

## FOR CORPORATE PARTNERS AND MENTORS

### NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC INDUSTRY MENTORS NETWORK TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

#### A. Introduction

##### SkillsFuture

Launched in 2015, SkillsFuture is a national movement that aims to provide opportunities for every citizen to develop their fullest potential throughout life, regardless of their starting points. At the Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs), this movement begins with the strengthening of Education and Career Guidance (ECG) so that students are better equipped to make well-informed education and career choices.

##### Ngee Ann Graduate Outcomes

Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) aims to imbue in all students a passion to seek out learnings beyond the classroom, from different parts of the world, from the young and the old and from different industries. The NP graduate must be agile, adaptable and always embracing change so as to bring that something xtra as a global-smart professional.

##### Industry Mentors Network

It is against the backdrop of SkillsFuture and NP Graduate Outcomes that the Industry Mentors Network (IMN) was conceived. The IMN is a mentoring programme where an industry practitioner (mentor) provides professional and industry guidance to **a small group of 3 to 4 students** to help them in their personal growth and development, particularly in the area of careers.

Through the mentoring relationships with industry practitioners, students are kept aware of job and career growth opportunities in the industries for which they are being trained. Students will be encouraged to reflect on what they hope to accomplish at NP and beyond and the pathways to get there.

#### B. Objectives

The IMN aims to:

1. Deepen students' skills and commitment in sectors they are trained for;
2. Broaden students' perspectives on career opportunities and assist them to reach their career aspirations;
3. Enhance networking opportunities for students and develop their confidence in communicating with experienced professionals; and
4. Develop NP-industry partnerships and collaborations.

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### **C. Benefits for the Mentor**

A mentor takes on a long term view to provide guidance, support, encouragement and inspiration to a student through the sharing of life experiences and exploring together options in career and in life.

Mentoring can be tremendously enjoyable and many mentors relish the journey of investing in others and in developing leaders for the profession while reflecting on their own experiences.

The IMN will allow mentors to understand the psyche and motivations of the younger generation. In the process, they will get to hone their mentoring skills and gather innovative ideas and perspectives from their students.

### **D. Benefits for the Mentor's Company *(as a corporate partner)***

Companies are invited to join the IMN as a corporate partner. By nominating suitable company mentors who can provide effective mentorships and setting aside company time, venues and/or events for company mentors to meet their students, e.g. 4 hours/company per mentor/year, a corporate partner of the IMN will help raise the awareness and enhance the perception of the industry.

Through helping students understand career pathways and progression opportunities within the company and/or the industry, these students will form a potential pool of interns and/or employees. All these will strengthen the company and industry's manpower recruitment and retention efforts.

### **E. Benefits for the Student**

Through mentors' sharing of industry developments, their career journeys and their own mentors who have helped shape their lives, students will find mentoring relationships invaluable as they explore and make decisions about their future.

The IMN will provide opportunities for mentors to assist with the matching of students' skills, interests and values to plausible career pathways. With their years of experiences and wealth of networks, mentors are also well placed to advise students on job applications and interviews as well as direct them to suitable contacts and/or opportunities. With guidance from their mentors, students will be able to set their career goals, track progress towards those goals and work towards closing gaps, if any.

As mentors and students with common industry interests are connected via the IMN, there is always scope for reciprocal learning and sharing during and even beyond the programme.

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### F. Requirements

The key to fruitful mentoring relationships is to ensure that mentors and students discuss and arrive at shared expectations of and commitments towards the IMN.

#### Mentors

People developers with a heart to serve are crucial to ensure the success of the IMN. In general, a mentor:

1. Is ready to embrace NP's beliefs, mission and vision;
2. Possesses good knowledge of career pathways in the industry;
3. Possesses good interpersonal skills, be encouraging, motivating and listens well;
4. Enjoys working with young adults and takes an active interest in their developmental process; and
5. Has about 5 years or more of relevant industry experience;

#### Students

Students must be fully aware that it is a privilege to be on the IMN as industry professionals are spending their time mentoring them and giving them a head start in their personal and career development.

Students must be self-starters who are committed to see through the full term of the IMN, barring any unforeseen circumstances. **Students should initiate and maintain contact** with their mentors to coordinate the meet ups and to update on their progress. This can be done either via phone, email or text messages.

#### Commitment

In as far as practicable, students' interests, values as well as education and career goals will be considered when they are being matched to their mentors. To promote relationship building and interaction, the ratio of mentor to students is intentionally kept small at **1 mentor to 3 – 4 students**. With a small number of 4 – 5 persons, it will be easier administratively when coordinating activities.

The mentoring process underlying the IMN hinges on **face-to-face** interactions. A mentor and his/her students should meet up at least **once every semester** or **twice a year** for a duration of 1 year, with the possibility of extending the mentoring process until the students graduate. Should their schedules permit, the mentor and his/her students are at liberty to meet up more than the required once every semester, especially over company and/or industry events which lend themselves as good mentoring and networking sessions.

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The proposed ratio of mentor to students, programme duration and frequency of meet-ups aim to promote fruitful mentoring journeys and meaningful relationship building between mentors and students.

### **G. Mentorship Activities**

Mentors and students will be requested to attend the following mentorship activities:

#### Initiation

The IMN journey commences with an initial meeting between a mentor and his/her students. Discussions between the mentor and his/her students on their shared goals and commitments towards the programme as well as planned activities for subsequent meet-ups will take place during this initial meeting.

#### *Goals*

Shared goals between the mentors and students could include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Mentors to share knowledge, experiences and career journeys with students;
- Mentors to convey industry insights and developments to students;
- Mentors to guide students on personal development and career planning;

and any other goals aimed at helping the students explore personal development and career options. These shared goals should be achievable and realistic taking commitments into consideration.

Though it is hoped that student(s) may intern or work at the mentor's workplace, the IMN does not obligate NP, mentors and students to ensure internship and/or employment placements.

#### Meet-Ups

Subsequent meet-ups may be conducted at mentors' offices, hence allowing the students sneak peeks into their mentors' workplaces, or any other location convenient to all members of the work group, i.e. a mentor and his/her 3 – 4 students, and appropriate to achieve the programme goals and objectives of a specific meet-up.

Suggested activities during the subsequent meet-ups between a mentor and his/her students may include, but are not restricted to, the following:

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- Chat sessions where mentors share their knowledge, life and work experiences as well as industry insights;
- Exploratory activities such as researching collaboratively on a topic, industry developments or trends;
- Developmental activities such as a mentor guiding his/her students to refine their career goals, validating students' (mock) interviews, resumes or job applications and giving company-specific feedback and sharing industry practices thereafter;
- Discussions led by mentors to increase students' understanding of the demands of various career options, workplace culture and job market. Taking students' interests, values and motivations into consideration, mentors can also help identify gaps in student's skills and experiences and guide them on pathways to bridge those gaps;
- Students visiting and shadowing their mentors at their workplaces; and
- Attending corporate and/or industry events together.

### Progress & Feedback

At the end of every semester, students will be requested to submit their progress, learning reflections as well as updates, if any, to the goals, commitment and planned activities detailed in the Programme Agreement/Discussion Worksheet.

Feedback may also be requested from mentors to ascertain the effectiveness of IMN in meeting its objectives and the areas for improvement. Mentors may also be invited to share their experiences and best practices of the IMN. Such sharing sessions will also lend themselves as networking sessions for both mentors and students.

## **H. Guidelines for Mentor and Students**

### General

To work towards a mutually rewarding mentoring journey, both mentors and students are encouraged to adopt the following mindset and attitudes throughout the IMN journey:

- Practise the NP core values of Respect, Resilience, Responsibility, Integrity, Gratitude and Compassion (R3IGC);
- Keep to scheduled meeting times or give adequate notice of changes
- Be open about and receptive towards sharing of knowledge, experiences, industry insights and feedback. Keep sharing and feedback balanced and realistic;
- Respect privacy and honour experiences (be they successes or failures);
- Observe confidentiality, objectivity and professionalism in all dealings; and
- Advise Programme Coordinator of issues and/or concerns

Please refer to Annex A for further elaboration.

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### Maturity and Safety

Mentors are requested to consider the **maturity and safety** of their students when ascertaining the suitability of planned activities. We seek mentors' assistance to brief their students on safety guidelines and equip them with the necessary personal protective gear during visits to the mentors' workplace, where applicable.

### Costs of Engagements

Mentors are encouraged to engage all their students collectively to promote collaborative learning and expediency in knowledge and experience sharing. As a general practice, students will foot their share of costs incurred during the activities, e.g. food costs incurred over chat sessions conducted at eateries. Mentors are kindly requested to keep costs of meet ups and engagement affordable for their students.

### Termination of Programme

In the event that the mentoring arrangement between a mentor and his/her student(s) is to be discontinued, either the mentor or the student may submit a request in writing to the Programme Coordinator. In the interests of the institution, NP may also similarly do so by informing the mentor and his/her student(s) in writing. A corporate partner may also withdraw its participation in writing to the Programme Coordinator.

**NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC  
INDUSTRY MENTORS NETWORK  
GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS AND STUDENTS**

**A. For Mentors**

Some of your students may be fresh from their secondary schools while others may be about to make that all important decision to work or further their studies after graduating with a Diploma. Regardless, most if not all of them will only be in their late teens and hence will do well with your added support and encouragement. Where possible, please

- Be committed to the expected time to be allocated for the students, maintain communication and follow through on commitments;
- Be patient with, motivate and encourage your students and in so doing, build their self-confidence;
- Try to understand your students' perspectives and listen with empathy;
- Be a facilitator, challenge your students with activities and/or alternative perspectives while guiding them towards self-reliance;
- Share insights from your own knowledge and experiences and be a resource person to help students set realistic goals;
- Open doors for your students by introducing them to suitable networks and/or opportunities;
- Observe professional boundaries which commensurate the stature of a mentor and the intent of IMN;
- Take necessary precautions to ensure that a meeting with mentee(s) is conducted appropriately and in an appropriate environment;
- Avoid any physical contact that could be reasonably misconstrued to be unprofessional, offensive, romantic, or sexual;
- Refrain from establishing an inappropriate relationship with mentee(s) whether the student has consented to the relationship, or whether the relationship is condoned by parents/legal guardians/caregivers; and
- Inform the Programme Coordinator in writing if you wish to withdraw from the programme.

**B. For Students**

Your mentor has committed a considerable amount of time and effort to assist you in your personal and career development journey. You will need to take responsibility for your learning and development from the IMN. Correspondingly, your commitment and effort towards the programme should be no less than your mentor's. For a start, students need to be clear of your personal goals as that would boost the chances of achieving the outcomes desired of the programme. In addition, students need to:

Be clear of and committed towards the planned activities of the programme;

- Submit the programme agreement/discussion worksheet, progress and reflections in a timely manner;
- Take the initiative to contact your mentor to coordinate the meet ups, either via phone, email or text messages, and keep him/her updated of your progress;
- Be proactive, prepare for all meet ups and ask questions. Your mentor may not have the answers to all your questions and may refer you to others who may be able to help;
- Be keen to learn and to establish contacts to build relationships during and beyond the programme;
- Be receptive to alternative perspectives, options and opportunities;
- Keep an open mind on feedback and be prepared to change;
- Be respectful and courteous in all dealings with your mentor and be grateful for the time and effort invested by him/her. You represent NP and your mentor's experience with you will impact his/her continued relationship with NP;
- Be mindful of your sharing on social media as what is expressed should be done knowing that it would be made public;
- Avoid any physical contact that could be reasonably misconstrued to be unprofessional, offensive, romantic, or sexual;
- Refrain from establishing an inappropriate relationship with mentor(s) whether the mentor has consented to the relationship;
- Maintain a professional and respectful relationship; and
- Inform the Programme Coordinator in writing if you wish to withdraw from the programme.