

ELB Mentorship Program

Overview

Mentorships can be an important and influential relationship for both Mentors and Mentee. They facilitate an intergenerational exchange of knowledge, connect people from different sectors in the environmental field, and create larger and stronger networks.

ELB's Mentorship program aims to connect established professionals in the field of biodiversity in Ontario with ELB members looking to gain a specific set of skills and/or career advice. We hope that by facilitating these relationships, we can empower younger generations to develop the skills they need and maximize their potential to become leaders for biodiversity.

2023-2024 Timeline and Events

- November - Program Kick-off and mentee/mentor matching
- December - First official chat and meet and greet with your mentee/mentor
- January-April - Monthly meetings between mentor/mentee. Topics to be discussed, but may include: general career advice, resume and cover letter review, networking assistance, etc
- May - Mentorship Wrap-up event

Communication

Mentorships may take various forms: videoconference or in-person meetings, via correspondence (e.g., over email, telephone), social media, attending lectures, job shadowing, etc. It's up to the two parties to decide how they want this relationship to unfold. **However, we strongly recommend that Mentors and Mentees have meetings where they can speak in real-time (i.e. videoconference, in-person, phone, etc.) minimum once a month.** Mentoring is expected to continue for at least six months. It is the Mentee's responsibility to initiate and maintain correspondence. However, we encourage Mentors to not only be responsive and available to their Mentee, but support them for as long as possible to follow and positively influence their careers.

Connecting Mentors and Mentees

ELB facilitates mentoring relationships based on what expertise Mentees are looking for and what experience Mentors are willing to offer.

Both Mentors and Mentees will be asked for feedback so we can continue to improve this program. After the first three months, both parties will receive a quick check-in survey to be completed within two weeks of reception. After six months, both parties will receive a more

extensive survey for feedback after six months to be completed within three weeks of reception. Please note that ELB's Mentorship Program has undergone significant upgrades and we hope to continue to grow it in years to come. Feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

As an ELB Mentor

Being an ELB Mentor is a selfless act in which you help guide someone on their path to achieving their professional goals. Furthermore, you can also build on your leadership skills and receive satisfaction from helping someone reach greater heights in their career. Mentorship is a way to give back to your field of work and an opportunity to strengthen your network. Moreover, you can gain insight and perspective from younger generations entering your field today. The application to become a Mentor can be found [here](#).

Mentees must complete an application that indicates three Mentors they would like to be paired with and why, as well as a one page cover letter describing themselves, what they hope to gain and potential career goals. The application will be sent to their three selected ELB Mentors who will have an opportunity to comment, approve or reject the applicant. The choice is at your discretion and any constructive feedback you can provide will be passed along to the applicant.

At a minimum, it is expected that Mentors will:

- Initiate correspondence with the Mentee (e.g., send an introductory email to the Mentee) and respond fully and promptly
 - o Tip: Push your Mentee to schedule meetings with you monthly. You can also message them in between meetings to help keep them on track and see how their career is progressing.*
- Provide career advice
- Provide feedback on resumes, curriculum vitae, and cover letters
 - o Tip: Offer to review specific applications for jobs or scholarships.*
 - Share relevant career advancement opportunities that they hear of with Mentees when appropriate. This can include employment, networking, training, and academic opportunities. *o Tip: Introduce your Mentee to three relevant opportunities. For example, if you come across an interesting connection in their field or an excellent job opening on LinkedIn. You can also introduce them to three contacts within your network.*

Any additional support, including financial costs incurred, is given at the discretion of the Mentors. ELB and its members are not legally or financially responsible for any additional support Mentors might provide.

All information exchanged between Mentors and Mentees is confidential. ELB does not give our members permission to give personal information (including contact information) to third parties without the Mentor's explicit permission. No personal contact information will be posted publicly. The only exchange of information will be the Mentee's contact information to the Mentors who agree to take them on. If you receive information that a Mentee is being harassed in any way or have any concern regarding ELB's network, it is your responsibility to report that information to us to deal with as quickly as possible.

We cannot guarantee the demand for Mentors at any one time. You have the right to refuse Mentee applications at any point. You have the right to leave ELB's Mentorship Program at any time. Please give written notice to the board and your Mentee.

As a Mentee

Mentorships can help inform your decision-making about your career path and sharpen your focus. Working with a Mentor, you may learn a specific set of skills and knowledge and can gain invaluable career advice. These relationships can provide insight and perspective into the experiences of well-established professionals in your field of interest.

Mentees must complete an [application](#) indicating your top three choices for a Mentors and why, as well as a one page cover letter describing yourself, what you hope to gain, and your potential career goals. Applications are distributed to the potential Mentors for review and it is at their discretion to accept you as a Mentee. Many factors, such as compatibility and areas of interest, may be considered and where possible we will pass on constructive feedback. Please remember that it is important to respect that Mentors volunteer their time.

Expectations of a Mentee:

- **Be professional** – Strike a balance between being formal, but not too formal. It can be as simple as proofreading an email before you send it, being on time, and showing gratitude to demonstrate that you take the relationship seriously.
- **Ask questions and maintain regular contact** – Come prepared with well-thought-out questions. If you want to know about opportunities, additional contacts, specifics about products (e.g., survey equipment, photography equipment, field equipment, training courses, etc), or if you want a reference from your Mentors, just ask. A little assertiveness will take you a long way.
- **Be patient** – Your Mentors may have a busy schedule or spend a lot of time away from the computer and may not respond right away. It is common for Mentors to even take a few days to respond given their packed calendars.
- **Be committed** – They have committed time to you and you should respect that and commit time to them as well. This involves maintaining regular communication, showing interest, and being assertive when you must.

Tips to foster a positive Mentorship

- **Create a genuine connection rather than one simply based on personal gain** - while you may be in the Mentorship Program to advance in your career, do not neglect that a successful Mentorship relationship depends on forging a natural, genuine connection between Mentors and Mentee. Do not lose sight of this in the pursuit of career success.
- **Make yourself stand out** – it's a competitive world and finding ways to make yourself stand out is important in gaining an edge in your field of choice. Taking initiative when others do not can be a good first step for this.
- **Ask for help with your resume** – This is a simple and great starting point. It gives your Mentors a chance to get to know you and learn about your experiences. And continue to ask

for feedback when applying for specific jobs and other opportunities.

- Have an idea of what you are looking for in a Mentors (e.g. species id skills, photography, writing, research, marketing, resume/interview skills, etc.) – you may very well gain more than a specific skill or knowledge from your Mentors, but having an idea of what you want (even if it might change later on) is a great starting point and gives you common ground with a Mentors.

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Mentoring is expected to continue for at least six months, providing that you maintain the correspondence. We do encourage Mentors to support Mentees for as long as possible to follow and influence their careers.

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