

**SME
Advisors
Guide**

OBIO© Introduction

OBIO is a not-for-profit, membership-based innovation organization engaged in strategy, programming, policy development and advocacy to further the commercialization of human health technologies positioning Canada as a leader in the international marketplace. OBIO advances this goal through collaborative partnerships with industry, the investment community, academia, the health system and government.

Workforce development

- The H2BB program is part of the OBIO portfolio of programs that help growing health companies grow and thrive.
- Where other OBIO programs enable companies to commercialize their technologies and access markets, H2BB aims to develop their workforce.
- These guides are available exclusively to OBIO member companies and who will have access to the new OBIO Job Board and Talent Network.
- All Ontario-based roles advertised on the OBIO Job Board are eligible for the OBIO H2BB training program to onboard and develop the incoming workforce.

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Introduction



The H2BB program is designed to provide structured, on-the-job learning experience for recent hires and consists of the four elements highlighted below.

- 1 | Candidate/Company Match:** OBIO's job board talent network platform allows H2BB candidates to connect with health science industry employers. Candidates can showcase their skills by building a talent network profile. OBIO member companies looking to hire can connect with talent network profiles that match the skills and qualifications they seek.
- 2 | Extensive Training:** OBIO provides engaging, content-intensive training modules for new hires during their first few months in their new, and often, first new roles. OBIO's interactive training modules, lead by industry experts and tailored for the health science industry and member companies, support new hire onboarding to reduce the time needed to become productive.
- 3 | 1:1 Mentoring:** OBIO matches each new hire with a Subject Matter Expert (SME) advisor who provides mentorship during the first four months of a new hire's arrival.
- 4 | Networking:** OBIO provides opportunities for new hires to interact with executives and entrepreneurs in the health science sector through industry-specific events and training.

How to Use this Guide

This guide is intended to support SME (Subject Matter Expert) Advisors serving as mentors for early career new hires who are enrolled in OBIO's H2BB™ (Health to Business Bridge) Program. In this context the mentor is not the direct supervisor of the new hire.

As referred to in this guide, “early career talent” are recent graduates who are transitioning from academia to industry or from a technical background into business-oriented roles. They typically have less than 1 year of work experience and tend to fill technical and business entry-level roles within industry.

The guide has been written to be useful to anyone involved in mentoring any new hires or other individuals early in their careers or transitioning into the health science industry.

From your perspective as an SME Advisor, the H2BB program is designed to ensure

that companies achieve the support they need to maximize the potential return on investment (ROI) from hiring early career talent or transitioning talent. At the same time the new hire is able to learn how to apply what they have learned academically in a real-world environment and develop skills and relationships that will allow them to have a successful career in the health science industry.

The SME mentorship is intended to complement the H2BB training and the roles of the participants in their respective companies.

Whether you are a new or experienced mentor, we hope you will find some tips and techniques to help build a meaningful relationship with your mentee and to ensure a successful onboarding and work experience. The topics are intended as modules to be accessed based upon your own individual needs at any stage of the mentoring process.

So, You've Been Asked To Be An Advisor

Companies utilize mentoring programs to support a learning culture and, most importantly, for the development and retention of critical talent. These conversations help in delivery of new knowledge to employees and assist in building a high-performance workforce.

H2BB mentors complement this transition and the onboarding process of the participant into a health science company, by coaching them on useful solutions to work-related technical and business challenges. In essence, as a mentor you would be coaching new hires on how to add value to their company but also for their personal growth and professional development.

It is usual for the Advisor to sign an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) with the company. It is recommended that the new hire's Supervisor attend the first meeting between the SME Advisor and the new hire to ensure alignment and mutual understanding.



SME ADVISOR PROFILES INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

- Are passionate contributors to the advancement of the Canadian health science ecosystem.
- Are innovators, leaders and trailblazers.
- Have the desire to share career insights to advance talent in the health science sector.
- Want to be part of an elite group of mentors.
- Value opportunities to share concepts and ideas.
- Want to be challenged to improve professionally and personally.
- Are good communicators.
- Demonstrate high professional integrity and ethics.

You have been approached to serve as an Advisor because you are a successful practitioner in your field. However, this will not inherently make you a good mentor. You may have some formal teaching or training experience. Again, this may prove useful or not, because the focus is on guiding rather than imparting. Effective mentoring must be intentional and will take time and planning if you, and your mentee, are to reap the rewards.

The Role Of The SME Advisor

The role of the SME Advisor is to act as a mentor who can be additional resource to the company who has hired early career talent, enabling the new hire to be able to quickly integrate within the company and be productive, while at the same time helping the new hire to grow personally. Whether by providing detailed technical expertise, an objective critique of the new hire's initial efforts at executing projects, or as an additional coach to the new hire as their project unfolds, the Advisor helps to ensure that company objectives are met.











OBIO’s research supports the findings that the main areas that employers/supervisors identified as requiring mentorship by new hires are:

1. Coaching on useful work-related business solutions
2. Communication and interpersonal skills – verbal and written
3. Sharing knowledge of industry dynamics
4. Guidance on workplace interactions and conflicts

These key mentoring areas take an SME Advisor beyond providing support with their technical knowledge. While you should appropriately approach technical matters, H2BB recommends a focus on the areas listed above to support the enhanced professional development of the early career talent.

ROLE OF A SME ADVISOR & MENTOR:

-  To provide guidance on how to achieve performance goals for their mentee.
-  To serve as a sounding board for their ideas
-  To provide insight into how to address any challenges they are facing.
-  To provide feedback to help the mentee continually improve,
-  To provide mentees with professional development advice
-  Inspire high performance.
-  Support the mentee's delivery of company goals.
-  Share industry expertise and career insights.

Essentials For Being A Successful Mentor

Good mentors are one of the most important relationships an individual can have throughout their career. When this relationship is established in the early stages of one's career, effective mentoring has been shown to improve professional skill development, career advancement and adjustment to the work environment. Mentored individuals have reported higher

satisfaction with their careers, higher incomes, more rapid advancement and stronger commitment to their profession or organization.

The rewards of mentoring are many for both the mentor as well as the early career new hire. Beyond the satisfaction of "doing good," mentoring provides a rich and diverse learning opportunity for the mentor. Assisting the next generation to solve immediate problems and the sharing of your unique bundle of knowledge, skills and experiences to new challenges can be deeply satisfying. Many of H2BB's Advisors have also remarked that they would have also benefitted from a mentor in their early career.


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A Good Mentor Has The Ability To:

- Establish and maintain a trusting relationship.
- Ensure discretion and confidentiality.
- Ensure good two-way communication.
- Actively listen with clear interest
- Ask thought provoking questions.
- Set realistic expectations.
- Maintain a focused conversation on mentee's development.
- Manage time/agenda of meeting.
- Establish an environment for open interaction.
- Schedule uninterrupted time for meetings.
- Use non-judgmental responses (avoid criticism or praise).
- Help the mentored employee identify obstacles to career progression and to take appropriate action to overcome them.
- Share best practices and information.
- Serve as a role model.
- Inspire high performance.

Setting The Stage: The First Meeting

We have found that mentoring works best using a structured approach and the first meeting is the ideal time to set the tone and plan subsequent meetings, touch points for communication and a mentoring plan.



The first meeting should be held with both the mentee and their supervisor/manager. Ideally and when possible, this meeting should take place in person at the work site. Given the current environment, many interactions have now transitioned to online platforms. We have provided some best practices on conducting virtual meetings at the end of this guide.

The role of the Supervisor is to inform you of the role and responsibilities of the new hire within the Company. The Supervisor should also provide you with the new hire's proposed goals, objectives and milestones/achievements.

The purpose of this initial meeting is to achieve a shared understanding of expectations of the early talent new hire, projects for which they will be responsible, and the support/guidance you will provide.

INITIAL MEETING WITH MENTEE & SUPERVISOR CHECKLIST:

- Job description
- Goals and objectives for the new hire mentee will have been clarified.
- Expectations and respective roles will have been discussed and agreed upon.
- "Rules" of engagement have been established.
- Project/deliverables timelines have been confirmed.



Role Of The Early Talent Career New Hire

As a mentor your role is to guide, coach and counsel – not to execute. In addition to the responsibilities, goals and objectives outlined in the first meeting, the Mentee plays a critical role in a successful mentor/mentee relationship as noted below.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTEE:

- Has primary responsibility for their development, learning and performance.
- Maintains contact with SME Advisor/Mentor.
- Assesses own strengths and development opportunities.
- Monitors their progress against goals.
- Actively solicits performance feedback throughout the year.
- Acts on meaningful feedback.
- Seeks opportunities for growth through new assignments.
- Is prepared for meetings.
- Is respectful of SME Advisor's/Mentor's time.
- Maintains strict confidentiality.
- Looks for ways to improve the mentor/mentee interaction.

Meeting With Your Early Career Talent New Hire

The first meeting with your mentee is your chance to build their engagement in the process and establish the professional relationship. Consider using some of the questions in the following table to help guide your conversation and learn about your mentee.

INITIAL MEETING WITH MENTEE:

- I am looking forward to working with you. I have your resume and job description in front of me, but I would like to start by telling you a bit about myself and also getting to know you.
 - Would you please tell me a bit more about yourself?
 - In turn, you should share a bit about yourself.
- What is your short-term aspiration with this company?
- What are your long-term goals?
- What are two to three things you want to accomplish this contract term/year?
- What do you hope to get out of our mentorship relationship?
- I would like to hear your thoughts about how to plan our meetings.
 - Virtual format/platform?
 - When? How/where?
 - Setting the agenda process and timelines.
- Rules of engagement: how we will work together
 - Examples: confidentiality, transparency, commitment etc
- Setting the Agenda: the action items in advance of the next meeting will have been set including dates and who is responsible.

Follow-Up Meetings

After the first meeting follow-up meetings should occur regularly. We find that these are most useful when they occur every two weeks or at least once a month at a minimum.

The duration of these meetings will vary with need but typically last between 30 and 60 minutes.

These meetings should include a review of progress and discussion of any challenges or changes that have arisen in the responsibilities or project(s) the early talent is involved in. By the end of the meeting the next steps should be defined.

These meetings also offer an opportunity for discussions to address non-project related issues and professional development questions that the early talent employee might have. Some mentors have found it helpful to have their mentee provide them an update in advance of the meeting and list any matters they wish to discuss. This allows time for you to consider additional questions to be asked and specific feedback and resources to be provided during the meeting.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO INCLUDE DURING MEETINGS:

- Are you on track, are you meeting your objectives/milestones?
- What is going well with your project?
- What barriers are you facing?
- How can I help you?
- Are there any other issues you would like to cover today?

Effective interactions should promote a solution-oriented approach focused on development. The most effective approach includes questions intending to:

- Enable employees find a solution to their problems themselves.
- Be information gathering questions.
- Include questions that deepen learning.
- Be clarifying questions to understand the individual's thinking process



Follow Up Questions That Encourage Mentee Development

Competency: Industry Knowledge

Probing Question:

- How do you maintain awareness of industry trends and challenges in the industry?

Suggestion, if required:

- Good resources include: XXX (magazine, website, email list...)

Performance Issue: Not demonstrating initiative.

Probing Questions:

- What benefits to you can taking initiative offer?
- Describe an instance where you were proactive recently. What was the outcome?

Suggestion, if required:

- Mentor: Here are some tips on prioritizing your to-do list..

Performance Issue: Adapting to unfamiliar/ changing environment.

Probing Questions:

- What are some strategies that you use to stay on track when a lot is changing around you?
- How do you respond to working with tight deadlines?

Suggestion, if required:

- Mentor: Perhaps try to understand why things are changing.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS – SOME BEST PRACTICES

1. Choose a virtual platform that works for everyone.
2. If you have agreed to use a new platform that you are not familiar with, test your platform in advance of the meeting.
3. State ideal behavior for video conferencing and meeting facilitation.
4. Remember you can share documents to view.
5. Have a clear agenda and leave time for any additional questions or follow up.
6. Actively participate and listen; do not multitask.
7. Obtain everyone's input during the meeting.

The Last Meeting

The last meeting between you and the mentee is an opportunity to reflect upon the experience, share feedback concerning what worked well and what might be improved, establish further communication mechanisms if desired and offer final words of advice.

Now, or shortly after, is also the time to fill send in the evaluation forms on your mentorship interaction, while the experience is fresh in your mind.

Thank you for your contribution towards the success of our program.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What should I do when new hire mentees do not engage or routinely postpone meetings?

- Ask questions and try to identify why this is occurring. Typically, this arises when mentees do not appreciate how you can help them. Some mentees have described themselves as “too busy” to work with their mentors. In this case you can try and explain how you can help them be more productive and efficient.
- Reach out to the supervisor to let them know that the mentee is not engaging with you.
- If this continues to occur, reach out to the OBIO H2BBTM team

2. What should I do if the supervisor is not available for the first meeting?

- Ask the mentee to come to the meeting with a description of their project, goals and milestones that their supervisor has already reviewed.

3. What should I do when supervisors expectations for the mentee are in my opinion, or in the opinion of the mentee, unrealistic?

- Clarify with the mentee (and supervisor if available) what the expectations are, and what resources or support are available to the mentee to meet the expectations.
- Discuss with the mentee (and supervisor if available) what the priorities are and indicate that you will work with the intern on the high priority tasks first.
- Discuss with the mentee directly, without the supervisor, whether they feel they can meet the expectations and what support they would require to meet them.
- Ask the mentee to make a list of what they believe is required for them to achieve each task, review it with them and then have them discuss this list with their supervisor and identify where there are differences and why.

4. What should I do if the company requires me to sign an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) before they allow me to act as a mentor?

- We expect our mentors to be able to sign an NDA with the company so that the new hire mentee can share freely what they require help with.
- If the NDA is something you are unable to sign, please contact the OBIO staff.
- Even if there is no requirement to sign an NDA as the mentorship relationship requires trust it is essential that you maintain privacy/confidentiality with your mentee.

5. What should I do if the supervisor wishes to talk to me about the new hire mentee without the mentee being present?

- Ask the supervisor what it is that they wish to discuss.
- To be an effective mentor the mentee needs to be able to trust that they

can discuss various issues with you in confidence.

6. What should I do if what the mentee requires is outside of my capabilities or the mentee does not appear to understand what I am suggesting they do?

- Talk to the OBIO H2BBTM team at once.

7. What should I do if I am asked to work directly with the supervisor, rather than (or along with) helping the mentee?

- Make clear to the supervisor that the duties that OBIO supports are only those related to the support you are providing to the mentee.
- Indicate that any work outside of the scope of your mentorship is separate and that you would need to come to an agreement with the company about how you would be remunerated for that separately.

Recommended Reading & Resources Used In Preparing this Guide

1. HRODF Mentoring Guidebook (2016) available at [https://www.pahrodf.org.ph/Mentoring Guide: A Guide for Mentors](https://www.pahrodf.org.ph/Mentoring-Guide-A-Guide-for-Mentors) (2003) Center for Health Leadership & Practice; Public Health Institute Oakland, CA. available at <https://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/more-mentoring-guide-for-mentors.pdf>
Brad Johnson (2007) On Being a Mentor: A guide for higher education faculty
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