



## Mentorship Program

# MENTOR AND MENTEE HANDBOOK 2023-2024

Dear Mentors and Mentees,

The RD Mentorship Program strives to create opportunities for undergraduate and graduate dietetic students and registered dietitians (RDs) to expand their network and enhance the profession. The program also aims to help increase diversity and preceptors in the field. The goal of the mentoring program is to provide students hands-on experience working one-on-one with an RD and enhance mentoring abilities and professional development for the RDs. We are pleased to have had a great response from both RDs and dietetic students who are excited to commit to the program and cannot wait to get started! This handbook will help guide you through your mentoring relationship; it includes an overview of the program and other information that will come in handy during your participation in the program. Do not hesitate to contact the mentorship program coordinators and/or principal investigators should you have any questions by emailing us at [rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com](mailto:rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com).

Once more, welcome and thank you for joining the program!

This program is launched nationwide and is currently only offered in a virtual format.

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**Overview of the Program**

***What is this program about?***

The RD Mentorship Program was created to help build bonds between registered dietitian (RD) professionals and nutrition students. Our main goal is to facilitate a professional experiential learning opportunity for nutrition students, while helping RDs on a project. The main role of the RD mentor is to provide their mentee with advice on project-specific duties and/or career path guidance and professionalism, provide motivation, and serve as a role model. The main role of the student mentee is to develop professional skills, create a relationship with their mentor to learn about the field of dietetics, and assist them with identified projects.

***What are the benefits of this program?***

For the mentor, this program is a great way to enhance your mentoring and precepting skills and gain valuable assistance on a project. For the mentee, this program provides the opportunity to gain experience working one-on-one with an RD. Ultimately, the mentor-mentee pair should work together to accomplish a project.

*What resources are provided to help assist mentors and mentees?*

- **Meet and Greet Workshops [See dates on the next page]**
  - A Virtual Welcome Orientation (September 2023)
  - Professional Development Workshops (2 FREE CEU's- October 2023 & January 2024.)
  - A Virtual Closing Reception (April 2024)
  
- **Mentor-Mentee Agreement**
  - This form is designed to help the mentee/mentor pair establish communication expectations, identify goals for this mentoring relationship, and outline skill areas to be enhanced or developed through this partnership.
  - All mentor-mentee pairs are strongly encouraged to complete this form at their first meeting.
  - This form is located in the handbook and on the website.
  
- **HIPAA Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement**
  - This form was requested by mentors and is designed to use in client interactions where confidentiality is essential to protect patients' rights to privacy
  
- **Mentoring Log**
  - This form must be completed by the mentee each month and submitted at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pNRjhYGeAnuJ4ZZmfmh2W8bHRwzZ4xh-pXgMFvtnlfc/edit> .
  - It is designed to keep records of mentor/mentee monthly meetings and the topics discussed and enhance communication and continuity by highlighting meeting content and projects.
  
- **RD Mentorship PRIVATE Facebook Page**
  - (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1508032439530802/>)
  - Designed to be a community to bounce ideas, connect and support each other through the program. **\*\*Not required\*\***
  
- **Program Website: <https://www.rdmentor.com>**
  - Designed to enhance communication and provide digital resources and useful information throughout the mentor-mentee program.

*Save the Dates! All participants are encouraged to attend the events below:*

- **All mentors and mentees must sign the informed consent and pre-survey to participate (September 2023)**
- **RD Mentorship Program 2023-2024 Orientation**
  - Monday, September 11 th 6:30 pm CST/7:30 pm EST (90 minutes)
    - Meeting Link: <https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>
    - Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

Passcode: 213086

o Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup> 6:30 pm CST/7:30 pm EST (90 minutes)

▪ Meeting Link:

<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

Passcode: 213086

● **Fall Professional Development (2 options-60 minutes)**

o Monday October 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST

▪ Meeting Link:

<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

Passcode: 213086

o Thursday October 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST

▪ Meeting Link:

<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

Passcode: 213086

● **Complete the Mid-Program Evaluation (November 2023)**

● **Spring Professional Development (2 options- 60 minutes)**

o Monday January 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST

▪ Meeting Link:

<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

Passcode: 213086

o Thursday February 1st at 6:30 pm CT or 7:30 pm EST

▪ Meeting Link:

<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

Passcode: 213086

● **Closing Reception (2 options- 45 minutes)**

o Monday April 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST

▪ Meeting Link:

<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

Passcode: 213086

o Thursday April 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm CT/7:30 pm EST

▪ Meeting Link:

<https://tamu.zoom.us/j/96240506125?pwd=UjhsTE9GVkozbfQ0Zk9iUm9yRG1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 962 4050 6125

- **Complete the End of Program Evaluation (April 2024)**

***What are the expectations of program participants?***

- All participants must sign the informed consent and pre-survey form (September 2023)
- Every commitment comes with responsibilities; mentors and mentees are expected to act professionally when engaging with each other.
- Communication is a requirement of any successful relationship. Mentors and mentee should respect each other by maintaining good communication and keeping your commitment to the mentor/mentee relationship agreement. Please reply to emails or other forms of communication within 24-48 hours and use professional etiquette. Be proactive!
- Mentor-mentee virtual meetings are required at least once a month minimum and will be individually arranged by the mentor and mentee. The mentor pair can meet more frequently if they choose, depending on what is acceptable with both participants.
- If any issues arise between mentor and mentee, please contact the program coordinators immediately by emailing [rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com](mailto:rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com) so we can assist in reconciliation of the situation. Issues may include, but are not limited to, lack of communication/responses from one party, disrespect, inappropriate language, failure to meet expectations of the program, etc.

### **TIPS FOR MENTORS**

**How/Where to get started with your mentee:**

To begin, reach out to your mentee within 24-48 hours after being matched. We encourage all mentor-mentee pairs to establish the mentor-mentee agreement at the first meeting and rely on it through the program. This is located in the handbook and on the website.

Questions and discussion points to start the conversation are:

1. When do you first plan to meet? How often do you want to meet?
2. Do you plan to meet on the phone, web meetings (zoom, Skype, FaceTime) or via email?
3. Set out your expectations from the get-go! (i.e., communication, etiquette, HIPAA etc.)
4. Describe your area of dietetics and what project-specifics you need help with
5. What are their overarching or long-term goals in dietetics? (They may not know)
6. What skills/background experiences might they have to help you? Learn about your mentee and how to maximize their success in your project together.
7. Set goals and expectations together by assisting the mentee in completion of the mentor-mentee agreement.

Other potential areas of discussion may be:

*Dietetic Internship (DI) applications and the application process\*:*

1. Discuss the process of applying to DI programs and/or graduate degree programs and/or specialty certifications; provide guidance and professional tips for success.
2. How to research programs – What are the characteristics of a good program (e.g.,

finances, reputability, location, etc.)?

3. Assist with application materials needed for your field (e.g., read and offer guidance on their personal statement, CV, letters of recommendation, etc.)
4. How to contact potential advisors and get letters of recommendation (perhaps you might consider writing a letter of recommendation for them after successful completion of the program.)

\*Please note there have been a lot of changes to the DI match process. Please contact Karen Beathard ([karen.beathard@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:karen.beathard@ag.tamu.edu)) if you have questions or need assistance with this information.

*Other suggestions:*

1. Share your background, values, goals, and needs.
2. Talk about your very first job and other experiences that might enrich your mentee's insight on RD internships, research, and the professional field.
3. Talk about life as a dietetics student vs. dietetics professional.
4. Look at your mentee's resume and cover letter and offer constructive guidance. The success of your mentoring relationship depends on you and your mentee.
5. Consider giving mentees some type of title for their project so they can add it to their resumes.
6. Provide open communication with the mentee and ask him/her their needs/desires/goals from this program and routinely check in to see if their needs/desires/goals are being met.
7. Recognize the mentees are students and have empathy and flexibility with them. Note that mentee class schedules change in January at the start of spring semester, so meeting time preferences may need to be adjusted. Meetings may also need to be adjusted during exam weeks.
8. Support the mentees where they are; ask about them personally and in their school progression and offer suggestions or encouragement as needed. Recognize them as students/people and not just someone to do a task/project for you.
9. Make sure project guidelines and expectations are clear to mentee. Routinely offer clarification or guidance if needed. It is best to set project expectations and due dates together based on the mentee schedule.

Be an active listener, a cheerleader, a compassionate supporter, and a role model.

## **TIPS FOR MENTEES**

### **What is your Role as a Mentee?**

As a mentee participating in the RD Mentorship Program, you are expected to display professionalism and respect. As a mentee, you are also a representative of your university's nutrition department. You applied to be a part of this program and are expected to follow through with your commitment by engaging in communication, working with the RD you were matched with and accomplishing project goals.

*How to handle your mentee position:*

1. Be respectful, timely, flexible and use professional language. professional
2. Address your mentor by their preferred credentials. (PhD/DCN = Dr; Mrs.; Mr.; Sir.)
3. Communicate with your RD mentor using the preferred mode of communication.
4. Provide your mentor an updated resume so they can see your experience.
5. Complete the mentor-mentee contract to set goals and expectations with your RD.
6. Discuss and understand the projects and assignments given to you by your RD. If something is unclear, ask your RD mentor for clarification.
7. Be clear about your time and effort commitments to the program and your ability to complete the tasks assigned.
8. If you have trouble understanding or agreeing with the given tasks, speak with your RD or contact the program coordinators through email ([rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com](mailto:rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com)).
9. Communicate your class schedule and realistic time you will be able to devote to this mentoring program, especially around exam time.

*How to gain the most from your experience:*

1. Complete assigned tasks by the identified deadline and ask your RD mentor for feedback.
2. Get to know your RD! Prepare and ask relevant questions and listen. Use questions below for ideas.
  - a. What is the dietetic internship like? What does a typical workday look like for the RD? What advice can the RD offer about the process?
  - b. What are some challenges the RD faces in the professional field and how can future RDs prepare for them?
  - c. What skills are necessary for becoming a successful professional?
  - d. Depending on the area of focus that the RD has, what are some resources for specializing RDs?
  - e. What are some good ways to manage finances through the dietetic internship and as a working professional?
  - f. Where can the student seek advice while completing the dietetics program and dietetic internship?
3. Most importantly, think of this program as a growing experience for both involved.

Be eager to learn, actively listen, show willingness to work as a team player, be a strong communicator, display a positive attitude, and show gratitude to your mentor for mentoring you.

## **Research Overview**

### ***What are the objectives of this research study?***

The objective of the study is to examine the outcomes from participating in a mentorship program. We would like to determine the benefits and perceptions on being a member of a mentoring partnership. We will be collecting qualitative and quantitative data to measure this. This study was approved by the University of North Florida and Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board (IRB 1143661-8).



Please visit our website: <https://www.rdmentor.com>

***What will I gain from being a part of this program?***

The direct benefits to you by participating in this program are gaining experience in the field of dietetics and/or being part of a mentorship program. The project that the mentor and mentee work on will be a hands-on experience to offer a look into life as an RD.

***Will any personal information be used in this research program?***

No, the research study team is only using data collected from the surveys and program evaluation. There will be no direct ties to personal names and/or workplaces that are involved.

***Is this a new program?***

No, this program has been undergoing pilot testing and evaluation since 2016. This is the fourth year it will be launched on a broader scale and will be nationwide. The following are manuscripts based on study outcomes.

1. Hicks-Roof K, Beathard KM. A Mentoring Program Builds the Bridge with Nutrition Students and Healthcare Professionals. *J Allied Health* 2022; 51(1):31-37. PMID: 35239758.
2. Hicks-Roof KK. Growing the Dietetics Profession via a Mentorship Program between Dietitians and Dietetics Students. *Nutr Today* 2018; 32(2): 89-91
3. Hicks-Roof KK, Beathard K. Development of a Sustainable Mentorship Program: Registered Dietitian Nutritionists Mentoring Undergraduate Dietetics Students. *J Allied Health* 2018; 47(2): e49-51

***How would I include this experience on my resume?***

An example of the RD Mentorship being included in the mentee or mentor resume is included below. Generally, one would want 3-5 bullets explaining the skills/knowledge they developed. An idea for the mentor entry is as follows:

**RD Mentorship Program, College Station, Texas**

**August 2022-April 2023**

**RD Program Mentee**

- Bullet tasks/projects you completed and skills gained leading with an action verb (see examples below)
  - Expanded technical knowledge by developing of a nutrition education pamphlet on healthy food choices for pediatric patients
  - Enhanced critical thinking by creating a SWOT Analysis over mentor's social media platforms
  - Developed professional social media skills by posting marketing prompts to generate new clients for mentor
  - Strengthened networking and communication skills by attending professional meetings with mentor

An idea for the mentor entry is as follows:

**RD Mentorship Program, College Station, Texas**

**August 2022 -April 2023**

RD Program Mentor

- Bullet tasks/projects you completed and skills gained leading with an action verb (see examples below)
  - Guided mentee in developing professional skills required for successful private practice
  - Supported mentee in completion of a high quality a nutrition education pamphlet on healthy food choices for pediatric patients
  - Coached mentee on counseling practices to facilitate behavior change in diverse individuals
  - Demonstrated professional ethics and behavior in monthly meetings and discussions with mentee

***What if I have questions about the program and/or the research process?***

We have posted an extensive FAQ on our website (<https://www.rdmentor.com/faq-s>). If the answer is not located on that website, please reach out to us so we can help you~  
[rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com](mailto:rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com). Thank you!

## Mentor/Mentee Agreement

### Purpose

This Mentoring Agreement was created to help the mentee/mentor pair establish communication expectations; identify goals for this mentoring relationship; and outline skill areas to be enhanced or developed through this partnership.

### Goals for participation in the Mentor/Mentee Program

- Mentee

My goal(s) for this program is/are to:

At the end of this program, my desired outcome(s) is/are:

- Mentor

My goal(s) for this program is/are to:

At the end of this program, my desired outcome(s) is/are:

### Ground rules

- Meeting Frequency: We will meet (minimum of once monthly, e.g., every two weeks)
- Meeting Length: Our meetings will last (amount of time, e.g., one hour minimum))
- Meeting Platform: Our virtual meetings will occur via (e.g., videoconference, phone and/or email; a variety of formats is acceptable; examples of different platforms include Microsoft Teams, Google Groups, Google Meet, Facetime, Zoom, etc. )
- If either the mentor or the mentee must postpone or cancel a scheduled meeting, we agree to contact via (method of communication - example: email the other person at least hours prior to the scheduled meeting time)
- If I have questions about a project, I will contact the other person via (method of communication) within (specified time)

## Team Agreement

As a mentee, I agree to do the following:

- To dedicate to learning and practicing new skills
- To seek to learn, improve and grow by asking questions and being open to honest feedback from my mentor.
- Clearly identify my goals in participating in this mentor/mentee program and come prepared to meetings.
- Prepare in advance of our mentor/mentee sessions by creating and bringing questions and ideas to the session.
- Accomplish agreed upon tasks by the identified timeline.
- Learn to use constructive criticism and feedback to further my professional development.
- Respect my mentor by showing up to meetings on-time and understanding when things come up.
- Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.
- To participate in professional development sessions provided by the research team.
- Honor ground rules established in this agreement.

As a mentor, I agree to do the following:

- Serve as a mentor and provide guidance, oversight, and encouragement.
- Provide constructive feedback regarding their progress, and experience.
- Meet virtually and communicate regularly with my mentee to review their progress and help them work toward identified goals.
- Respect my mentee by showing up to meetings on-time and understanding when things come up.
- Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.
- To participate in professional development sessions provided by the research team.
- Honor ground rules established in this agreement.

This agreement outlines the goals and expectations agreed upon by the mentor and mentee listed below. Although the thoughtful completion of this form was used, it is understood that items will change and adjust naturally to fit the needs of both parties as the mentoring relationship grows. Current plans are to revisit this document every (months) to adjust goals and dates given current accomplishments. If at any time during the duration of the mentoring contract one member of the mentoring pair does not feel like the other is able or willing to fulfill the items agreed to above, please contact the Mentor/Mentee Research Team at [rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com](mailto:rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com).

Name of Mentee:

Mentee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: (may be electronic)

Name of Mentor:

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: (may be electronic)

## HIPAA CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

Mentees involved in this program may be granted access to confidential patient information in the course of their responsibilities provided by the mentor. This agreement is to ensure the protection of patients' rights to privacy.

This non-disclosure agreement is effective upon signing and throughout the entirety of the mentorship. It is entered into by and between \_\_\_\_\_ (“Mentor”) and \_\_\_\_\_ (“Mentee”).

By signing below, the mentee shows they will adhere to the mentor’s privacy policies, as well as the following policies in compliance with HIPAA Privacy Law:

- Protected health information (PHI) should only be accessed on a need be basis as it pertains to mentee responsibilities.
- PHI should only be disclosed with the patient, unless in a private setting with individuals who have approved access, and only on a need be basis.
- “confidential information” refers to any data and/or information that is related to the disclosing party “e.g. Mentor”, in any form, including, but not limited to, oral or written. Such confidential information, but not limited to, any information related to the business or industry of the mentor, such as discoveries, processes, techniques, programs, knowledge base, customer lists, potential customers, business parties, affiliated partners, leads, know-how, or any other services related to the Mentor.

Failure to uphold this agreement may lead to disciplinary actions based on the nature of the violation as deemed necessary by the mentor.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor Signature Date

**Disclaimer: This agreement is between mentor and mentee. The RD Mentorship Program will not be held liable for any miscommunications or discrepancies listed in this agreement.**

See [www.rdmentor.com](http://www.rdmentor.com)



## Mentoring Log

\* Required

Email address \*

Your email

Mentor Name \*

Your answer

Mentee Name \*

Your answer

Date of Meeting \*

MM DD YYYY

/ / 2021

Contact Type \*

Teleconference

Email

Phone

Description or Status of Activity/Project \*

Your answer

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pNRjhYGeAnuJ4ZZmfmh2W8bHRwzZ4xh-pXgMFvtnlfc/edit>

\*Mentee should fill out this form, but should notify the mentor so the mentor has the opportunity to comment on the document as well.