own mentors have motivated and supported you during your career – what lessons can you impart to future actuaries?
- Seek the advice of other actuaries who are already mentoring.

**Timeline**

Mentoring partnerships will officially run for about X weeks from <month> <day>, <year>, to <month> <day>, <year>, as below:

| <b>DATES</b>  | <b>ACTIVITIES</b>  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>DATE 1</b> | Mentor registration deadline   |
| <b>DATE 2</b> | Mentors receive an email with their assigned mentee                        |
| <b>DATE 3</b> | Mentoring program begins*  |
| <b>DATE 4</b> | <i>Suggested midterm review of progress between mentor and mentee</i>      |
| <b>DATE 5</b> | Mentors and mentees requested to provide progress feedback                 |
| <b>DATE 6</b> | Program wrap-up; mentors and mentees requested to provide overall feedback |

\* Mentor and mentee can arrange convenient meeting times.

### **Matching you with a mentee**

Our matching criteria considers the field you wish to mentor in, the mentee's motivations and goals, and both of your overall expectations.

### **How to register**

If you are interested in volunteering, fill out the attached **mentor application form** to register in this term's mentoring program. Please note that your name and contact information will be shared with your assigned mentee.

We look forward to having you on board to help us show our aspiring actuaries what the industry is *actuarially* about.

Should you have any questions about the registration or other concerns, please do let me know.

Cheers!

<sender's name>

## Email to Prospective Mentee: Describing mentoring program, expectations, and timelines

Hello <name if available>,

Starting out in any field can be daunting, and actuarial science is no exception. It's common to be concerned about how to find internships, when to start writing actuarial exams, or what work in the industry is like and whether it's for you. The mentorship program is a chance for you to connect with an experienced actuary who can share advice and answer your questions.

You will have a chance to indicate which practice area you are interested in, such as life, property and casualty, reinsurance, etc., so that we can pair you with someone whose expertise matches your interests. If you are still unsure, that's perfectly fine as well! Your mentor will be able to tell you about the differences between each practice area.

Over the course of the term, you will meet with your mentor to discuss your goals and expectations. You'll have a chance to learn from their experiences – they were once in the same position you are now! Your mentor will be able to talk to you about the challenges they've faced in the past, what a typical day at work looks like for them, and which key skills employers look for from actuarial interns. As well, they'll be able to give you tips on studying for actuarial exams and looking for internships.

We're excited to help you start on this journey. If you need support, resources, or recommendations along the way, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thanks,  
<sender's name>

## Email to Matched Mentors and Mentees: Program outline, expectations, sample topics, and timelines

Hello <mentor's name> and <mentee's name>,

Welcome to the <fall/winter/spring> <year> mentorship program!

The mentorship program is an intentional and continual journey established to help mentors and mentees share experiences and advice. The program gives actuarial professionals a chance to give back to the actuarial community by serving as mentors as well as giving students interested in becoming actuaries a platform to ask questions and learn more about the profession.

As a pair, you have indicated that you are interested in exploring and discussing the <practice area selected> practice area. You are more than welcome to talk about other practice areas as well, and the skills relevant to each.

Please take some time during your first meeting to define the following:

- **Times suitable for meetings during this term:** (X January – X April) OR (X May – X August) OR (X September – X December).
- **Topics/questions to discuss during your time together (suggestions below):**
  - What does a typical week look like for the mentor?
  - What are the key skills and experiences that employers in the <practice area selected> practice area look for in their ideal candidates?
  - In terms of technical skills, what software or programs are typically used in this industry?
  - What are some of the challenges faced by the mentor in their work? How do they overcome these?
  - What has been the best advice you have each received so far? Who was the advice from, and how has it impacted your life?
  - What are some tips for passing actuarial exams?
  - How do you stay focused and motivated? *This can apply to both the workplace and actuarial exams.*
  - How do you overcome failure?
  - Tips for getting internships and/or full-time jobs after graduation.
- **How will you know that your pairing has been beneficial?** Discuss what this looks like to you, what you hope to accomplish, and other expectations.

Feel free to use our suggested questions above and/or add others where you see fit. We encourage mentors to suggest tips on how to secure co-op or internship placements; however, please be advised that this is not a program to help students get such placements directly from their mentors.

Finally, let me introduce you to your mentorship partner (you have both been copied on this email). Go ahead and introduce yourselves and work out a time to meet.

**Mentor:** <FirstName Surname>

**Mentee:** <FirstName Surname>

We're excited to help you start on this journey. If you need support, resources, or recommendations along the way, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thanks,

<sender's name>

## Check-in Email for Mentors and Mentees: Request feedback mid-program timeline

Hello <mentor or mentee's name>,

You have now been an active participant in the mentorship program over the past two months. We hope that you are enjoying the experience and are benefiting from it.

Based on your experience thus far, do you have any questions or concerns that you would like to share to help in your current role as well as for future participants?

Please submit your feedback by <1–2 weeks from send date> to ensure it is included in our half-time review of this season's program. Though not ideal, we still appreciate late feedback.

If you need support, resources, or recommendations along the way, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thanks,  
<sender's name>

## Post Program Wrap-up Email to Mentors and Mentees: Requesting feedback

Hello <mentor or mentee's name>,

Thank you for participating in the mentorship program! It has been a great pleasure working with you during this period of learning and exchanging knowledge. As we wrap things up for this term, we hope that this journey has been both meaningful and impactful in your actuarial career.

At this point in time, we ask for your feedback, which will help us improve the mentor-mentee experience moving forward.

If you were pleased with your experience and would like to leave a testimonial for use in future emails to mentors and mentees, we would greatly appreciate it.

Please submit your feedback by <2-3 weeks from send date> to ensure it is included in our final review of this season's program. Though not ideal, we still appreciate late feedback.

Thank you for your active participation, and we hope you will join us again next term.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please do let us know.

Regards,

<sender's name>

### Useful Links for Mentees

- [CIA website](#) (and [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#))
- [Career Information](#)
- [Canadian Enrolment Information](#)
- [CIA Network \(CIAnet\)](#)
  - CIAnet is open to students to gain access to the members section of the CIA website, research studies, archived meeting presentations, guidance materials, and much more. You will also receive CIA News, and other communications.
- [Actuarial Jobs Portal](#)
  - Our CIA job portal where you can upload a resume, receive job alerts, search employers, and find your next actuarial job.