Suggested Questions to ask your Mentor

The keys to a successful mentoring relationship are your enthusiasm, preparation and ability to communicate clearly. Before you meet your mentor, think about the type of information which would be helpful for you. The following questions are meant to help you get started.

Questions about your mentor’s career path/training:

- What kind of education/training do you have?
- What was your experience at McGill like?
- How did your time at McGill prepare you for your career? Are your studies at all related to your career?
- How did you manage the transition from school to work?
- How did you get your first job post-graduation?
- What has your career path been like to date? Is it representative of most people in this kind of position?
- How important is a graduate degree, designation, or additional certificate in this field?
- Are you a member of any professional orders or associations? Which ones do you feel are the most important to belong to?
- What are the future prospects like in this field? What trends do you see developing over the next few years?
- If you could change any aspects of your career, what would you change?

Questions about their current position and responsibilities:

- How did you obtain your current position?
- What are your primary job responsibilities?
- What does a typical day/week in your job look like?
- What do you enjoy the most about your job? The least?
- What are the most challenging aspects of your job?
- What kind of professional development opportunities are available?
- Are there many opportunities for advancement in this position/organization?
- Who are the people who usually excel in this field/position? What personal qualities do you need to succeed?

Questions about working conditions:

- How many hours do you work in an average week?
- How much autonomy do you have in terms of what you focus on at work?
- What kind of supervision did you have when you were starting out? Currently?
- How is your performance evaluated?
• What is the average starting salary in this field?
• How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours, vacation or job location?

Questions relating to your current situation and future goals:

• What advice would you like to have heard when you were starting out?
• How would you recommend I “try out” this line of work while I am still in school?
• Does your organization offer volunteer or internship opportunities for students who are looking for related experience?
• Do you have any recommendations with regards to useful courses to take or extracurricular activities to be involved with?
• Are there any other fields or jobs you would suggest I research/explore?
• How do people find out about job openings in this field? Are they advertised? If so, where?
• When should I start applying for positions and forwarding my resume?
• How is a typical job interview in this industry conducted?
• Is there anyone else in this field you would recommend I talk to? When I call them, may I mention that you referred me?