**Career Education 2202
Sample Template: Mentor Interview Experience**

Mentoring involves a community host or professional offering advice and guidance based on their life/work experience. Mentoring is important, not only for the knowledge and skills students can learn from mentors, but because mentoring provides professional socialization and personal support to facilitate success in school and beyond.

* To complete this experience, individual students will use their personal and family networks and connections to seek out people in a career field that interests them who are willing to serve as mentors.
* They will schedule, prepare for, and conduct a formal interview on career and professional development topics.
* The interview may be scheduled using an in-person or virtual format, and should take place outside of school hours.
* The student should take careful notes during the interview. If the interview is to be recorded via electronic means, they must first receive the permission of the mentor to do so.
* Interview questions may be taken from the sample list below, and a final list of questions should be submitted to the teacher for review prior to the interview. Students should give thought to the order of questions so that the interview has an appropriate flow.
* Following the interview, the students will complete and submit a reflective journal that lists the questions asked and a summary of responses received. It should also describe the new information they have learned and how it will benefit their future career development.
* A completed journal should become part of the student’s Personal Career Plan.

Students may be eligible for up to 4 Career Education hours by completing a mentor interview experience and associated reflective journal. Students may receive credit for subsequent interviews with the same individual, but the questions asked and information gained must be substantively different from the prior interview. A reflective journal must be completed for each interview in order to receive credit for eligible hours.

**Sample Interview Questions**

* Could you describe one of your typical workdays?
* What skills are required in your position on a day-to-day basis?
* What technology, tools, or machinery do you use in your work?
* Do you work mostly indoors or outdoors?
* What parts of your job do you find most challenging?
* What parts of your job do you find most enjoyable?
* Are there any negatives to your job?
* How many hours do you work in a typical week?
* Which seasons or parts of the year are toughest in your job?
* How would you describe the culture of your workplace?
* What is the typical dress code or clothing for people in your position?
* Is this field growing enough so that there is room for someone like me?
* Are too many or too few people entering this profession?
* What developments on the horizon could affect future opportunities?
* Where do you think the changes will happen in this industry in the next five years?
* How frequently do layoffs occur? How does it affect employees' morale?
* Why do people leave this field or company?
* Who are the most important people in the industry today?
* Which companies have the best track record for promoting women and minorities?
* Are there opportunities for self-employment in your field? Where?
* What would be a reasonable salary range to expect if I entered this field? What is the long-term potential? (Remember it would likely be inappropriate to ask the mentor to tell you their own salary!)
* What is the advancement potential in the field? What is a typical path?
* How did you get your job?
* If you could start all over again, would you change your career path in any way? Why?
* How long does it take for managers to rise to the top?
* What is the background of most senior-level executives?
* What educational preparation would you recommend for someone who wants to advance in this field?
* What qualifications do you seek in a new hire?
* How do most people enter this profession?
* Can you recommend any steps I should take before proceeding with my job search?
* What companies or industries do you think I should target?
* Considering my background, how well do you think I would fit in this company and/or profession?
* How does your company compare with others in this sector?
* Does the work involve any lifestyle changes, such as frequent travel or late-night business?
* Considering all the people you have met in your field, what personal attributes are essential for success?
* Taking into account my skills, education and experience, what other career paths would you suggest I explore?
* Where can I find up-to-date information on salaries, employers and industry issues?
* What professional journals and organizations should I be aware of?
* Is there anything else you think I need to know?
* Whom else would you recommend I speak with? When I call, may I use your name?

**Sample Reflection Questions**

* What did you learn about the industry and/or the mentor’s career path?
* What surprised or excited you the most?
* What was the most helpful piece of advice you received?
* Are you now more or less interested in this career path? Why?
* What concerns do you have about this line of work?
* Can you see yourself enjoying this line of work? Why?
* Does this path capitalize on your strengths and align with your values?
* What skills do you need to gain or further develop to succeed in this field?
* What information are you still missing?
* Now that the interview is over, what are your next steps?

**Tips for a Successful Interview**

* The interview may be conducted in-person, online, or over the phone.
* If in-person, choose a comfortable location with few distractions. Dress in a manner that is professional and appropriate for the situation.
* Arrive or sign-on early - do not make your mentor wait for you.
* If you are running late, be sure to communicate this promptly to your mentor.
* Bring your written list of questions, along with paper and pen for taking notes. Remember your goal is to learn more information to help you in your career exploration.
* If you intend to record the interview via electronic means, be sure to first inform your mentor and receive their permission.
* Show your interest in, and enthusiasm for, the conversation.
* Do not be afraid to ask the person you are speaking with to connect you to someone else following your conversation. After your interview, you may want to get additional information from another professional in a different type of work, and they might know someone to introduce you to.
* Immediately following the interview, take a few moments to jot down a few notes about your experience.
* Be sure to send a thank you card or email within 24 hours to thank them for their time. Make this a thoughtful note that highlights some top points you took away from the conversation, and how they helped you.
* Do not be afraid to keep in touch as you progress through your career. Now that you have made the connection, this person may become part of your on-going network.