

IOWA

College of Public Health

Mentorship Program

Handbook

2025-2026

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Overview

The Mentorship Program seeks to connect University of Iowa College of Public Health (CPH) graduate students and graduate alumni. This connection will provide students with opportunities to interact with public health professionals, enhance their career readiness skills, including networking, resume and cover letter development, and gain insight into the field of public health.

Mentors and Mentees will apply to be a part of the program and will be matched by a CPH committee. Interests and goals will be taken into consideration when matching, though the program will be limited based on mentor participation. Based on feedback, we will prioritize matching in the following order by: industry, department, and degree program.

Expectations

Alumni Mentors

WILL ...

- Be an employed professional in the field of public health (in areas such as academia, government, public health department, non-profit organization, etc.)
- Serve as a resource:
 - For career readiness questions and offer suggestions and feedback (ex: resume, cover letter, interviewing, job searching).
 - Adapt to mentee needs based on their time in the program and when their degree conferral will take place.
 - Help mentee reach their goals for the program.
- Communicate:
 - With mentee at least once each semester between October 2025 to May 2026. More frequent communication is encouraged.
 - Work with mentee to develop a meeting schedule that works for both of you (i.e. twice a month via email, once a month via Zoom, etc.).
 - Respond to mentee in a timely fashion.
 - Inform the mentorship staff if they no longer wish to participate in the program or their mentee relationship is not going well.

Will NOT ...

- Be expected to provide their mentee with a job.
- Be expected to provide more time than what they are comfortable.
- Stop communicating with their mentee when life gets busy. Rather, they will reach out and let the mentee know what's going on and set up a future time to connect.

Student Mentees

✓ WILL ...

- **Initiate first contact with their mentor by October 31, 2025** and be responsible for continuing to engage with their mentor.
- Be prepared to talk about your goals for the program and have a plan of what you would like to discuss in each meeting.
- Be open-minded and appreciative when receiving advice and feedback.
- Communicate:
 - With mentor at least once each semester between October 2025 to May 2026. More frequent communication is encouraged.
 - Work with mentor to develop a meeting schedule that works for both of you (i.e. twice a month via email, once a month via Zoom, etc.).
 - Be courteous of their mentor's time and respond to mentor in a timely fashion.
 - Inform the mentorship staff if they no longer wish to participate in the program or their mentor relationship is not going well.

⊘ Will NOT ...

- Ask your mentor for a job.
- Stop communicating with their mentor when life gets busy. Rather, they will reach out and let the mentor know what's going on and set up a future time to connect.

For a successful mentorship both the mentee and mentor must...

- Communicate with each other.
- Establish the best way to communicate and frequency of communications. Discuss potential busy periods in which frequency might have to decrease.
- Be respectful of each other's time and make sure they are both on time for virtual or in-person meetings. Communicate when this is going to be a problem.
- Contact the mentorship staff if there are questions or if things are not going well.

Mentorship Benefits

For Alumni Mentors:

- Share your talents, real-world experiences, and professional wisdom with the next generation of public health leaders.
- Grow your network and develop collaboration opportunities.
- Broaden your leadership and mentoring skills.
- Add to your resume or CV.
- Make a critical, non-financial contribution to your alma mater (even if you live far from Iowa City).
- Make an impact and influence aspiring public health professionals.

For Student Mentees:

- Connect with public health professionals about career tools (resume, cover letter, job search process, interviewing).
- Practice professional communication.
- Learn about public health careers, organizations, and various opportunities.
- Connect with someone who has “been there, done that.”
- Develop new networking and collaboration opportunities.

Suggested Mentorship Activities

Students set the agenda for each meeting

Mentees should **come prepared** with **topics to discuss** with their mentor at each meeting and the following can be used as a guide. There are examples for mentor/mentees who live near one another and for those who live far apart.

Getting to know each other:

- Initial email from mentee to mentor will be sent within 2 weeks of match notification.
- Introduction and sharing of backgrounds, goals, and interests.
- Mentor should share their career path after graduation.
- Set expectations for each other including communication goals and preferences.

Professional Development and Preparing for the Workforce:

- Resumes and cover letters – review each other’s and discuss.
- Watch a webinar or attend a lecture on a common interest and discuss afterwards.
- Meet at a national or state meeting (e.g. APHA, Public Health Conference of Iowa) or another professional development conference.
- Create a list of potential professional organizations to join. Discuss the pros and cons.
- Conduct a mock interview (in-person, zoom, phone).
- Have mentee job shadow the mentor.
- Discuss books to read to prepare for the real world.
- Discuss skills needed in the workplace and handling difficult workplace situations.
- Explore job search engines together and discuss potential job possibilities, the skills needed for each, and how mentee can build additional skills while in degree program.
- How to choose where to work.
- How to navigate difficult conversations or situations in the workplace.

Current Student Needs:

- Discuss potential useful courses for the area of employment mentee is seeking.
- Research interests and future dissertation plans.
- Discuss internship opportunities.
- Mentor may provide professional network contacts if applicable.
- Discuss pros and cons of next life stages (continuing education or entering workforce).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will I be placed with a mentor/mentee?

The Mentorship Committee will review applications and pair individuals together. It is possible (if they choose) that mentors will have two mentees assigned to them.

The Committee will try to ensure a good match, however if there are problems you should communicate them to the mentorship staff.

Interests and goals will be taken into consideration when matching, though the program will be limited based on mentor participation. Based on feedback, we will prioritize matching in the following order by industry, department, and degree program.

2. Who can participate in the Mentorship Program?

All graduate alumni who are currently working in a public health position may apply to be a mentor. All graduate students in the College of Public Health are invited to participate as a mentee.

3. What do I do if I do not hear from my mentor or mentee?

Please contact the mentorship staff right away.

4. What if I feel like my mentor is not a good fit?

Concentrate on the skill building areas that mentors can provide generally. If you are still unsatisfied with your match, please contact mentorship staff.

5. Can I be matched again with my mentor/mentee next year?

To participate the following year, Mentors and Mentees will need to submit a new application. If the mentee has not graduated and the mentee and mentor would like to continue with their mentorship the following year, they must both email mentorship staff with this request.

Program Timeline

Dates	Deadline
September 26, 2025	Mentor and Mentee applications are due
October 13, 2025	Match notifications, mentorship program begins
October 31, 2025	Deadline for Mentees to send first email to their mentor
Late April 2026	Mentors and Mentees will submit a Program Assessment (emailed by tara-mckee@uiowa.edu)
May 1, 2026	Mentorship Program ends

Notes:

- Mentorship staff will hold an introduction to the mentorship program meeting for mentees at a date to be determined early in the program.
- Mentorship staff will check in with mentees and mentors once in the fall and once in the spring semesters.

Mentorship Staff Contact Information

All questions, concerns and feedback for the University of Iowa College of Public Health Mentorship Program can be communicated to:

Tara McKee, CPH Alumni Coordinator

✉ tara-mckee@uiowa.edu

☎ 319-384-4277

Scot Reisinger, Assistant Dean of Student Services

✉ scot-reisinger@uiowa.edu