Cisco MentorMe

PROGRAM HANDBOOK + MENTORING AGREEMENT

WHAT IS MENTORME?

MentorMe is an annual program at Cisco targeting women in higher education studying a degree within STEM or who are passionate about technology. MentorMe m aims to inspire, motivate and educate on the opportunities available in IT.

The program prepares students for entering the workforce, and to build their personal brand - completing MentorMe does not guarantee a position with Cisco or within the industry. Students are paired with a mentor and will be required to attend weekly two-hour sessions via Webex.

Students will gain a network of industry professionals, a developed understanding of suitable career paths from job shadowing, an improved resume and LinkedIn, and a higher degree of self-confidence to stand out.

Cisco is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, or any other legally protected basis. We request individuals with disabilities contact us to request accommodation so they are provided reasonable accommodation to participate, perform essential functions, and receive other privileges.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

You must be a female higher education student with a curiosity about building a career within the IT industry who can commit to two hours every Thursday to attend virtual or in-person sessions from August to October as well as a minimum of 30 minutes each week for mentoring.

The program will be a hybrid model with sessions held in-person as well as virtually through our video collaboration tool Webex. It is strongly encouraged to attend at least the kick-off and graduation in-person.

THE VALUE OF MENTORING

Despite many complex factors contributing to the under-representation of women in leadership roles and positions of power, mentoring was recognised as a strategy for supporting women and reducing isolation in male-dominated fields. In particular, the absence of appropriate role models, networks and mentoring were identified as key factors that work against women's retention, progression and success.

For these reasons, every year Cisco opens our doors to share the breadth of opportunity that exists in the industry, to prepare students for entering the workforce, and to build their personal brand. Students are paired with a mentor and attend weekly sessions. By the end of the Program, students will have a new network of industry professionals, a developed understanding of suitable career paths based on job shadowing experience, an improved resume and LinkedIn profile, and a higher degree of self-confidence to stand out from the crowd.

Cisco believes the talents and capabilities of women are under-utilised in technology fields and are therefore missing from key areas of decision making and problem-solving for the future. Increasing participation, retention and prospects for success of women in the fields of engineering and IT will contribute to redefining organisational cultures and their preparedness for change and innovation.

WHY CISCO?

Regardless of what you study or what career you choose, you will rely on IT to be successful. Envision the possibilities! Plus, careers in technology are exciting: in fact, it is hair-standing-on-end exhilarating. Why not get started?

Cisco is the worldwide leader in IT and 85% of global Internet traffic travel across our systems. We design and sell products, provide services, and deliver integrated solutions to connect the unconnected. For over 30 years, we have helped our customers build networks and automate, orchestrate, integrate, and digitise IT-based products and services. We apply our technology and expertise to accelerate global problem-solving and innovation to positively affect people, society, and the planet.

A career in technology means you get to work around extraordinary people to make amazing things happen. You can change the world by using technology and realise your passion for helping people or the planet with IT. You can work from anywhere, so get those passports validated as tech talent is in demand in every country. Finally, being technology illiterate does not cut it anymore: IT is no longer for a savvy few. It is the future, for all of us.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

INFORMATION SESSION
Thursday, May 25 @ 1PM (AEST)

APPLICATIONS OPEN
Monday, May 22 - Wednesday, July 26

NOTIFICATIONS SENT
Wednesday, August 9 - Friday, August 11

WEBEX BRIEFING
Tuesday, August 15 and Thursday, August 17

Most sessions will be held virtually via Webex. To help prepare for sessions, mentees will receive a Starter Pack and we will be holding practice run sessions using Webex from home.

PROGRAM KICK-OFF
Thursday, August 24 (12:00 - 2:00 PM AEST)

The launch of the program will include a mentee briefing and Cisco Overview. This is a great opportunity to network with others and to meet their mentor before or after the session.

WEEKLY SESSIONS
Thursday, August 31 - Thursday, October 12

The mandatory weekly sessions occur every Thursday for a minimum of two hours each week. Topics range from An Insight into a Day in the Life, personal / professional development, and industry or Cisco product knowledge sharing sessions.

GRADUATION
Thursday, October 19

Mentees have the opportunity to attend an in-person Graduation, receive a Certificate of Completion, and enjoy a celebration with their mentor and peers.

THE ROLE OF MENTEE

Mentees participating in MentorMe are expected to be actively engaged with the program, open to new opportunities and experiences, be willing to learn new skills and actively seek feedback and information from their mentor.

The program seeks our mentees who take ownership for their own learning and make the most out of their experience in the program. This involves maintaining regular communication with mentors, taking responsibility for their learning, goals, interests and needs. Mentees should be aware of the time commitment required to successfully complete the program and recognise any connection to an industry representative in their chosen field is valuable, regardless of position, gender or interests. Mentors volunteer their time and experience, and there may be occasions when they are not available.

Due to the number of universities involved, the sessions will at times overlap with study vacation, exams and semester breaks. It is the mentee's responsibility to plan accordingly to ensure they can attend required sessions. Consistent absence from meetings with their mentor or group sessions without providing adequate justification may result in the mentee's removal from MentorMe. Feedback on the participation, behaviour and attendance of the mentees may be collected and provided to their university during the Program's duration.

Mentee responsibilities include:

- Being proactive in the mentoring relationship
- Creating their own goals and actively working towards these
- Asking for help and support where required from their mentor and the Site Leader
- Completing and participating in all tasks and activities they commit to
- Appreciating the generosity of their mentor's professional/personal commitments
- Actively communicating with their mentor, providing adequate notice for absence
- Maintaining confidentiality as well as upholding the values and standards of Cisco
- Making the most of any opportunities that are offered during the program

Mentees in the MentorMe Program will benefit from:

- Exposure to Cisco as well as new challenges and opportunities
- Personal development in areas of their interest
- Meeting role models in diverse positions across Cisco
- Guidance about their career choices and development
- A close connection with a professional from their chosen field
- The opportunity to network with like-minded people

THE ROLE OF MENTOR

The role of the mentor in the MentorMe Program is to engage with their mentee and introduce them to the range of experiences available to them. The mentor will share knowledge and experience to equip the student for the challenges they may face in their chosen field and guide their mentee through a learning process. This involves meeting with a mentee for a minimum of 30 minutes every week over the course of 9 weeks to discuss milestones.

This is a unique opportunity for mentors to actively support future female leaders seeking a career in technology and contribute to an increase in the representation of women in leadership roles, as well as get to know other senior professionals within Cisco.

Responsibilities include:

- Being aware of their mentee's goals and working towards these throughout the program
- Helping their mentee develop an understanding of their chosen field
- Helping facilitate job shadowing opportunities in their mentee's area of interest
- Supporting their mentee to find and develop professional networks and contacts
- Helping their mentee develop an awareness of organisational norms, standards and values

MENTORING AGREEMENTS

Mentoring Agreements ensure that both parties expectations are realistic and achievable, and they share an understanding of the mentoring role. Each mentoring partnership will create a personal agreement about the objectives and operation of their relationship and the appropriate degree of formalisation. To ensure both are clear on their responsibilities, the Agreement should address:

- Objectives and expectations
- Activities and goals
- Meeting frequency / structure
- Assurance of confidentiality

It is important to maintain flexibility within the mentoring relationship.

Some participants may find the nature of their arrangement changes over the course of the program duration. Therefore, when planning the meetings, consideration should be given to:

Availability: Time commitment and frequency of meetings – consider your schedules and when you can both reasonably meet. An often-convenient time to meet is before or after the weekly group sessions. It is a good idea for mentors and mentees to use the first session together to plan future meetings.

Communication: Decide the priority mode for communications. Example, via Face-to-Face, Webex, email, phone, or text? How will differences be resolved between the parties?

The mentor should consider the student may aim to learn career management skills such as:

· Lifelong learning
· Coping with male orientated cultures/working in non-traditional fields for women
· Developing career pathways to reach career goals
· Career enhancing activities, such as networking
· Developing effective strategies for overcoming key challenges
· Building a profile and gaining visibility in the organisation and industry
· Identifying opportunities for promotion
· Managing competing demands (for example, balancing work and family)

NEGOTIATING EXPECTATIONS & GOALS

The mentee is responsible for driving the partnership and organising meetings. Mentors are often exceptionally busy people but they are committed to the program and will endeavour to find time for their mentee. If either party needs to reschedule, it is a good idea for the mentee to immediately give the mentor a list of three or four alternative times to meet so the mentor can select a suitable time or suggest an alternative. Another option is to have a conversation with your mentor and schedule your next session at the end of your meeting.

The **first meeting** should focus on getting to know each other. Learning each other's interests and opinions beyond IT helps build trust and understanding. Many find it easier to start with a more informal discussion, such as the topics suggested below, to build rapport and provide a gentle introduction to the discussion of more serious career development topics.

· How would you spend your last day on earth?
· What are your favourite hobbies?
· Who is your hero?

· What is your dream job?
· Are you a morning or a night person?
· What qualities do you most admire or detest?

The **second meeting** is critical in establishing the foundations of the partnership and ensuring that both participants share the same objectives and expectations of the program. Regular contact is important and participants should meet at least once a week for 30 minutes. However, some may meet bi-weekly or may supplement meetings with regular emails or phone calls. The arrangement can be flexible.

Participants should decide whether they want to follow the program framework, discuss pre-prepared topics at their meetings or would prefer ad hoc discussions. Participants should also discuss what they want to achieve through MentorMe and how they will reach their goals.

It is recommended that at **ongoing meetings** mentors share their own career history, significant experiences and how they got to where they are now. Mentees can share similar information, based on their university studies, work experience and any important life experiences. Both mentors and mentees should reflect on what is important to them and what drives them both personally and professionally.

I wish I had known at the time …
The project I am most of proud of is …
Today's graduates should know ….

Mentors should avoid dominating meetings,
exerting undue influence or discounting views.
Mentees are responsible for their own problem
solving with the mentor providing the 'big picture'.

Mentees should determine three 'development needs' that
their mentor can help them work on including professional skills
or areas of knowledge that the mentee wants to improve or learn more about to develop as a professional in the IT industry. Together, brainstorm ideas and opportunities for ways of developing these needs. Examples include: communication skills, networking skills, specific job-related skills, knowledge of specific current IT issues, workplace scenarios and politics, IT in an international context, and more.

During the **final meeting**, focus on the mentee's career direction. They may want assistance to clarify their career direction or to develop a career plan. It is important to evaluate career direction based on the mentee's likes/dislikes, strengths and developments needs as well as skills, values and interests.

To close, reflect and consider successful aspects and identify areas for improvement. Self-assessment of the participation of the mentor and mentee is important to measure the development and success of the mentorship, as well as the personal and professional development of both. Consider the following:

· Has the Mentee/Mentor attended all meetings and Mentoring Program events?
· Does the Mentee/Mentor have a positive approach to each meeting?
· Is the Mentee/Mentor attentive, punctual and organised?
· Has the Mentee expanded their professional network?
· Has progress been made towards the Mentee's goals?
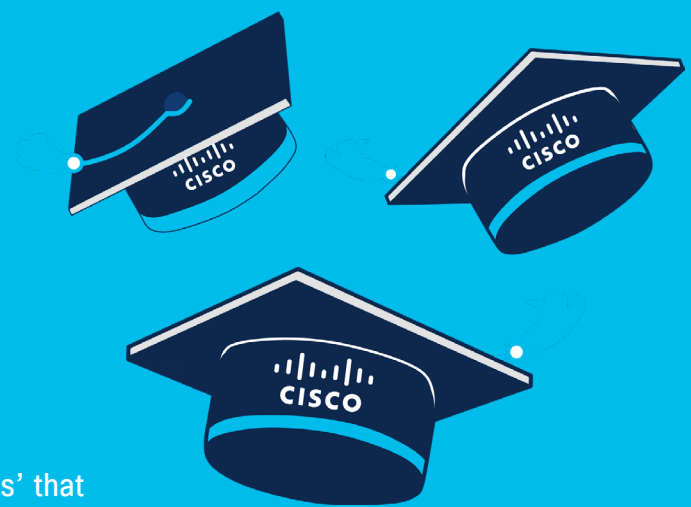
YOUR MENTORING AGREEMENT

Mentors and mentees participate in a mutually beneficial relationship in which there are clear objectives and responsibilities. We anticipate personal and professional development. This optional agreement is solely a reference for the mentor and mentee only - it should not be shared with the program coordinators.

1. Mentoring Relationship start and finish dates: _____ to _____ ;

2. Communication Method (face-to-face, WebEx, email, mobile): _____ ;

3. Structure of Meetings: _____ ;

4. Frequency and dates of meetings: _____ ;

5. Length of meetings: _____ ;

6. Location of meetings: _____ ;

7. Mentee goals and requests:

We have discussed the above basic principles underlying our mentoring relationship as a motivational and education experience. We agree to maintain flexibility within the program and ensure confidentiality.

Mentor: _____   Email: _____   Phone: _____
Mentee: _____   Email: _____   Phone: _____

Signed by Mentee on date: _____   Signed by Mentor on date: _____

MENTORME CONTACTS

To learn more about Cisco's investments in STEM education visit csr.cisco.com.

The MentorMe Journey

2022 ● 199 Students | 34 Universities

2021 ● 170 Students | 29 Universities

2020 ● 155 Students | 23 Universities

2019 ● 187 Students | 18 Universities

2018 ● 96 Students | 12 Universities

2017 ● 60 Students | 8 Universities

2016 ● 24 Students | 5 Universities

2015 ● 12 Students | 2 Universities

2014 ● 8 Students | 1 University

2013 ● 8 Students | 1 University

Cisco MentorMe

INSPIRING THE FEMALE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

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