

# Veterans Affairs Canada

## Guide for Initial Meetings: Suggested Talking Points for Mentorship Plus

Congratulations on initiating your Sponsorship program! Here is a list of talking points that could be useful to discuss at your initial meetings with your Sponsor/Protégé. This list is not exhaustive. Feel free to discuss any other topics you think are relevant and can enhance the conversation.

The goal of your initial meetings is to set the tone, get to know each other, establish the dynamics of the sponsorship relationship and create a safe and supportive learning environment. Along with the Sponsorship Agreement, it is important to discuss your mutual expectations, limits of the relationships, goals and concerns, and determine a schedule for future meetings.

Get to know each other	Sponsor	Protégé
<b>History</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What first attracted you to pursue a career in your respective field or become a DG or Senior Director?</li><li>- When you look back at your professional life, is there a time that really stands out for you as a high point – a time when you felt most alive, most engaged, or really proud of yourself or your work?</li><li>- Do you have other interesting work experience (private sector)?</li></ul>	X	X
<b>Strengths and Contributions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What do you value most about your work when you are at your very best?</li><li>- What do you value most about working for VAC? Discuss some of the opportunities and challenges that you might you have experienced.</li><li>- Professionally speaking, what are your strengths? Weaknesses?</li><li>- What are your short-term / long-term career goals?</li><li>- What are your career aspirations and objectives?</li></ul>	X	X

<p><b>Positive learning experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the most important skillsets for success as an executive?</li> <li>- How would you describe your management style? Coaching style?</li> <li>- What is your perspective on exchanging honest and constructive feedback to enhance the full benefit of the sponsorship experience?</li> <li>- What are your personal and professional values?</li> <li>- Imagine that this sponsoring relationship has been rewarding and of great value to you. Describe what it would be like?</li> </ul>	X	X
<b>Competencies to be developed</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Protégé</b>
1. Why do you want to become an executive? What drives you to reach this level?	X	
2. What competencies and soft skills you want/need to further develop and why?	X	
3. Are you looking to acquire work experience/knowledge/exposure in a particular area or field? What type of training, learning opportunities and resources can you suggest?	X	
4. What types of developmental activities do you seek? (assignment, an acting opportunity or in participating in a high profile project in particular)	X	
5. What is your approach to problem solving and addressing/mitigating conflicts and leadership challenges?	X	X
6. Where do you see yourself at the end of the sponsorship journey?	X	
7. What do you anticipate you might be able to do and/or perceive differently after this experience?	X	X
8. As your sponsor, how can I support you in achieving your goals?	X	
<b>Logistics and meeting details</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Protégé</b>
9. Until the end of this sponsorship agreement, will there be a period when you expect to be less available? (travelling, special projects, family related, other reasons etc.)	X	X
10. What is your preferred mode of communication (Phone, Teams, In person) and timing and duration for our meetings? (over lunch, during working hours, morning, afternoon?)	X	X

<b>11.</b> Who sets up the meetings and what is the best format to maintain a sense of connection and maximize time? A formal agenda? Informal points?	X	X
<b>12.</b> Discuss what confidentiality means to each of you, including your own boundaries, and agree on what should and should not be confidential.	X	X
<b>13.</b> Do you have any work-life balance requirements that need to be taken into consideration? (specific working hours, medical conditions, etc..)	X	X