

Innis Alumni Mentorship Program

Fall/Winter 2025-26 Mentee Handbook



Innis College

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About the program

The Innis Alumni Mentorship Program matches upper-year student mentees with mentors from the Innis alumni and friends community in one-to-one pairings.

Each pair is carefully brought together through a collaborative matching process between staff in Innis's Student Life and Alumni Offices. This process focuses on compatibility between mentees' career interests and mentors' career experiences but includes additional factors, including graduate school aspirations and university involvement.

Once participants are suitably matched and connected, the mentors and mentees set their agenda and expectations moving forward. The Mentorship Committee remains available, in a supporting role, as the mentorship relationship progresses.

Our hope is that, by the end of the program, mentees have explored career and/or graduate school paths, set goals, and learned tips to better network, promote, and advance themselves upon graduating. Who better to support this important transition than those who've worn the same shoes? This program is also a community building opportunity for Innis College. Mentoring can be a new and meaningful way for our alumni to engage with their alma mater.



Timeline

- **Mentee orientation on September 24, 2025**
- **Mentorship program launch event on November 4, 2025**
- **Monthly mentee-mentor meetings from October 2025 to April 2026**
- **Mentor-mentee agreement, due after your first meeting with your mentor**
- **Monthly mentee logs, due at the end of each month from November to April**
- **Mentorship wrap-up event on April 1, 2026**

All mentees and mentors will be notified via email as these events approach.

Note that mentees in the micro-mentorship program only need to be aware of the program launch event and wrap-up event. Micro-mentees will be required to complete a separate Micro-Mentorship Orientation module.

Goals and learning outcomes

Goal 1: Help Innis students prepare for life after graduation

Learning Outcomes:

- Gain a clearer understanding of career options that align with their skills, interests, and values.
- Learn strategies for connecting with professionals and grow their network.
- Develop a plan for their career pathway with the support of their mentor to help achieve their career goals.

Goal 2: Build leadership capacity within our students

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate a developing ability to self-reflect, seek feedback, and assess experiences in order to set goals and manage change.
- Identify transferable skills in order to inform personal and career goals.

Goal 3: Develop and nurture an engaged alumni base at Innis

Learning Outcomes:

- Feel prepared to engage in conversation with Innis and University of Toronto community members about their academic and co-curricular experiences at Innis College and beyond.
- Articulate the connection between studies at the University of Toronto and career/academic goals and achievements.

Goal 4: Promote community engagement and civic responsibility

Learning Outcomes:

- Think critically about their role (consider own values and motivations) within the University of Toronto community and beyond.
- Feel mutually empowered to get involved in community roles and initiatives.

What does it mean to be a mentee?

A mentee is someone interested in learning from the experience of others, proactive in the mentorship relationship, and dedicated to the process. Our mentors are alumni and friends of the College, who are just as enthusiastic and interested in the experience as you. This means that you should feel comfortable being your inquisitive, attentive, and respectful self. With that said, there are nuances to being mentored that can generate a more meaningful relationship. We've included a list of strategies, tips, and explanations of etiquette to help start you off.

What can we talk about?

- Get to know each other
 - What do you like most about your work?
 - What do you do in your free time?
 - Do you have a mentor?
 - What's your favourite book/film etc.
 - How do you define success?
 - How did you choose your career?
- Create an agenda, communicate goals
- Career paths
- Academic paths
- Post-secondary experiences in and out of the classroom
- Studying abroad
- How to network
- Co-curricular/extra-curricular involvement
- Experience with internships
- Industry/professional standards
- How to promote yourself
- How to manage work-life balance
- Professional development and associations

What are qualities of good mentees and mentors?

- Genuine enthusiasm and commitment to the program
- Good communication skills

- Ability to reflect on experiences
- Reliability and responsiveness
- Ethical behaviour
- Patience and positivity
- Discretion
- Willing to invest in time and the mentorship experience
- Good telephone/in-person/email etiquette

What are the responsibilities of a mentee?

- Initiate conversation and the arrangement of meeting(s) with your mentor.
- If you are a mentee of the eight-month mentorship, meet regularly with your mentor (at least once a month).
- Be positive, open, and honest about your background, experiences, and goals.
- Listen actively with intent to engage in the conversation and follow through on any work/activities encouraged by the mentor. Check out this fun resource, [a TED Talk by Celeste Headlee](#) about ten ways to have a better conversation.
- Engage in the program (social opportunities, evaluations/reflections, active communication with your mentor and the mentorship coordinators).
- Respect confidentiality.
- Respect the time of your mentor.

Maintaining a positive relationship

We ask that mentors and mentees respect the following guidelines:

Follow up and follow through

- Be on time and keep commitments.
- Be present and consistent.
- Set boundaries.
- Accommodate each other while also being respectful of time and roles.
- Reply to opportunities and communications in a timely manner.
- Ask for feedback and show growth.
- Demonstrate that you actively reflect between interactions.

Maintain confidentiality and discretion

- Mentors and mentees will share stories about their own academic and career paths. Mentors may also share more personal anecdotes. These are to be honored as advice and their own experiences and are not to be shared unless advised that it is ok to do so.
- *Please note: Should there be a safety concern, or concern for well-being, it is expected that participants contact the Office of the Dean of Students at Innis College for advice and, therefore, confidentiality may not always be promised. (See contact info for more information.)*

Be engaged

- Be willing to step out of your comfort zone.
- Demonstrate interest through active listening.
- Take initiative—whether that be finding a new coffee shop for a meeting, setting the date/agenda, etc.
- Be honest about your goals and aspirations.
- Speak up if you need clarification.
- Show gratitude and stay positive!

Setting goals and feeling prepared

At the beginning of the program, participants of the eight-month mentorship will be directed to complete an online Mentor-Mentee Agreement. The intention of this exercise is to allow you to establish a set of expectations together to align and guide your partnership through the program.

To prepare for this, think ahead about your goals, which could include:

- Discovering your strengths and areas for development
- Exploring careers or graduate school programs
- Identifying your personal brand and online presence
- Cleaning up your CV/résumé and interview skills
- Discussing the transition between university of career life
- Working on interpersonal and communication
- Developing leadership skills

- Developing critical thinking skills
- Engaging in the U of T or Toronto community together

You may also decide to prepare a list of questions that you'd like to ask your mentor. Here are some examples to get you started:

Career-focused questions:

- What part-time jobs or co-curricular or extra-curricular experiences would you suggest to help me prepare for a job in this field?
- What are the most important skills to develop to access an entry-level position in this field?
- What academic courses do you still find most helpful to your career today?
- Who helped you get into this field? Do you have a mentor?
- What professional associations can I be involved with?

Academic-focused questions:

- What part-time jobs or co-curricular or extra-curricular experiences would you suggest to help me prepare for graduate work in this field?
- How did you transition from undergraduate study to graduate level study? What skills do you suggest I work on?
- What tips do you have to connect with your faculty/choose an advisor?
- How did you prepare for graduate school applications?

It is recommended that mentees of the micro-mentorship program also prepare for their one-time mentorship by considering their expectations, goals, and questions prior to meeting their mentor.

Email etiquette

Graduated Student Union, University of Calgary, 2009

Be brief and to the point.	Do not write a long, detailed email when a few lines can make your point.
Pay attention to your spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Errors in writing can give a poor impression and raise questions about your performance as a businessperson. It is also not appropriate to use short-form or emoticons in professional emails.
Answer emails quickly.	Responding quickly lets people know you are responsible. Procrastinating indicates a lack of professionalism.
Take care with attachments.	If it is very large, break it into several parts or compress it.
Take care with capital letters.	No one likes to be shouted at.
Always proofread every message before you send it.	You will catch any typos, errors in grammar and make certain your ideas come across in the way you intended. One tip is to only fill in the recipients email after you proofread the document, that way you avoid accidentally sending a half-finished or unchecked note.
Watch your use of “reply to all”.	Only use the “reply to all” when every person on the list needs to see your response.
Make the subject line meaningful.	The right words will prompt the reader to open your message quickly; however, do not abuse the use of “Important”, “Urgent”, or flagging emails as high priority.

Do not forward joke emails.	Do not forward any email that contains offensive or derogatory remarks of any kind, even if they are jokes in a professional environment.
Do not send angry emails.	Do not respond to or send an email message when you are angry or upset, it is best to wait until you have had a chance to cool down before responding.
Be careful what you write.	Email is not private, and it is permanent. Be responsible with what you write. Never write anything that you would not want printed and shared among co-workers and friends.

Email template

Hi [Mentor’s First Name],

My name is [Your First Name], and I am participating in the Innis Alumni Mentorship Program. I was recently informed that you will be my mentor. I am excited to learn from you over the coming months, and I am especially interested in finding out more about your career path in [Mentor’s Career Field/Position]. Please let me know when you might be free to connect, and if you have a preference in terms of meeting in person or online. If in person, what location would work best for you? If online, I am familiar with MS Teams and Zoom. I am free on Mondays from 10am–2pm and after 6pm, and after 3pm the rest of the week.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

Video/phone etiquette

Graduated Student Union, University of Calgary, 2009

Have the right tools ready.	Have your agenda, a pen, pencil, and notepaper or electronic device ready to write down any pertinent information about the conversation.
Focus your attention on the caller.	Once you pick up the phone, the individual on the other end is your primary concern. Do NOT get distracted by other conversations in your office or incoming email messages. Never try to multi-task and do other work while on the phone.
Speak slowly, clearly, and distinctly.	Make it easy for the caller to hear you and understand what it is you are saying.
Be an active listener.	Do NOT assume you know what the caller is going to ask. Wait until they have finished speaking before replying. Ask questions or reiterate your understanding to clarify the caller's request.
Eliminate silence.	If you need to take some time to look up information, retrieve a file, or write something down, inform the caller of what is taking place. Do NOT just stop talking.
No food or drink allowed!	Do NOT eat, drink, or chew gum while you are on the phone.
Would you hold please?	If you must put the caller on hold, ask their permission before doing so.
Close the conversation.	Make sure you know what follow up is necessary before ending the call and always follow through on your commitments.
Thank you for your time.	Always end the call on a positive note and call the caller by name.

Contact us

Please know that we are here to support you throughout your mentorship experience. We have done our best to match mentees and mentors through a rigorous registration and orientation process, focusing on the students' academic and career aspirations and the mentors' life experience. That said, an unanticipated issue between a mentor and mentee could arise. If you find yourself in such a position, we encourage you to contact one of the coordinators without delay. We would much rather circumvent an issue from happening in the first place, than for your mentorship relationship to be compromised altogether.

Thank you again for your commitment to this program.

Innis mentorship coordinators

Kelly Curran, student life coordinator, Office of the Dean of Students

Shayla Anderson, alumni relations officer, Innis Alumni Office

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