MENTEE EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

As a Merge Mentee, you have the opportunity to connect with an industry professional and receive guidance, support, and feedback on your personal and professional development. You are encouraged to approach this opportunity with initiative, enthusiasm, and appreciation. A mentorship relationship must be built upon mutual trust and respect, so we recommend taking some time at the start of the program to get to know your mentor so both parties can get the most out of the meetings.

To effectively maintain the mentoring relationship, you are required to meet with your mentor at least once per month for at least one hour. It is important to work with your mentor at the start of the program to establish a communication plan (meet in person vs. Zoom, meet more than once per month, etc.). You will be required to take notes during and/or after the meetings to recall topics of discussion later. Your mentor is aware of the meeting length requirements, but it is your responsibility to actively engage in each meeting and come prepared with questions, topics of discussion, and personal experiences to ensure each interaction is intentional and impactful. You might find that meeting more than once per month is beneficial and feasible for both parties which is optional, yet encouraged! Additionally, both parties might decide to continue the mentoring relationship after the program has ended. There is absolutely no pressure to commit to this, and it is up to both individuals whether or not it continues.

In an effort to provide helpful discussion prompts and topics of conversation, each month will be assigned one of eight NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) career readiness competencies. Career Readiness, as defined by NACE, is the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace. Through the mentoring relationship, you can learn the importance of the competencies while gaining insight into how they can be developed and applied within your desired career industry.
Before your first meeting, we ask that you familiarize yourself with the competencies and identify questions, stories, and situations you have encountered relating to the competencies. This will reduce potential stress prior to the monthly meetings to come up with questions. With that being said, allow conversations to develop organically and take full advantage of the time you have with your mentor through questions, reflections, and sharing your own experiences. Below you will find the competency, a brief definition, and examples of discussion topics assigned to each month:

September | Communication
Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. Demonstrate public speaking skills, express ideas to others, and write/edit memos, emails, letters, and reports clearly and effectively.
- Presentations; resumes & cover letters; communications styles; email and phone

October | Teamwork
Build collaborative relationships to work effectively with others in a team setting through shared responsibility, empathy, and respect. Work within a team structure, and effectively negotiate and manage conflict.
- Conflict management; dealing with difficult people; typical projects requiring teamwork; collaboration inside and outside an organization; navigating personality types

November | Career Ownership
Identify and articulate one’s skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth. Navigate and explore job options, understand and take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understand how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace.
- Networking (at conferences, dining events, online, in the community, etc.); salary negotiation; identifying strengths and weaknesses; job search process; communicating value to an employer; personal branding
December | Technology
Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals. Demonstrate effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

- Social media; LinkedIn; online job search; common types of technology used in industry; staying updated on technology

January | Professionalism
Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image. Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior, act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and learn from their mistakes.

- Etiquette (email, dining, in-person, etc.), first impressions; appropriate work attire; ethics in the workplace; workplace boundaries; “adulting”

February | Cross-Cultural Fluency
Respect the viewpoints of those from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, and lifestyles to build collaborative relationships and communicate effectively. Appreciate, value, and learn from other cultures and perspectives to move beyond tolerance.

- Identity awareness and personal biases in the workplace; avoiding assumptions of others’ identities and experiences; effective and respectful communication in a global workforce; illegal questions in the job search; discrimination
March | Critical Thinking
Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and solve problems. Obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process and demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

- Problem-solving skills; when to ask questions vs. when to find the answer yourself; expanding job search/career options; strategic decision-making, connecting past experiences to a new position in application and interview, taking initiative

April | Leadership
Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others. Assess and manage your emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

- Supervision styles; finding your leadership style; what makes a good leader; management of others; when to lead vs. when to follow; remaining professional in tough situations

APPROVED MERGE MEETING TYPES

1. In-person – appropriate public meeting spots (e.g. coffee shop, on campus, mentor’s business location, etc.)
2. Video conferencing – Zoom (official Auburn University platform)
3. Phone call

We strongly encourage you to set up Zoom (free of cost) or in-person meetings for at least the first few months to establish a stronger relationship with your mentor. Please note that emailing your mentor is approved throughout the program, but it does not count towards the required monthly meetings.

Feel free to contact Anna Claire Stinson with any questions or concerns throughout the program.
AGREEMENT

Please read the following requirements for participation in the Merge Mentorship Program. If you agree to the terms, please complete and electronically sign the survey.

- The Merge Mentorship Program is intended to create positive and constructive dialogue between industry professionals and students for the purpose of mutual personal and professional development. Mentee agrees not to ask Mentor for a job, but rather engage in intentional conversations to cultivate awareness and demonstration of competencies.

- The mentorship will begin on the Merge start date and finish on the Merge closing date. There is no requirement or pressure to continue the mentorship, but the Mentor and Mentee can mutually agree to continue the mentorship beyond the closing date.

- The Mentor and Mentee will meet via one of the approved meeting types at least once per month for at least one hour, and the Mentee will take notes during and/or after each meeting to recall and reflect on previous discussion topics and complete surveys.

- The Mentee and Mentor will take initiative in creating a communication plan and professional development plan at the start of the program and commit to honoring that plan throughout the course of the program. The Mentee will accept all assistance, guidance, and support provided by the Mentor with respect and appreciation.

- FERPA regulations apply to all discussions between the Mentee and Mentor; therefore, all discussions will be kept confidential unless both parties agree otherwise.

- All meetings will be professional and appropriate in nature at only approved locations, and discussions will be centered around the NACE competencies.

- The Mentor and Mentee will complete any and all surveys distributed to them.

- If either party chooses to end participation in the program, the program coordinator must be notified immediately.