

Creating Successful History Graduate Mentor-Mentee Relationships

A guidance document for History students and faculty
Co-authored by History students and faculty, spring 2023¹

What is mentoring?

“Advising is an activity that generally focuses on academic and programmatic guidance for students, ranging from coursework and program navigation steps to pointing out key resources and contacts within a given community. Mentoring is a bi-directional activity between a mentor and a mentee that often includes aspects of advising, but has additional involvement of a mentor-mentee relationship that transcends the advising role. This will generally involve a faculty member or other professional in the discipline working with the mentee to understand the mentee’s personal and professional goals and then providing the mentee with a mix of professional knowledge, career advice, counsel on work-life balance issues, guidance on academic expectations, a rigorous academic challenge, and support as the mentee develops the skills necessary to become a full member of a profession.”²

Why seek mentoring relationships (what can students get from mentors)?

Mentors can provide students with all kinds of professional guidance including career advice, professional skills, job advice, goal setting, conferences, fellowships and grants, advice on publishing, networking, CV help, job market prep, cover letters, sharing or generating ideas about research and teaching, information about seminars, and talks, internships and paid research opportunities. We encourage students to seek multiple mentor voices and perspectives.

Who can be a mentor?

Any faculty or staff member can be a mentor. Students should seek multiple faculty mentors, as every faculty member brings different expertise, styles, and accessibility to a relationship. Each mentor will have a different style & level of accessibility. Students should take responsibility for initiating mentoring relationships, but faculty can direct students toward other potential mentors and will be clear about what they can provide a student.

When should mentoring happen?

Mentoring needs will change over time so you should expect your relationship with mentors to evolve and to find new people to talk to throughout your grad career. The History Department encourages students to develop this professional skill throughout their careers.

Making the most of a Mentor-Mentee relationship

What Students Mentees can expect of Faculty Mentors:

- **Students can expect professional development and discipline-specific guidance from their mentors.** This can include job application processes, post-grad plans, networking opportunities, applying and preparation for conferences, oral presentations, grant writing, goal setting, and providing guidance on developing historical skills such as historiography and research techniques.
- **Mentors will be clear** with students about their capacity to assist them and what their specialities are.
- **Mentors can provide support and advice** pertinent to successfully completing graduate school.

¹ Student authors: Addie Brian, Jade Felthoven, R.J. Hillman, and Libby LeDoux.

² Language taken from [Faculty Manual, Section E.12.1](#)

- **Mentors and Mentees will maintain clear and timely communication** throughout their time at CSU.
- **Mentors and Mentees will encourage each other to participate** in the intellectual and social life of the department.

What Faculty Mentors can expect of Student Mentees:

- **Mentees will be active participants in their own education and professional development.** Mentees will approach grad school with the same level of professionalism as in their dream jobs. In other words, mentees will show up for every class and meeting, be on time, and respond to emails clearly and promptly. Remember, what one gets from graduate school is proportional to what one puts in – engagement and effort are key to growth and success.
- **Mentees will be proactive in creating these relationships, and seek out mentoring relationships with many different people.** Faculty should encourage students to get many different perspectives, as a Master's program is a time when students can start creating a professional network for support during and after grad school.
- **Mentees will listen to mentors, but also offer feedback.** Mentoring is a relationship, not a one-way communication, so reflection and reaction will improve the mentoring received.
- **Mentors and Mentees will maintain clear and timely communication** throughout their time at CSU.
- **Mentors and Mentees will encourage each other to participate** in the intellectual and social life of the department.