

ACVP MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

BACKGROUND: Mentorship is recognized as a key component of personal and professional development in the health care professions, including the veterinary field. Finding an effective mentor thus is an important step in the veterinary pathologist's career. However, establishing and maintaining a productive mentorship relationship is challenging for veterinary pathologists for several reasons, including the fact that many work in relatively small divisions comprising only a few to no pathology colleagues.

A *mentor* provides support, a sounding board, knowledge, encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback to the mentee by developing a relationship that encourages growth.

A *mentee* seeks guidance in career and professional development from a more experienced individual. Mentees are responsible for their own career and professional development.

PROGRAM GOALS: The ACVP mentorship program aims: (1) to provide veterinary pathologist mentees with mentors from outside their organizations; (2) to provide a basic framework of mentorship training to mentee and mentor participants; (3) to help ACVP members develop professionally.

This 12-month program will focus on developmental mentorship (ie, not training of any specific kind) to support veterinary pathologist mentees in their career development and professional pursuits.

Mentor Program

Participant Eligibility

All program participants must be ACVP members.

Mentors

Mentors will ideally have at least 5 years of experience in the specific area(s) of need. Mentors should have a desire to contribute to the future of the profession, and a willingness to share experiences and build relationships.

Mentees

Mentees must be ACVP members (Trainee Affiliate and Allied Professional Affiliate included). The career of a pathologist can involve many twists and turns, including changes in focus area. Accomplished individuals may look for mentorship to grow in additional areas.

Program Requirements:

- Meet at least seven times, virtually or in person, in the 12-month period (duration and schedule will be decided by mentor/mentee pairs);
- Have a genuine interest and commitment in the ACVP Mentorship Program;
- Be objective, honest, and supportive;
- Act ethically and with respect towards all participants;
- Respect and maintain strict confidentiality;
- Contribute to discussion and attainment of goals raised in meetings; and
- Complete the Mentorship Program post-evaluation.

Mentor/Mentee Pairing

The program will attempt to link mentors and mentees with suitable interests and areas of expertise based on the enrollment questionnaire.

If either the mentor or mentee is uncomfortable with the pairing at any stage during the Mentorship Program, or decides the mentorship is not successful, the Early Mentorship Closure process (below) explains the way to end the relationship.

Suggested Meeting Framework

Mentorship resources are provided on the ACVP website. We recommend mentor/mentee pairs watch this introductory video that provides a foundation for successful mentor/mentee relationships.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSpyKjyr7Gw&list=PL4ripzZbflsxlwvqaUf7RgO4pMNngaKXs&index=4>

Mentorship resources (those posted on ACVP and numerous other sources) provide continued development and are useful in navigating all aspects of the relationship.

Stage 1: Establish the Relationship

- Get to know each other
- Share career/work history
- Identify goals

Stage 2: Develop/Support/Attain Goals

- Refine and clarify mentorship goals
- Develop trust and rapport over time
- Provide feedback

Stage 3: Summary and Conclusion of the ACVP Mentorship Program

- Complete the post-program evaluation
- Discuss the future of your relationship now that the program is complete.

Meeting Framework Suggestions:

Meeting 1: The first meeting sets the foundation for the development of the mentorship relationship. Although meeting a new person virtually for the first time can be intimidating, it is important that both parties share the same expectations of the program. At the first meeting it is recommended that the mentor and mentee:

- Get to know each other
- Share career/work history
- Identify goals

Meetings 2-6: All subsequent meetings after the first should revolve around the current needs/objectives of the mentee with an effort to continue to learn more about each other and solidify the mentor-mentee relationship. At these meetings we recommend:

- Discuss mentee's current/evolving objectives/needs
- Establish goals based on the mentee's needs and objectives
- Identify actionable tasks or establish a tentative framework/approach to achieve these goals
- Discuss mentee's progress/accomplishments since last meeting
- Outline what the mentor and mentee will do prior to the next meeting
- Set a date and time and platform for the next meeting

Meeting 7: The last meeting should be used to summarize the progress and accomplishments of the last 12 months. We also recommend utilizing this meeting to openly discuss how the mentor and mentee view their relationship continuing. At the last meeting we recommend:

- The mentor and mentee complete the post-program evaluation
- Discuss the need or want for future meetings.
- Discuss what this program has meant to them, and what they have learned from it.

Early Mentorship Closure

There may be situations when the mentor/mentee relationship ends prematurely. It should be noted that not all mentee and mentor relationships work out, whether it be interests, schedule or personalities and it is to be expected that some relationships will need early closure. The relationship can be ended with a "no fault" closure after informing the program coordinators. In all cases, participants will be encouraged to participate in future programs.

Early mentorship closure can be initiated by either party, and explaining the reasons for closure is not required. This “no fault” closure attributes no blame on either party. Either party can initiate closure directly, or can contact the program coordinator to facilitate this process. All conversations should be professional and respectful.