



McGill

McGill Black
Alumni Association

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Mentee Guide

McGill Black Mentorship Program

Mentee guide

The McGill Black Mentorship Program seeks to provide current students with an opportunity to explore their academic, professional, and/or personal goals within the McGill context and to enable alumni, faculty, and staff to share their experiences and knowledge.



About the McGill Black Alumni Association

The McGill Black Alumni Association (MBAA) is a community for present and future Black McGill alumni, as well as faculty and staff, to connect, communicate, and enrich their professional and personal lives. Through development, mentorship, and community service initiatives, our goal is to create a strong and supportive international network to help all Black members of the McGill community embrace the challenges and triumphs we experience during and after our time at McGill. MBAA exists to address the needs of Black McGill alumni, students, faculty, and staff and is open to all members of McGill University to join in discussion.

About the mentorship program

This mentorship program, organized in conjunction with the Subcommittee on Racialized and Ethnic Persons (REP) of the McGill Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity and with support from the McGill Alumni Association (MAA), is designed to connect Black McGill undergraduate and graduate students with Black McGill alumni, faculty, and staff in valuable partnerships. The program seeks to provide current students with an opportunity to explore their academic, professional, and/or personal goals within the McGill context and to enable alumni, faculty, and staff to share their experiences and knowledge.

The program aims to provide an engaging and rewarding experience for both mentors and mentees. Mentor-mentee pairings will be facilitated by MBAA, REP, and MAA based on the interests and goals provided by mentors and mentees in their applications.

Please note that matching will depend on the availability of mentors and mentees.

Commitment

By becoming a mentee, you commit to engaging in a mentorship relationship with a student for eight months (a full academic year). For mentorships that begin at the start of the winter semester, the duration must still be the minimum eight months (January-August). Mentors and mentees are welcome to continue their mentorship beyond the eight-month minimum independently from the organizations overseeing the program.

Mentors are required to meet (virtually or in person) with their mentee once at the beginning of the school year and once at the end. *Please note: If meeting in person, the initial meeting must be held in a public place. Please also be sure to follow all social distancing guidelines.*

Between the first and last meetings of the mentorship, mentors and mentees will have a touchpoint or meet (either virtually or in person) at least once each month, according to your and your mentor's availability. Mentors and mentees are welcome to meet more frequently if they would like and are available. While it is largely the mentee's responsibility to keep in contact and arrange meetings, mentors are encouraged to regularly check-in with mentees.



Expectations

Mentees are expected to:

- > Stay accessible, committed, and engaged throughout the length of the program
- > Ensure uninterrupted time with your mentor
- > Respect your mentor's time, resources, and capacity
- > Participate in any scheduled events of the program

The Mentor match

Once you have been matched with a mentor, they will be provided your name, contact information, and brief biography. You will also receive their contact information and biography. Your mentor will then send a short introductory email to welcome you to the mentorship program. In your response, please introduce yourself briefly:

- > Describe your academic background and interests
- > Attach a copy of your CV so the mentor can get a better idea of your background/experiences
- > Offer options for dates/times to schedule the next touchpoint or communication
- > Use professional etiquette and proofread your response before sending

Introductory meeting

Mentees are encouraged to meet with their mentor virtually or in person, but if video capability is not possible, a phone conversation is acceptable. Try to address some or all of the following topics in the introductory meeting:

- > What you and your mentor hope to achieve through the Mentorship
- > Your classes and extracurricular activities
- > Your short- and long-term goals
- > Your interests, values, and career aspirations
- > Mode and schedule of communication

Topics for discussion

Once you have laid the groundwork for your mentorship with the introductory meeting, you are encouraged to take an active role in building the relationship with your mentor. Get to know your mentor by asking questions about their career path, current responsibilities, and personal experiences. Discussion ideas for subsequent meetings include:

- > Updates on growth, challenges, etc. since your last meeting
- > Evolution of short- and long-term academic and career goals
- > Strategies for coping with academic stress
- > Networking etiquette and opportunities

Suggested activities

Build a strong and meaningful relationship by attending events and scheduling activities together, including networking events, lectures, coffee or lunch meetings, and conferences. *Please keep in mind social distancing guidelines when making plans.*

- > Have a casual Zoom coffee or lunch with your mentor to identify common interests/goals
- > Ask your mentor to hold a mock interview for you
- > Participate in relevant professional conferences, activities, or materials
- > Discuss with your mentor some of the campus resources available to McGill students and which one(s) you could consult between your scheduled meetings



Take initiative

Your academic and personal development is ultimately your own responsibility. You are expected to actively work towards your goals by taking initiative and not relying on your mentor to prompt you. Here's how you can take charge of your success:

- > Assume responsibility for acquiring or improving skills and knowledge
- > Be honest and realistic about your goals, expectations, challenges, and concerns
- > Come to meetings prepared and with a clear idea of what topics/issues you would like to address
- > Reach out to your mentor if you have specific questions or concerns that come up between meetings
- > Follow-up regularly so your mentor can stay updated on your academic, professional, and/or personal progress

Effective communication

Clear and open communication is essential to a productive mentorship, whether when planning meetings and follow-ups or asking for advice and guidance.

- > Be respectful and transparent with your mentor about your goals, successes, and struggles
- > Clearly articulate your ideas or concerns so your mentor can respond appropriately
- > Seek advice, constructive criticism, and direction from your mentor
- > Be an active listener when receiving advice or feedback from your mentor
- > Communicate efficiently to keep discussions on track
- > Give clear feedback to your mentor if you would like to change something in the mentoring relationship

Realistic expectations

The role of a mentor is to offer advice, feedback, and possible resources or serve as a sounding board for your ideas. Be understanding of your mentor's abilities and limitations.

- > Mentors are busy and may not always be available when you are.
- > Do not ask for privileges that your mentor may not want or be able to provide (e.g. job shadowing, office tours, etc.). Your mentor may have a good reason for not offering those perks.
- > Although your mentor will guide and support you, they are not responsible for solving your problems for you.

Career advice

One of the most valuable takeaways from a mentorship is a new perspective or an alternative point of view. In addition to providing academic and/or job support, mentors challenge and stretch your thinking. Your mentor can open your eyes by sharing their professional and personal experiences with you.

- > Be receptive to and consider new ideas or paths, even if they seem irrelevant to you
- > Make informed choices after fully reflecting on all suggested possibilities
- > Be responsive to feedback and constructive criticism



Post-mentorship survey and feedback

Mentors and mentees will be required to provide feedback at the midway point of the mentorship (in either December or April) as well as a final evaluation (in either April or August) on your mentor-mentee match and the program overall. In addition, we encourage mentees to consider giving back to McGill's Black community by applying to become mentors once they graduate.

Code of conduct

- > Be mindful of your mentor's schedule, and communicate at agreed-upon times
- > Actively seek academic and professional experiences throughout the mentoring relationship
- > Respect your mentor's confidentiality and privacy
- > Treat your mentor with respect and maintain professional conduct
- > Do not ask or expect your mentor to provide you with a job

Mismatch

In cases where there are any logistical or other concerns with a mentor-mentee match, either the mentor or the mentee can contact program coordinators for re-assignment. Such cases will be addressed in strict confidentiality.

If you have any further questions or concerns during the program, please contact the program coordinators at mbaa.alumni@mcgill.ca or alumnicareers@mcgill.ca.

