

Professional Mentoring Program

Information Guide & FAQs



HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Voice of the HR Profession

Dear HRMA member,

So you are interested in participating in our Professional Mentoring Program but want to learn more about the program first? Great! There are so many benefits and reasons for being involved in our mentoring program, both intrinsic and extrinsic.

This Professional Mentoring Program Information & FAQ Guide will help clarify the roles and responsibilities of both mentors and protégés. Please take the time to read the contents of this document to better acquaint yourself to the commitment and activities surrounding this program.

The most successful mentoring relationship exists when both the mentor and the protégé agree to explore and learn from each other and when both partners are contributing and working to keep communication lines open; when the protégé role moves from one of a 'passive receiver' to that of an 'active partner' and the mentor from that of an 'authority' to more of a 'facilitator'. More importantly, the shift in the learning process is from one that is mentor-directed to one that is self-directed with the protégé responsible for their learning.

We hope that you will consider participating in our mentoring program as many members continue to come back year after year to give back to the profession and to enhance their own development and growth.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

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Purpose of our Program:

The HRMA Professional Mentoring Program (PMP) links an established human resources professional with an emerging HR practitioner, an HR professional transitioning into a new field of interest, or perhaps a professional who is taking on a more significant HR role within their organization. The PMP is intended to provide the vehicle for orienting, guiding, and supporting program participants throughout their relationship thereby resulting in the enhancement of their professional development, whether as the *mentor* or the *protégé*.

Types of Mentoring:

To truly understand the purpose of the HRMA PMP, it is important to also be familiar with the definition of mentoring, the types of mentoring programs, and the various categories or functions they serve.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a special type of relationship when a trusted and experienced individual, a *mentor*, freely acts as an advisor, coach, guide, teacher, or role model to someone less experienced, a *protégé*, who is seeking such a relationship. It is an ongoing, planned partnership that focuses on helping the *protégé* reach specific goals they have developed, over a set period of time.

A *mentor* is an experienced person who commits to helping another person reach important goals through coaching, listening, advising, and guiding. A *mentor* does not establish or complete the *protégé's* goals or objectives.

A *protégé* is an individual who receives advice, coaching, assistance, and feedback from a more experienced person with the desired outcome of achieving the goals that they have set. The *protégé* must have clear goals and be willing to be guided.

Degree of Formality

Informal mentoring is what happens naturally in our everyday relationships. Informal mentoring relationships happen on their own as opposed to being actively developed or structured with explicit goals. There are generally no expectations, regularly scheduled meetings, or sanctioning organizations.

Formal mentoring, on the other hand, happens when the relationship is structured, with clearly defined expectations, and the *protégé* and *mentor* make a connection with help or direction. Typically, the *protégé* and *mentor* agree to meet over a specific period of time and on a regular basis. The intention of this relationship is for the *protégé* to grow and learn by the *mentor's* example, expertise, and support.

The HRMA PMP is a *formal mentoring program* and is most effective when the structure, expectations, and goals are stated and understood from the outset.

Function

Educational mentoring is directly or indirectly aimed at improving the *protégé's* academic performance, or teaching the *protégé* some specific information or skills.

Career mentoring, which can incorporate aspects of educational mentoring, generally assists the *protégé* in acquiring new skills, gain exposure to another's area of expertise and knowledge, provide guidance with the advancement through their career path, or support the *protégé* in the workplace.

The HRMA PMP functions as a combination of both **educational and career mentoring**.

Benefits of Mentoring:

Mentoring brings value to everybody in its practice: *protégé*, *mentors*, and the organization(s) for which they work. *Protégé* have an opportunity to gain wisdom from someone who has travelled the path before them. *Mentors* have an opportunity to invest themselves in someone who seeks what they can offer.

Benefits for Protégés:

- Insight into the pros and cons of various career options and paths
- Increased self-awareness and self-discipline
- An expanded personal network
- Support in the transition to a new role or location
- A sounding board for testing ideas and plans
- Positive and constructive feedback on professional development areas

Benefits for Mentors:

- Proven method to share ideas, try new skills and take risks
- Enhanced capacity to translate values and strategies into productive actions
- Increased awareness of personal biases, assumptions, and areas for improvement
- Renewed enthusiasm for their role as an expert
- Personal fulfillment from investing in others¹

Desired Characteristics of Mentors and Protégés:

¹ SHRM Mentor Guide: Self-Paced Workbook 2007

A successful mentor should be...

- **People Oriented** – one who is genuinely interested in people and has a desire to help others develop and grow
- **Good Motivator** – needs to be able to motivate a *protégé* through encouraging feedback and challenging assignments
- **Effective Teacher** – must understand skills required by the *protégé's* position and assist with setting goals to achieve these when needed
- **Secure in Position** – must be confident in own career so pride for the *protégé's* accomplishments can be genuinely expressed and enjoys being part of *protégé's* success
- **Respects Others** – one who shows respect for another's well-being and differences in opinions, values, and interests

An ideal protégé should be...

- **Eager to Learn** – one who has a strong desire to learn new skills and strives to elevate own level of expertise
- **Able to Work as Team Player** – must be a team player and willing to contribute as much as possible to the mentoring relationship
- **Patient** – must be willing to put in the time and effort and understand that career advancement doesn't happen overnight
- **Risk Taker** – must be willing to move beyond tasks mastered and accept new and more challenging experiences
- **Positive Attitude** – should not be afraid to fail, a hopeful attitude will lead to success!²

"Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing"
Albert Schweitzer

² NASA Mentoring Program Handbook 2003

Roles and Responsibilities:

The PMP relationship consists of one *mentor* and one *protégé*. Both parties are equally responsible for actively participating in the PMP and committing to the following:

- Commit for the 9 month period of **mid-October – mid June** (may extend this if both parties agree)
- Participate in at least **1-3 hours per month** of interaction with your partner
- Establish (*protégé*) or support the development (*mentor*) of clear goals and objectives
- Continue to be a HRMA member in good standing throughout the program
- Complete an evaluation at the completion of the program

Protégé Responsibilities

- Take initiative and be proactive in and responsible for your career development
- Play an active role in setting personal goals and communicate those to your *mentor*
- Initiate discussions and activities and seek feedback
- Follow through on your commitments and the timeline you and your *mentor* have set
- Allow flexibility with regard to meeting times and places
- Be willing to be coached and ask for and receive feedback in a non-defensive manner
- Attend formal mentoring training, progress reviews and other events whenever possible

Mentor Responsibilities

- Take initiative to make the first contact and be willing, able and available
- Play an active role in supporting the *protégés* goals and define strategies for success
- Help *protégé* develop an appropriate learning plan
- Give sound, constructive, tactful and honest review of the *protégé's* progress
- Accept the *protégé* as a legitimate colleague with potential for high performance
- Provide help and serve as sounding board for issues relating to your *protégé's* goals
- Attend formal mentoring orientations, progress reviews and other events whenever possible

*"A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could,
because someone else thought they could"*

Unknown

Expectations for Mentors and Protégés:

Mentors and *protégés* typically enter their relationships with assumed expectations of each other. Many have been irritated and disappointed because expectations weren't met or even discussed. To prevent this and help you with your planning, be clear about these expectations and your responsibilities from the beginning. A mentoring relationship is a partnership, with both parties showing respect and support for each other.

Unreasonable Expectations Regarding Mentors

It's easy for a *protégé* to assume that the *mentor* will be more actively involved than the *mentor* is able. As a general guideline, the *mentor* should **not** be expected to:

- Drive the relationship or do the work for the protégé
- Be an expert in every imaginable development area
- Provide the *protégé* with personal introductions to other people unless they are comfortable and have offered to do so
- Spend more time on the relationship than he or she is willing or able to give
- Take the lead in the relationship, setting up all meetings and driving the *protégé's* career development
- Develop a friendship with the protégé outside of the boundaries of the relationship

Specific Tips for Protégés

- Remember that you own your development, not your *mentor*. It's up to you to identify objectives as well as keep the relationship focused and moving forward.
- Be prepared to ask for specific advice on your skill set, ideas, plans, and goals. The more specific you are the easier it is for your *mentor* to respond in a meaningful way.
- Be complete yet succinct in your comments and explanations
- If you get corrective feedback, don't try to defend yourself but rather ask specific questions such as "What don't you like about _____?" or "What would you do in a similar circumstance?"

"One of the principal reasons that mentoring relationships fail is that the learning process is not tended to and the focus on learning is not maintained"

Lois Zachary

Tips for Mentoring Success

1. To enhance opportunities for learning and/or networking

- Discuss how HR is conducted/practiced in the organizations you work in
- Attend the PMP Orientation Session together, whether 'in person' or web-based
- Attend other HRMA functions (i.e. roundtables, business mingles) together
- If appropriate, and both parties agree, introduce your partner to your own HR network

2. To track your progress towards your goals

- Complete the PMP Development Plan to document your goals and review regularly
- Set SMART goals – specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, time specific
- Provide regular feedback to each other and evaluate progress
- Discuss what you have learned from each other
- Be aware of inconsistencies – check for the difference between 'what is said' and 'what is done'

3. To communicate effectively

- If possible, plan for your first meeting to be 'in person'
- Complete the PMP Accountability Agreement at your first meeting to set out the 'ground rules'
- Be open and honest at all times
- Be considerate of each other's time and other commitments
- Actively participate in the relationship and initiate conversations

4. To maintain confidentiality in your relationship

- Respect the privacy of your partner
- Discuss what, if any, boundaries there are at the outset
- Do not disclose the details of your conversations and communications

5. Have fun and make the mentoring relationship a positive experience!

- Share your stories of successes as well as failures- we are all human after all
- Develop your cache of HR jokes as you never know when they will come in handy
- Share your mentoring experience with others to create awareness about this very valuable 'career development' strategy

***“Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person”
Mother Teresa***

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Do I need to be a member of HRMA to participate in this program?

Yes, the Professional Mentoring Program is a members only benefit.

How long does the program run?

The official 'start' of the mentoring program is now mid-October to early June of each year. When you apply, you are committing to participate in the program for the full 9 months.

Can I continue my mentoring relationship after the 9 months?

Yes and we encourage it. If you both agree you can continue as long as you like. Be aware however, that the formal program support is only in place for the 9 months that the official program runs.

When does intake for applications open?

Specific application open dates vary from year to year but will take place around mid-July to end of August. Check [our website](#) for specific dates.

When does intake for applications close?

Applications are usually accepted for a period of 3 - 4 weeks. The exact deadline will differ year to year and will be included in the initial email and subsequent communication to members. Again this information can be found on [our website](#).

Is there a charge to participate in this program?

There is no charge for mentors to participate in the program. Protégés are required to pay a small processing fee of \$30 for general members or \$20 for student members for the 2015-2016 program year.

Why is there a processing fee?

HRMA wishes a processing fee was not necessary, however the association believes in the value of mentoring for our members and this fee is one way to help offset administrative costs associated with processing applications along with the continued development of programming resources for participants.

Is this processing fee refundable?

As this fee is related to the processing of applications at the beginning of the program, it is non-refundable. It is not related to being accepted into the program or finding a match.

I have already self-identified someone to be my mentor/protégé, can I apply to the program and ask for that person specifically?

Yes you can, however we only match people together if *both* parties have agreed to work together. Both the mentor and the protégé need to complete their online application and specifically request to be matched with each other. Please ensure you have also selected the same region in which to be matched.

I participated last year and both of us wish to continue our mentoring relationship again this year. Do we need to reapply?

You do not need to reapply to be matched, however, you do need to notify us that you will be continuing your relationship if you wish to participate in and be communicated with about the mentoring program in your region. There is a separate online notification form which will be sent out to all past participants to complete when the program launches in September. There is no fee to notify us of your continuation with a match.

Does everyone get a match?

While every effort is made to provide all applicants with a match, HRMA cannot guarantee that you will be placed in the program as this is determined by the number of program volunteers and appropriate matches in any given year.

I was matched with someone who doesn't exactly possess the qualities I had indicated on my application. Why did this happen?

Our committee does their best to find you the best match possible given the pool of mentor candidates. Unfortunately, we can't ensure there will be a mentor who meets all of your requirements. Our aim is to find every protégé a mentor as best we can and that sometimes means that both protégés and mentors need to be flexible when it comes to expectations about their match.

What happens if I don't get matched?

We do our best to find everyone an appropriate match, but it all depends on the number of applicants each year. If we are unable to find you a match we will notify you before the onset of the program in mid-October. Things can change, however and if an appropriate match is found before the middle of November then we will contact you to see if you are still interested in participating. After the end of November if we still haven't found you a match you will have to reapply the following fall.

Why am I only able to be matched in my region?

At this time, in order to manage the large number of applicants we use our geographical regions to match you with someone closest to 'home'. Additionally, your regional Member Relations Managers and AC leads know our members best in their own region and thus we hope this knowledge will enable us to find the best match possible for you in your region.

Can I be a mentor *and* a protégé?

Yes, however you must complete the online application for each position separately.

Can I mentor more than one protégé?

Yes! We are always in need of mentors so if you can find the time to mentor more than one person it would help us to hopefully match every protégé with a mentor.

If I have a question about my match who do I reach out to? Each region has their own Mentoring Volunteer Committee lead. They are your 'go to' person first if you have any questions or concerns. You may also reach out the mentoring program manager at any time as well. Contact information for staff and volunteers can be found at the end of this document.

How often should I meet with my partner?

You can meet with your partner as often as you like, but it is important to meet at least once a month in order to maintain a valuable relationship. Some professionals have less discretionary time than others; therefore, their approach for staying in contact is by e-mail or telephone calls. Accessibility and maintaining contact is essential for the relationship of *mentor-protégé*. We also recommend a minimum of 1 - 3 hours per month.

How and what are we going to talk about during our first meeting?

You and your partner have been provided with information on how to find one another (e-mail, telephone, etc.) Generally we recommend that the *mentor* take the first step and contact the *protégé*. Remember, you

and your partner have been matched on the basis of something you have in common. More than likely you will have similar interests. If, after the first few minutes of meeting with your *protégé*, you do not find much to discuss, you may want to tell him or her more about yourself (e.g. hobbies, organizations you volunteer for, etc.)

What do I tell my partner about myself?

Your partner is probably very interested in your professional life. Share with him or her information about yourself and how you became interested in the profession, your current role in HR, or your involvement with HRMA. You may share personal information at your discretion. Some people may wish to connect with you personally as a general point of reference. If you are uncomfortable with this, however, it is imperative that you share this at the outset.

What kinds of activities can I do with my partner?

There are many possibilities but the activities will depend on both parties' availability. Most of us are very busy but try to schedule a social activity (coffee, networking event, HRMA event) from time to time. Undoubtedly, there are activities that you engage in regardless of whether you have a mentoring partner or not. In a recent survey, many *protégés* wrote favorably of meeting their *mentors* for lunch or dinner. Please remember that if you decide to invite your partner to an activity you are not expected to pay for him or her. It is important to discuss boundaries and expectation early on. You are not expected to attend social gatherings of a personal nature.

What do I do if my partner shares very serious problems or confidential matters with me?

If you believe that a professional is needed, you may suggest that your partner speak to a staff member in the HRMA Office who will refer them to an appropriate person for assistance. Also, be sure to tell your partner that the information discussed will not be shared with friends, family members, or colleagues.

What do I do if the relationship with my partner is not working (i.e. lack of interest)?

If after a few interactions, it is clear that the relationship will not work, please first call your regional advisory council mentoring lead to discuss solutions. Matching *mentors* and *protégés* is very challenging. It may be that we will have *mentor/protégé* matches that just do not work. Please do so as early as possible as we **may** be able to re-match you with another partner.

Are mentors responsible for academic assistance?

Mentors are not responsible for providing academic assistance. If your *protégé* needs academic assistance, please call the HRMA Office and your *protégé* will be referred to the appropriate person for assistance.

What is the PMP Accountability Agreement & PMP Development Plan and why is it important?

The **Accountability Agreement & Development Plan** serves as the backbone for the mentoring relationship. It provides the framework for the scope of the relationship and acts as a contract between the *mentor* and *protégé*. You will need to discuss this agreement during your initial conversation or meeting. It serves to determine the confidentiality standards, establish the boundaries for the relationship, help you set your meeting schedule, and set out ways to monitor progress. Templates are given to all participants once accepted into the program.

How many CHRP credits can I earn for participation in the PMP?

To satisfy the requirements of the **Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) National Recertification Log**, *mentors* and *protégés*

may amass renewal points under **Sections B1 and B2** at 1 point per hour of mentor contact to a maximum of 20.

How do I account for the time I have spent in the mentoring program for CHRP points?

Protégés and *mentors* with their CHRP designation can amass CHRP credits for the time spent in the PMP. The PMP Manager can provide verification of the fact that you are a participant in the program for any given year for the purpose of an audit; **however**, you must maintain your own log of the actual time spent with your *protégé /mentor*. A template Mentoring Log can be found in the Resource Guide given to you upon acceptance into the program. You must also ensure that you and your *protégé/mentor* are in agreement as to the time that you have spent together.

Have more questions about the mentoring program? Please reach out to the program manager at any time.

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