



MENTORING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Mentoring an international student can be an incredibly rewarding opportunity. While being from another country is only one aspect of an international student's identity, inherent challenges exist when communicating and building relationships across cultural and language differences. This resource helps you take those differences into consideration and provides strategies to assist in becoming a cultural mentor who can form a mutually beneficial relationship with a multi-faceted international student.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO ASK INTERNATIONAL MENTEES

1. Why did you choose to have a mentor? How can I help you?
2. How do you understand mentorship? What are your expectations of mentoring?
3. Why did you choose to study in the U.S./ at UGA?
4. What is one difference between education in your home country and education in the U.S.?
5. What is one part of American culture that you are most excited to experience?
6. What is one part of your home country's culture that you would like to share?
7. What do you miss most about home? What new thing do you like about being a student at UGA?
8. What is something that you find difficult to navigate at UGA as an international student?
9. What do you most enjoy about life at UGA?
10. What would you like to study?
 - a. If you are not sure, what's your plan to discover different options?
11. What events have you attended so far while at UGA?
12. What classes are you taking this semester?
13. Do you have an English name? How did you get it?
14. What are your plans for [XYZ] holiday...?
15. How do you celebrate birthdays, triumphs, etc. in your home country?
16. How are you building or finding a community to be a part of on campus?
17. What difficulties have you faced while transitioning from your home country to UGA? What part of transitioning has been easier than expected?
18. Do you have any questions for me? Do you feel comfortable asking questions? Some students don't, and inviting or giving them permission to ask questions can be very helpful.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Be sensitive to and respectful of cultural differences. Individuals from different cultures may have unique ways to express their feelings, different ways to approach situations, and a different understanding of things. Be aware of these differences.
2. Communicate your thoughts or questions effectively and without bias towards the student in order to avoid potential misunderstanding.
3. If you feel offended by a response from the international student, let them know how you feel--it may be a misunderstanding or cultural difference.
4. If you noticed that they do something that is considered culturally strange, explain the behavior to them in a kind way. Example: "I've noticed that you don't smile when you greet someone. Americans typically smile when they greet someone. It shows that you are friendly."
5. Have your mentee help you practice pronouncing their name until you have it mastered.
6. Sometimes international students may need to take extra time to answer or respond. Give them more time to try to describe something since they may be trying to process the translation in their mind from their mother tongue to English.
7. If your mentee provides an answer or response that seems unrelated to your question or statement, you may need to ask the student if they understood your question or what you explained.
8. Moving to a new country brings a lot of challenges to international students. While mentoring international students, try to think as if you have just moved to a new country. Consider what kind of guidance you can provide to assist them adjust to life at UGA.

ACADEMIC/MENTORSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

Communication

- In many countries, email is not used as a primary channel for communication. Be clear and up-front if this is your preferred way to communicate throughout your mentorship. You can also consider alternative ways to communicate:
 1. Zoom/Skype
 2. iMessage/text
 3. WhatsApp
- Be patient
Be aware that what you consider to be or think of as common sense may not be common sense for international students. While communicating, try not to assume they understand. Be patient and willing to explain.

Assist students as they adjust to life at UGA

- Offer advice on cultural adjustment
- Share resources available on campus (see list under 'Helpful Resources for International Students')
- Consider sharing tips on studying effectively
- Share what life is like in Georgia/Athens
- Discuss how to get involved on- and off-campus
- Discuss friendship formation within the American cultural context
- Discuss exploring majors and choosing careers
- Discuss challenges of having a language barrier
- Discuss feelings of homesickness
- Ask about culture shock
- Discuss educational system within the U.S.
- Discuss internship process/job search etiquette
- Discuss networking and professional development opportunities
- Share UGA/educational traditions such as graduation, football/sports, etc.

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International Student Life

- [The Basics- Social Security, identity Theft, and Getting Connected at UGA](#)
- [Cross-Cultural Adjustment](#)
- [Health and Wellness](#)
- [Transportation & Getting Around Athens](#)
- [Food, Groceries, & Shopping in Athens](#)
- [Money Management](#)
- [International Student Organizations](#)
- [International Student Life Library at UGA](#)

International Student Programs

- [Cultural Nights](#)
- [Courses – ECHD 4000 – Global Perspectives](#)
- [Global Buddies Program](#)
- [Global Dawgs](#)
- [International Coffee Hour](#)

- [International Education Week](#)
- [International Street Festival](#)
- [Languages Labs](#)
- [Leadership UGA](#)
- [Tea Talks Leadership Opportunities](#)
- [International Student Advisory Board](#)
- [International Student Organizations](#)
- [Leadership UGA](#)
- [World Leaders](#)
- [ISL Awards](#)
- [Volunteer with ISL](#)
- [UGA Mentor Program Ambassadors](#)

Career Resources

- [International Student Resources from UGA Career Center](#)
- [Interstride](#)