CUNY School of Professional Studies

Faculty Peer Mentoring Program Guide

For Mentors and Mentees

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Introduction and Overview

Welcome to the CUNY SPS Faculty Peer Mentoring Program. This program pairs experienced SPS faculty with an instructor in their first semester of teaching at SPS. The mentor provides collegial peer support and does not serve in any supervisory or evaluative role in relation to his or her mentee.

The objectives of the program are to:

- provide new faculty with the appropriate learning models and skills to teach online effectively,
- offer social and informational support for new faculty,
- strengthen new faculty members' connections to the SPS online faculty community, and
- help bridge the gap between the new faculty's initial training in Blackboard and online teaching and actual management of the online course.

Mentors and mentees will meet four times to discuss topics relevant to different parts of the semester. Apart from the four scheduled meetings, mentees can ask mentors for information or support throughout the semester. Mentors are enrolled in mentees' courses, and vice versa.

Meetings can take place via email, telephone, zoom, other electronic means, or in-person.

At the end of the semester, a short report is exchanged and submitted by both mentors and mentees. Mentors are compensated for their service at the rate of 10 hours NTA *after submission of the mentor's final report. Please note that because this is processed at the end of the semester, **payment will not be made until the beginning of the next semester.***

Schedule

Meeting	Objectives	Tasks
1: Pre-Term Setup (1-2 weeks before semester begins)	• Meet your mentor/mentee • Review needs and expectations • Establish means and schedule for communication during the program • Discuss Semester Start Checklist	1. Mentor should contact mentee. 2. Mentee should review Semester Start Checklist prior to the meeting. 3. Mentor can check in on the setup of the course if asked by mentee. 4. Mentor and mentee should discuss questions/notes in the Semester Start Checklist. 5. Both should sign the [mentoring commitment form](#) and return.
OFDIT check-in (week 2)	• Resolve issues or questions around course design or teaching with Blackboard	• OFDIT will contact mentee and mentor regarding any issues or questions arising in the first 1-2 weeks of the course.
2: Instructor Presence (week 3)	• Discuss instructor presence and course interactivity with peers • Consider student feedback options • Understand online attendance reporting	1. Mentee should reflect on and answer the Instructor presence and Interaction questions. 2. Mentee and mentor should discuss, either with peers in the live meeting (optional) or in a separate meeting.
3: Feedback (between weeks 6 and 8)	• Review processes for giving feedback to students • Review feedback from students • Discuss suggestions for changes (this semester or future semesters) • Optional: Help mentee prepare for observation if such is scheduled for mentee.	1. Mentee should complete the checklist and questions regarding feedback to and from students. 2. Mentee and mentor should discuss feedback to and from students. • Mentor should answer any questions regarding the peer teaching observation if one is scheduled.
Post-Peer Observation Discussion (Optional, weeks 11 to 12)	• Mentee and mentor can discuss the mentee's Observation	1. Mentee should contact mentor if he or she wants to discuss the Observation process. 2. Mentor and mentee can discuss ways to improve and move forward from the Observation.
4: Final Review (end of the Semester)	• Review overall course organization, activities and assessments • Review online teaching • Review mentoring program • Consider next semester steps	1. Mentor and mentee should fill out their respective Final Review forms. 2. Mentor and mentee should review each other's completed forms. 3. Mentor and mentee should submit final forms to OFDIT.

Participants and Getting Started

Mentor:

- Please review this guide as the program has been updated.
- Please reach out and contact your mentee to arrange for the first meeting, which should be scheduled 1-2 weeks before the semester begins.
- You will be enrolled in your mentee's course as a Facilitator (access to content but limited ability to make changes). Your mentee will likewise be enrolled in your course as a Facilitator unless you have objections. If you have any enrollment questions, please contact Sarah Kresh (sarah.kresh@cuny.edu).
- For more on how to be part of a successful mentoring relationship, please visit the section of the guide: Being a Mentor at SPS.

Mentee:

- Please review this guide and consider your expectations for the mentoring relationship.
- After you and your mentor have scheduled your first meeting, prepare for your first interaction by going over the Semester Start Checklist.
- Your mentor will be enrolled in your course as a Facilitator (access to content but limited ability to make changes). Your mentor may also want you to see how his or her own course works and you will likely be enrolled in your mentor's course as a "Facilitator." **Important: Do not take any actions in your mentor's course—you are there only as an observer.** Please note: Your mentor may have reasons not to have you enrolled or may want to delay your enrollment to a point later in the semester.
- For more on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship, please visit the section of the guide: Being a Mentee at SPS.

Academic Director:

- Academic Directors will introduce mentors to mentees, generally over email.
- Academic Directors will be available throughout the semester to send reminders and updates, answer questions, and provide other types of support.

OFDIT (Office of Faculty Development and Instructional Technology):

- The peer mentoring program is facilitated by OFDIT.
- Faculty Development and Instructional Design Manager Sarah Kresh will send out information, forms, reminders and updates.
- Sarah will be available throughout the semester to answer questions and provide other types of support, and can be contacted at sarah.kresh@cuny.edu.

Meetings

1: Pre-Term Setup (1-2 weeks before the semester begins)

Meeting	Objectives	Tasks
1: Pre-Term Setup (1-2 weeks before semester begins)	• Meet your mentor/mentee • Review needs and expectations • Establish means and schedule for communication during the program • Discuss Semester Start Checklist	1. Mentor should contact mentee. 2. Mentee should review Semester Start Checklist prior to the meeting. 3. Mentor can check in on the setup of the course if asked by mentee. 4. Mentor and mentee should discuss questions/notes in the Semester Start Checklist. 5. Mentor and mentee should discuss schedule/expectations for communication. 6. Both should sign the mentoring commitment form and return.

Semester Start Checklist

I feel prepared to:	Questions/notes I have
Set expectations for communication and interaction	
Add my instructor contact information, ideally through multiple modes like CUNY email, phone, zoom, google voice account, etc. in the Blackboard site.	
Personalize the course welcome announcement.	
Establish protocols for communication, such as how to post questions about the course versus those of a personal nature, use of the Announcements space, and office hours or other arrangements for being available.	
Use a Discussion forum for general questions and subscribe to this forum.	
Remind students to check their SPS email regularly.	
Respond to student messages - SPS has assured students that they can count on a 24-hour turnaround time in response to messages sent directly to the instructor.	
Access the course site 4-5 days a week (6-7 days per week during the summer) throughout the semester, and alert students and the Academic Director if I need to be away for a slightly longer period on a one-time basis.	
Establish contact	
Participate in opportunities for my students and me to get to know one another through introductions and ice-breaking activities.	
Be regularly, visibly present in the course by responding promptly to student questions and comments and frequently adding elements to the course site that enrich and enliven the content (adding announcements, posting articles or other items of interest).	
Set expectations for, and help students manage, the course work	
Provide students a copy of the course syllabus that is printable (a Word, .pdf or HTML file) and remind students to review the syllabus regularly and to ask questions whenever an item isn't clear.	
Follow the course schedule from the beginning of the course with any changes communicated in advance to students via announcements and email.	
Ensure that students know on a daily/weekly basis what is expected of them.	
Explain activities and assessments clearly.	

OFDIT Check-in (week 2)

Meeting	Objectives	Tasks
OFDIT check-in (week 2)	• Resolve issues or questions around course design or teaching with Blackboard	• OFDIT will contact mentee and mentor regarding any issues or questions arising in the first 1-2 weeks of the course.

OFDIT will email mentee and mentor to see if there are any questions about the design of the course and how to use Blackboard, especially the Grade Center.

For reference, mentees may want to view the standards that every course must meet in the section of the guide: Course Design and Interaction Guidelines.

2: Instructor Presence and Mentoring Group Meeting (week 3)

All mentors and mentees are invited to a live session (remote, date TBA). If you are unable to attend, please meet in your mentoring pair.

Meeting	Objectives	Tasks
2: Instructor Presence (week 3)	- Discuss instructor presence and course interactivity with peers - Consider student feedback options - Understand online attendance reporting	1. Mentee should reflect on and answer the Instructor presence and Interaction questions. 2. Mentee and mentor should discuss, either with peers in the live meeting (optional) or in a separate meeting.

Instructor presence and interaction

Please take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions and write some notes in the space provided.

Do you use the Announcements area – how often and for what purposes (encourage, remind, update)?

Do you participate in the discussion forums – when and for what purposes (encourage, stimulate, answer, follow up, extend, summarize)?

What tone and what role do you aim for (for yourself) in the discussion forums?

What tone and what role do you aim for (for yourself) in the course as a whole?

Do you use communication tools like email, Collaborate, or others, and for what purposes?

How do you provide individual attention to your students?

How do you get feedback about the course from your students (mid-semester survey, forum, emails)?

3: Feedback to and from students (weeks 6-8)

Meeting	Objectives	Tasks
3: Feedback (between weeks 6 and 8)	• Review processes for giving feedback to students • Review feedback from students • Discuss suggestions for changes (this semester or future semesters) • Optional: Help mentee prepare for observation if such is scheduled for mentee	1. Mentee should complete the checklist and questions regarding feedback to and from students. 2. Mentee and mentor should discuss feedback to and from students. • Mentor should answer any questions regarding the peer teaching observation if one is scheduled.

Giving Feedback to Students:

Note: Assignments should be submitted through Blackboard, ePortfolio, or through platforms such as My Math Lab or Wiley that are part of the published course requirements. Assignments should not be submitted via email.

I do the following to ensure that students receive useful and timely feedback:

☐ Keep students informed of their progress via the Grade Center, making sure that feedback on assignments is visible.

☐ Grade exams and assignments promptly and give detailed feedback before the next significant assignment is due.

☐ Submit midterm student evaluations on time so that Academic Advisement can take appropriate and timely actions where needed.

☐ Grade according to the rubric or published criteria.

☐ In discussions, differentiate between levels of participation and quality.

☐ Provide suggestions that will help the student improve as well as identify strengths in student work.

What do you find most difficult to manage or accomplish with regards to giving feedback to students?

Getting Feedback from Students:

Did you use any instruments (survey, forum, emails) to get feedback about the course from students?

What feedback have you received through these instruments or other means?

What are your thoughts about responding to that feedback?

OPTIONAL Post-Peer Observation Discussion (weeks 11-12)

Meeting	Objectives	Tasks
Post-Peer Review Observation (Optional, weeks 11 to 12)	• Mentee and mentor can discuss the mentee's Observation.	1. Mentee should contact mentor if he or she wants to discuss the Observation process. 2. Mentor and mentee can discuss ways to improve and move forward from the Observation.

4: Final Review (end of semester)

Meeting	Objectives	Tasks
4: Final Review (end of the Semester)	• Review overall course organization, activities and assessments • Review online teaching • Review mentoring program • Consider next semester steps	1. Mentor and mentee should fill out their respective Final Review forms 2. Mentor and mentee should review each other's completed forms. 3. Mentor and mentee should submit final forms to OFDIT.

All forms will be made available online but questions are listed below for reference.

A. Course feedback

Please share your feedback about the content and design of the course. Using the categories in the Course Design and Interaction Guidelines, please note areas where you felt the course excelled or where you have suggestions for change.

B. Online teaching feedback (mentee)
1. Describe one or two aspects of your online teaching that you feel have improved or changed during the semester.
2. Describe one or two areas that you would like to further develop or explore for future semesters.

B. Online teaching feedback (mentor)

1. Describe one or two aspects of your mentee's teaching that you feel are reflective of his/her strengths as an online instructor.
2. Describe one or two areas that the mentee may want to consider for development or exploration in the future.

C. Mentoring program feedback

3. How often did you communicate outside of the scheduled meetings?
4. How did you communicate (email, phone, in-person, Skype, video chat)?
5. How did your mentoring relationship support teaching and which interactions were most helpful and why?
6. Do you have any suggestions about how to improve the mentoring program?

Course Design Guidelines

1   Course Overview and Introduction

1.1   There are clear instructions for getting started and how the course will work.

 1.1.1   A welcome announcement introduces the course and directs students how to get started.

 1.1.2   A specific link or folder contains the work students must do first.

1.2   Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.

 1.2.1   A syllabus that includes items such as course name & number; prerequisites; official course description; program learning outcomes; course learning outcomes; textbook information; course schedule; grading scheme; course policies; instructor contact information.

 1.2.2   Introductory video or course tour video.

1.3   Course policies are stated.

 1.3.1   Course policies, rubrics and grading policies (including placeholder for lateness policy if applicable) are in the syllabus and may be expanded upon separately.

1.4   Institutional policies and academic and support services are stated or linked to.

 1.4.1   Either separately or in syllabus, course policy statements include: Accessibility and Accommodations, Online Etiquette and Anti-Harassment, and Academic Integrity.

1.5   Technical support and how to obtain it is described or linked to.

 1.5.1   Information for the Help Desk should be listed.

1.6   Technology and access requirements are clearly stated, and information is provided on how to obtain technology or materials needed.

 1.6.1   Access to course materials is clearly explained and links are provided.

 1.6.2   Access to technology (plug-ins, applications) is clearly explained with links provided. Tools like Digication, VoiceThread, publisher content, etc. or other resources are well integrated, their purpose is explained, and support information is provided.

 1.6.3   Course clearly indicates any prerequisite abilities required of the learner, such as computer or software skills.

1.7   Communication expectations are explained.

 1.7.1   Instructor contact card includes contact information, office hours, availability, short professional biography and photo.

 1.7.2   Email response policy is stated.

 1.7.3   A separate Q&A discussion forum (can be called, Ask Professor, Q&A, etc.) is established for questions from students. Setting is enabled to allow students to subscribe to it.

 1.7.4   All required channels of communication in which students must participate are explained.

1.8   Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.

1.8.1 A "Getting to Know You" activity is provided at the beginning of the semester in which students can introduce themselves to one another and to the instructor; instructors add their own introductions.

2   Course Design/Structure

2.1   Course navigation facilitates ease of use.

2.1.1   Menu link names conform to the program course template or standard guidelines

2.1.2   Menu links are appropriate in number and organized

2.2   Course design is consistent and facilitates student understanding.

2.2.1   All materials for each week or unit are organized within content folders or learning modules.

2.2.2   Each content folder or learning module includes title and beginning/end dates in the title.

2.2.3   Organization and content of units/modules is consistent across course and matches up with what is on syllabus and schedule.

2.2.4   Reading material and multimedia content is presented in manageable segments. (For example, best practice is short videos under 6 minutes, no excessive scrolling, etc.).

2.3   Design is readable, accessible and mobile-friendly.

2.3.1   In general, no more than two layers of folders for content.

2.3.2   Course site is free of typographical, grammatical, and other errors.

2.3.3   Consistent use of font type, font size and color. Don't use appearance of the text (highlighting, font colors, bold, italics, or underlining) as the only way to convey meaning or emphasize importance. No use of red or green text color (not distinguishable to color-blind users).

2.3.4 Important content should not be added to the following text fields (or should be repeated elsewhere) because they are not visible on the Blackboard mobile app:

- description text on folders, learning modules, and lesson plans
- text added to any tool or course link (such as to the discussion board or forum, blogs, wikis, etc.)
- description text added to assignment or exam links

3   Outcomes and Assessments

3.1   Each module/unit has learning objectives, with outcomes that are measurable and consistent with course-level objectives.

3.1.1   Each module/unit states learning outcomes (as distinct from tasks)

3.1.2   Each module/unit includes a brief introduction/overview and states important assignments.

3.1.3   Learning objectives are appropriate for the level of the course.

3.2   Assessment activities address achievement of learning outcomes.

3.2.1   Assessments measure achievement of the learning objectives.

3.2.2   Assignments emphasize development of writing, quantitative, and reasoning skills (as appropriate) in addition to content mastery.

3.2.3 Grading rubrics or clearly listed grading criteria are available to students for all major assessments; performance expectations are clearly explained and examples or relevant resources are provided when needed.

3.2.4 Assignments' contribution to the final grade is explicit. For assessments that have multiple parts, the contribution of those parts to the total assignment grade is clear.

3.2.5 All of the major graded components are set up in Grade Center and align with the course syllabus; there is a column that calculates total points or weights for final grade and it is set up correctly. My Grades provides students a view of graded assignments, due dates and rubrics.

3.3 Assessments are sequenced, varied, and suited to the level of the course.

3.3.1 Assessment activities are varied in format.

3.3.2 Assessment activities begin in the first week of the semester and include regular opportunities for "low-stakes" assessment throughout the semester (e.g., reflection exercises, self-assessment, progress reports, and questions about concepts).

3.3.3 Learning is assessed frequently throughout the course, and assignments are designed to encourage/require instructor feedback and interaction throughout the semester.

3.3.4 Both the pacing of assessments throughout the semester and the amount of time allotted for each step of an assessment are realistic and appropriate.

3.3.5 When applicable, opportunities are provided for students to provide each other feedback on their work and clear guidelines for this feedback are provided.

3.4 Assessments are secure.

3.4.1 All essay/paper submissions use of SafeAssign or Turnitin. All high-stakes Blackboard exams (any single exam worth 20+%) require a password and use, as appropriate, security measures like pools, randomization, etc.

4   Course Content

4.1   The instructional materials represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline.

4.1.1 Course content is current.

4.2   A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.

4.2.1 Content is presented using a variety of media (e.g., text, visual, audio) and supplementary resources are made available where appropriate.

4.3   Instructional material is appropriate for the level of the course.

4.3.1 Readability, degree of complexity, and amount of material per week are appropriate for the course.

4.4   The course provides accessible text and images in files, documents, LMS pages, and web pages to meet the needs of diverse learners.

4.4.1 Meaningful images include text tags (alt-text), videos include captions or transcripts, and documents are screen reader accessible. All external tools used are accessible. If something cannot be made fully accessible, an alternate and equivalent option is offered.

5   Activities

5.1   Learning activities promote the achievement of the learning objectives.

5.1.1   Activities are appropriately complex and engaging and ask students to add, integrate, and/or synthesize knowledge.

5.1.2   Activities promote learner engagement and active learning.

5.2   A variety of different activities are used.

5.2.1   Learners have the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities that draw from authentic experiences where appropriate.

5.2.2   Discussion questions and group projects are appropriately complex, may require critical thinking and problem-solving, and offer the possibility of many different answers and/or approaches.

5.2.3   If real-time activities are scheduled that were not stated at time of registration, alternatives are provided (transcripts, asynchronous discussion, etc.).

5.3   Activities include frequent opportunities/requirements for interaction (and collaboration) between students.

5.3.1   Course activities include assignments to be completed by individual students and through peer interaction and collaboration, such as through blogs, wikis, threaded discussions, group work, peer review, and other tools (Collaborate Ultra, VoiceThread).

6   Continuous Improvement

6.1   Feedback is solicited.

6.1.1   Students are given opportunities to provide feedback to the instructor about the course within the course itself (e.g., midterm evaluations, discussion board for feedback, surveys).

Interaction Guidelines

1   Interaction

1.1   Instructor Presence

1.1.1   Instructors in some way participate in discussion during the week, either directly with their own posts and/or indirectly by referencing a discussion point

1.1.2   Instructor's postings stimulate discussion and exploration and encourage different points of view, and prompt students with follow-up questions or comments

1.1.3   Instructor models the tone and quality of interactions for students

1.1.4   Instructor maintains an active presence on Blackboard throughout the week

1.2   Grading

1.2.1   Instructor grades according to the rubric or published criteria and provides comments that will help the student improve

1.2.2   Instructor assigns grades that differentiate between student's levels of participation and quality in discussion

1.2.3   Instructor assigns grades in timely manner

Additional Resources

Being a Mentor at SPS

1. Defining mentor:

A mentor is primarily an advisor and a guide to the mentee and not necessarily a friend. It is important for both mentor and mentee to acknowledge this boundary. In addition, a peer mentor will have prior experience teaching at SPS, but does not have supervisory power over a mentee.

2. What does a mentor do?

- Serves as a role model and advisor to the mentee
- Assists the mentee in figuring out and achieving his or her professional goals
- Shares his or her perspective with the mentee so the mentee can have an outside assessment of his or her professional image and teaching skills
- Advances a mentee's understanding of SPS's institutional context so that a mentee knows the history and inner workings of SPS
- Welcomes the mentee into the faculty community at SPS and introduces mentees to professional networks
- Helps mentee interpret and apply the SPS course design and teaching guidelines, models, and expectations to mentee's own course

3. Setting expectations with your mentee

As a mentor, you will need to help set expectations for the semester so you and your mentee know what to expect from each other during the semester.

- Ask what the mentee's goals are for the course
- Ask what the mentee hopes to achieve both in the course and in mentorship

After getting a clearer picture of the mentee's objectives for the semester, you and the mentee will need to come to a mutual understanding of what is expected.

- Tell the mentee what you can help with
- Tell the mentee how you see working with the mentee
- Tell the mentee what you will need from him/her to achieve the mentee's goals

4. Communicating with your mentee

Effective interactions with your mentee require that you understand your mentee's questions and concerns and that your mentee understands your advice and counsel. You can help guide communication with your mentee by starting a constructive dialogue.

- With your mentee, analyze your mentee's experience to find patterns or common themes that are occurring
- Ask specific probing questions so that both of you can understand what underlying issues exist and how they can be addressed
- Be candid but maintain a positive tone
- Make sure all discussions are a two-way dialogue

5. Maintaining neutrality and managing reactivity

As a mentor who has more experience teaching at SPS, you should advise and guide your mentee but remain neutral. It can be easy to overly influence your mentee.

- Let your mentee come to his or her own conclusion
- Use lists of pros and cons to help your mentee
- Put your mentee's goals first

You may have a negative reaction to something that your mentee does or communicates to you. Try and maintain your neutrality and maintain your mentor role.

- Clarify what you understand has been said or done
- Explain your perspective
- Reframe what has happened as a learning experience
- Come to a common understanding

6. Giving feedback to your mentee

Giving feedback is a key method to developing your mentoring relationship and to helping your mentee reach their goals. However, when feedback is given or received in the wrong way, feedback can hurt a mentoring relationship.

- Set up a preferred method of giving feedback
- Make sure you have a full understanding the situation
- State the problem clearly and confirm that your mentee understands it as well
- Offer a positive strategy with concrete suggestions that the mentee can use
- Check to see if your mentee understands your guidance
- Come to a common agreement or plan that the mentee will attempt to apply
- Offer support to the mentee
- Follow up

Being a Mentee at SPS

1. Defining mentee:

A mentee is a new or less experienced faculty member that is seeking their mentor's advice and support. A mentee is an active participant in the mentoring relationship.

2. What does a mentee do?

- Establishes goals so the mentee and mentor can develop a plan to achieve those goals
- Communicates his or her goals and expectations for both course and the mentoring relationship
- Seeks advice
- Shares his or her experiences, both good and bad
- Applies what is learned from the mentor
- Starts forming his or her own professional network
- Brings creative energy and new ideas to the mentoring relationship

3. Setting expectations with your mentor

As a mentee, you will have to be prepared for the expectation discussion.

- Assess your weaknesses and strengths as instructor especially as an online instructor
- Figure out what you want to accomplish this semester in your course and in the mentoring relationship
- Determine your teaching goals for the semester
- What kind of guidance do you want?

Bring the product of the above process to your first meeting with your mentor, so you both can get on the same page quickly.

4. Communicating with your mentor

Effective interactions with your mentor require that you receive and understand your mentor's feedback and advice. Do not be shy about communicating with your mentor and do not assume that your mentor will always take the initiative.

- Share your experiences and be specific
- Make sure you understand what your mentor has written or said to you
- Clarify any misunderstandings you may have
- Discussions should always be a two-way dialogue
- Make sure to follow-up with your mentor as needed
- End every interaction with a mutual understanding of what has been discussed

Faculty Peer Mentoring Commitment Form

We, _____ (mentor) and _____ (mentee) have both reviewed the guidelines and requirements of the SPS Faculty Peer Mentoring Program. We understand our respective responsibilities during the semester.

_____   _____

Mentor Signature   Date

_____   _____

Mentee Signature   Date

Please sign by simply typing your name and the date. Once both mentor and mentee have signed, please email to ofdit@sps.cuny.edu. Thank you.

CUNY School of Professional Studies, Office of Faculty Development & Instructional Technology