



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS
Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Office Hours and Mentorship Program: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the mentorship program?

The mentorship program is one of the most valuable resources at the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. We connect UT Dallas students, staff, faculty and alumni with industry leaders for one-on-one meetings. Our mentors bring decades of experience and expertise in a wide range of fields. Many of our mentors are entrepreneurs themselves or frequently work with startups. We have monthly office hours for any UTD affiliated startup, Entrepreneurs in Residence at our Venture Development Center, and a formal mentoring program through VMS NTX for ventures that are more established.

How do I sign up for a meeting?

The link to sign up for a meeting will be sent in the Institute newsletter every Monday. Currently, Mentor Office Hours are scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM at the Blackstone LaunchPad. You can sign up for your appointment through the link in the newsletter. If you are unable to make the monthly office hours, you may complete a mentor meeting request form on our website at <https://innovation.utdallas.edu/mentorship/> and we will follow up with you to set an appointment.

Can I bring a colleague, business partner, etc. to the meeting? What if they are not affiliated with UT Dallas?

Yes! As long as one person from your team is a UT Dallas student, staff member, faculty member, or alumni, your team is qualified to participate in our mentor programs.

Do I need to check in for my appointment?

Please stop at the front desk at the Blackstone LaunchPad to swipe your Comet Card or sign in.

What if I need to cancel?

Please provide at least 72 hours cancellation notice by cancelling your sign up in signup genius or emailing **Sarah Jane Murdock (sarahjane.murdock@utdallas.edu)**. Our mentors are very generous in donating their time and traveling to campus.

What if I miss a meeting?

Missed appointments are an embarrassment to both the Institute and our entrepreneurs, and they strain the relationships that our staff works so hard to build and maintain with the mentors. Without adequate prior notice, we are unable to fill your spot and the meeting opportunity goes wasted. If you miss a meeting, you will no longer be able to participate in mentor hours.



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Can I meet with a mentor more than once?

Yes, though if you plan on meeting a lot, it's best to set up time outside mentor appointments to make room for others.

How should I prepare for the meeting? Is there anything I need to bring?

Be early enough to allow time to check in at the front desk.

Know what you want to get out of the meeting by creating a list of discussion topics or questions. You should practice being able to describe what you are working on, so that you can be concise and thorough and the mentor will be able to understand the idea easily. Check out the mentor's profile in advance so you can better understand their expertise and what they can help you with. Mentors can meet with anyone from early ideation stage on.

If you would like to send information (like pitch deck, website link, etc) to the mentor ahead of time, send it to **Sarah Jane Murdock (sarahjane.murdock@utdallas.edu)** at least 24 hours in advance.

Can I ask a mentor to invest in my company?

Mentor appointments are a good way to begin building relationships that could lead to investment down the road. Please don't ask for money the first time you meet a mentor. Be strategic, and please ask the Institute for guidance if you are unsure.

Can I ask a mentor to sign an NDA?

It is HIGHLY unlikely that mentors will sign NDAs. Ideas are much less valuable than execution, and if someone can build your company just from hearing your idea, you probably need a better idea. If the meeting goes well and there is a reason to discuss proprietary issues, then an NDA can be considered for a subsequent meeting.

However, if you believe you have patentable IP or trade secrets, seek the advice of an attorney before disclosing your idea.

How can I follow up with a mentor?

We encourage you to follow up after your mentor meeting and continue building your relationship. During the meeting, it is appropriate to ask the mentor if you may follow up with them. Most are very willing, and you may request their email address.

What do I do if a mentor wants me to use their products or services?

Mentors should not attempt to hard-sell startup founders on their products or services. Please let us know if this ever happens, especially if it comes across with any feeling of pressure.