

HGSA Mentorship Program Expectations

Last Updated: September 5, 2025

Well, hey there!

Hey prospective mentees, we're so glad you've decided to participate in the HGSA Mentorship Program! Graduate school is a wonderful experience—but it can be challenging, too! Thankfully, you don't have to navigate this on your own. We want to support you on this journey.

Don't think we've forgotten about you, prospective mentors! We're so grateful you're here and willing to provide guidance and support to newer undergraduate students. You know better than anyone what it's like to embark on this journey and the challenges faced by new students.

The Program

This program has been developed by the University of Manitoba History Graduate Students Association (HGSA) upon reflecting about our own experiences of graduate school. The goal is simple—match experienced graduate students with new graduate students to help provide guidance, alleviate uncertainty, and promote the strengthening of our graduate student cohort.

Mentor/Mentee Requirements

Mentors

- Mentors who are enrolled in an MA program must have fully finished their coursework, language requirement, and be working on their Thesis or MRP. Mentors should be in their third year or higher.
- Mentors who are enrolled in their PhD must have fully finished their coursework and be working on their comps or dissertation. (Exceptions can be made, in certain circumstances.)
- Mentors must successfully complete the Sexual Violence Awareness course on UM Learn. (Course code SVA_202090_CO) Proof of successful completion must be submitted to the HGSA.

Mentees

- (Undergraduate) Mentees must be enrolled in the honours program or have history as a major. Mentees who are considering applying for graduate school will be given priority over mentees with no interest in graduate school, if there are not enough mentors for everyone who applies.

- (Pre-MA) Mentees can be at any stage in their Pre-MA program.
- (MA) Mentees can be at any stage in their program, but priority will be given to MA students in the first two years of their program.
- Mentees are encouraged to complete the Sexual Violence Awareness course on UM Learn. (Course code SVA_202090_CO) However, this is not a requirement for participation.

What You Can Expect

Meetings

Frequency

Mentors and mentees agree to meet a minimum of one hour per month during the fall semester in September, October, and November, and half an hour (if needed) in December. Mentors and mentees agree to meet a minimum of one hour per month during the winter semester in January, February, and March, and half an hour (if needed) in April.

This one hour does not need to be all at once—in fact, we encourage you to break it up into smaller meetings! This can be 15 minutes every week, or 30 minutes every two weeks. The frequency and date of the meetings are to be determined by the mentor and mentee based on their schedules and availability.

Meeting Best Practices:

- *Consistency:* If you opt for 15 minutes every week, try to make it the same day and time every week. If you choose 30 minutes every two weeks, try to make it the same day and time every week. Obviously, things will come up and plans will need to be changed, but consistency will help keep everyone on the same page.
- *Location:* Meetings should be held in a public, easily accessible place such as one of the libraries on campus. While private classrooms or offices might seem ideal because they can be quieter, for everyone's safety and comfort, we request that meetings be held in a public space. The student lounge on the 4th floor of Fletcher Argue is a great option for this.

Reporting

Meeting Notes

We encourage both mentors and mentees to take notes during their meetings. You can choose how to take and store these notes; they are for your own reference, and we will not ask to see them.* However, taking notes will allow both parties to make sure questions are being answered, things that are agreed upon are being done, and everyone is on the same page.

Meeting Acknowledgement Form

It is important that we have documentation of the meetings and the time spent by the mentors and the mentees working on this project. This proof is used for the experiential record application so that you can get student record credit for your participation. You will be provided with a PDF form that will need to be printed by the mentor before the first meeting. At every meeting, you'll record the date and time, and then both mentor and mentee will physically sign off on the form. We recommend occasionally scanning the form to keep a backup in case the physical copy goes missing. There will be one form for the fall semester, and one for the winter. We will collect the physical copy at the end of the semester.

Mid-Year Reporting

We want to make sure that everyone is enjoying the process and that it is actually helping participants! Therefore, we will provide a mid-year evaluation form to both mentors and mentees. Forms will be simple and quick. Individuals will submit their forms directly to the HGSA where we will read them. If everything looks good, mentorships will continue uninterrupted. If there are issues that need to be addressed, we will address them.

Year-End Reporting

Similar to mid-year reporting, both mentors and mentees will be provided with a feedback form to complete at the end of the year to let us know how the program worked for them. Both individuals will submit their forms directly to the HGSA.

*We reserve the right to request your meeting notes if an issue arises/there is some sort of dispute that requires mediation.

Communication

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to communicate via University of Manitoba email. While exchanging other emails or phone numbers is up to the discretion of mentors and mentees, we highly encourage most, if not all, communication to be limited to student email.

While we want mentees to be encouraged to reach out to ask their questions, we also want to make sure that the time of mentors is respected. Some mentors will have multiple mentees, on top of their own academic, community, family and work obligations. (And, of course, mentees will have other obligations as well!) Therefore, here are some best practices:

- Neither mentors nor mentees are expected to answer questions outside of standard “work hours” which, for this purpose will be defined as 9am to 5pm—unless different “work hours” are specified in the mentor/mentee agreement document.
- Mentors and mentees are expected to acknowledge emails received, and answer questions where possible, within 48 hours, Monday to Friday. Different expectations may be agreed upon and spelled out in the mentor/mentee agreement document.

Nature of Relationship

Mentors are here to help mentees navigate graduate school at the University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg, specifically within the History department. They are not trained therapists/counsellors, they are not academic advisors, they are not financial experts, etc. Like you, they're students!

Therefore, we ask that mentors and mentees keep the relationship academic in nature.

We will provide mentors with a list of resources they can provide to mentees as needed. Mentees, if you're feeling overwhelmed, sad, anxious, etc., you can communicate this to your mentor, and they will help connect you with the appropriate resources with kindness and support. They themselves are not trained to help you process stress, trauma, anxiety, etc.

Additionally, romantic relationships between mentors and mentees are strictly prohibited.

Other Notes

This guide is meant to illustrate the basics of the HGSA Mentorship Program. We, the HGSA, reserve the right to make changes to this document as necessary, at any time.

Mentors and mentees are expected to abide by all UM policies and procedures, especially those pertaining to safe and respectful work and learning.

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