



## Hot Tips for Meeting with Faculty Mentors

**Create a mentorship agreement and follow its guidelines.** Mentorship agreements are a great way to work collaboratively with your mentor to delineate expectations, responsibilities, and rules of engagement for your mentorship relationship. This document should also establish meeting etiquette, communication standards, and scheduling practices. That way, these practices can be easily referred to (and altered if necessary). Be sure to establish **meeting times, meeting frequency, and meeting locations** so there is no unnecessary logistical confusion.

**Take the initiative to set the agenda yourself.** Part of navigating graduate school and becoming a successful scholar involves taking charge of your academic experiences. Selecting a meeting topic, crafting a meeting agenda, and communicating these to your mentor in a professional manner are important skills to learn and can support you in achieving your goals.

**Speak up!** Don't be afraid to voice your interests and aspirations, even if they are different from those of your mentor. Learning to identify and name your interests and needs to those you are working with is a key skill for your interpersonal and professional academic life. Take advantage of your mentoring meetings to practice articulating new ideas / research methodologies / conceptual frameworks and be open to challenges and feedback from your mentor.

**Make a practice of summarizing the meeting after it's over.** This is an excellent practice for developing diligent listening and organizational skills. Documenting meeting minutes in written form (email or a shared document) is also a useful way to maintain an archive of your conversations with your mentor and keep tabs on your progress.

**Establish expectations for next steps.** This might be as simple as scheduling another meeting. Or it might mean thinking with your mentor about taking a certain action or completing certain tasks. Whatever it may be, don't let the meeting end without a clear sense (for both of you) of what's next.

**Have a plan to address conflicts.** Make sure that you have a conversation with your faculty mentor early on in the relationship (or you could even include this in your mentorship agreement) about how you two will proceed if a significant conflict arises. Will you involve the department chair? Will you bring in a conflict resolution facilitator? Having this plan in place before a challenging encounter occurs can save the relationship from undergoing irrevocable damage.