



Basic structure

In order to participate in this program, both mentors (alumni) and mentees (students) must commit to a full academic year-long mentoring relationship (September – May) and be willing and able to meet in person and/or communicate virtually at least once per month. In addition, periodic events will be held at The Cooper Union to provide mentoring pairs additional support and opportunities to interact. Mentors and mentees must apply and be accepted to the program. Contact the [Center for Career Development](#) for application details.

The Center for Career Development and The Office of Alumni Affairs and Development will provide suggested activities and materials to support mentoring relationships and will check in with mentor-mentee pairs periodically. Students are responsible for scheduling time to talk and/or meet with their alumni mentors.

What does it mean to be a mentee?

Mentees are engineering students in the School of Engineering at The Cooper Union who are mature, responsible, and committed to their professional development. They are interested in exploring career options and in developing their interpersonal skills so that they may be successful in their professional endeavors. A mentee is interested in learning as much as she or he can from the mentor, regardless of the mentor's specific academic or professional background. Mentees are open to constructive feedback and advice from experienced professionals.

Mentees may come from any major in the School of Engineering and may represent a variety of career interests, both in and outside of the engineering world. The program is open to all engineering students in good academic standing.

What does it mean to be a mentor?

Mentors are alumni of the Albert Nerken School of Engineering who volunteer their time and energy to serve as resources for mentees with regard to their career development. They act as professional role models for mentees and are expected to support and guide their mentees. This professional guidance may take many forms including, but not limited to the following:

- Working closely with mentees to develop their interpersonal communication skills. Simply having a conversation about career goals with a working professional is excellent practice for engaging with professionals in a variety of contexts and serves to boost students' confidence and familiarity with the norms of professional discourse.
- Helping mentees understand career options and industries by sharing insights from their own professional experiences.
- Supporting mentees in pursuit of their professional goals, which may mean providing feedback on career search materials, or practicing interviewing skills, as examples.

Although mentors must be graduates of the Albert Nerken School of Engineering at The Cooper Union, they may have professional experience from a variety of industries – they need not be limited to the engineering world. As engineering students pursue professional experiences both in and outside of engineering, this program is open to all alumni of the Albert Nerken School of Engineering regardless of professional area.

First and foremost, mentors must be interested in helping their mentee succeed professionally; in whatever way the mentee aims to go professionally. They must also be willing to make time each month to meet (virtually is OK, but real time is essential) with their mentee, and be responsive to email/phone communication. Mentors are excellent listeners and are primarily concerned with providing insight, support, and constructive feedback.

Important considerations/FAQs

1. "I'm interested in being matched with a mentor, but my school schedule probably won't allow me to meet/communicate with my mentor monthly, should I still apply?"

No, please wait until the demands of your academic life are less rigorous. To participate in this program you must make time for your mentor and initiate communication.

2. "I'm interested in having a mentor, but I'm not really sure how to take full advantage of this opportunity, what should I do?"

We understand your concern. Being part of this program requires that students will take initiative to drive the relationship, but we will give you suggestions and ideas about how to do so. Taking initiative means setting up times and dates to meet or talk with your mentor, and coming prepared with topics to discuss during meetings. The program is designed so the mentor can help the mentee, and in order to do so, the mentor needs to know what the mentee is most interested in learning about and/or what skills they want to develop or improve. We promise to help you make the most of this relationship and we will provide consistent support along the way. The most important thing is that you are open to learning and that you prioritize your relationship with your mentor and make time for them. Set up an appointment

with the Center for Career Development through [Handshake](#) to brainstorm ways to make the most of this opportunity.

3. “Can my mentor help me get a job or internship at their place of work?”

The work that you do with your alumni mentor will very likely improve your chances of getting a job or internship. However, the Program is **NOT** about getting jobs, but rather, it is about providing support and a safe space for professional exploration. **Mentees may NOT ask their mentors for a job of any kind.** However, mentees may inquire with their mentors about shadowing them at work for a day or about professional networking with the alumni mentor’s contacts.

4. “I’m a civil engineering student and I am specifically interested in pursuing a career in structural engineering. Can you guarantee that I will be matched with a mentor who has professional experience in this field?” Or “I’m interested in pursuing a career in [insert industry/field/role] can you guarantee that I’ll be matched with an alumni mentor with that exact experience?”

The Engineering Alumni-Student Career Mentoring Program is **NOT** about preparation for a specific industry or career. Rather, it is about working with mentors to develop the skills necessary to communicate with confidence in professional contexts, and to develop self-awareness. We cannot make any guarantees about the specific career background of your mentor. We can guarantee that mentors will have valuable professional and life experience to learn from, and that they will be willing to work with you to assist you in developing and achieving your career goals. That all said, we will do whatever we can to match mentors and mentees in a way that responds to professional backgrounds and career interests.

5. “I still have some questions about this program, who can I talk with about it?”

Please contact Jolie Woodson (jolie@cooper.edu) in the Center for Career Development to discuss any questions or concerns you have about this program or your participation in it.