



# International Buddy Program

Buddy Guide  
<2020-2021>

# International Buddy Program Buddy Guide

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# 1. Introduction

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International Buddy Program is a campus life program under the International Students and Scholars Services. Established in the 1950s, the International Buddy Program, also known as IBP, has gone through multiple changes to better connect cultural differences. Originally called the international friendship group, the program obtained its current name in 2009.

The fundamental goal of the program is to ease the transition of new international undergraduate students. IBP pairs up incoming international students- both freshmen and transfer students- with the current UMN students to help new international students to be adjusted to a new environment which is challenging and exciting at the same time. The mentorship program runs through from the beginning of July to May. Mentors are students who are currently registered to the University of Minnesota and have a living experience in the Twin-Cities area for a year minimum. Buddies are new international students; international students who are in their first year at the University of Minnesota are welcome to join the program regardless of their class. The program serves 200 students- 50 mentors 150 buddies- each semester with special social events and helpful resources. Through the mentorship program, we expect both international and domestic student to:

- Actively interact with other students from different cultural background by providing a safe and open space for cultural exchange
- Build a supportive community for the transition of new international undergraduate students on campus
- Be initiatives that create a safer and more inclusive campus community changing campus climate and clearing out cultural barriers
- Build cultural competency that is essential to be a global citizen
- challenge themselves to take a personal investment in supporting others regardless of cultural difference
- Improve interpersonal cross-cultural communication skills being exposed to a culturally diverse environment
- Develop respect to one another from different cultural resolving misunderstandings and expanding social knowledge

We work to provide students with diverse cultural experiences and recognize their role in creating an inclusive climate within the campus community. Therefore, the program encourages mutual interaction between students regardless of where they are from or where they feel home by providing a mutual connection with the name of the IBP Mentorship program. Many of these relationships have proven to be enriching and longstanding. IBP ultimately aspires to raise

cultural awareness within the campus community and to promote cultural competency that goes beyond the college experience.

**\* IBP is committed to a policy of anti-harassment and nondiscrimination for all participating students no matter what.** For more comprehensive information, please access to [https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2019-09/policy\\_equity\\_diversity\\_equal\\_opportunity\\_and\\_affirmative\\_action.pdf](https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2019-09/policy_equity_diversity_equal_opportunity_and_affirmative_action.pdf)

## **2. What Is Mentoring and What Is Not:**

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### **Mentoring IS:**

- Sharing your campus life experience
- Being open minded
- Being culturally embracive
- Expanding your personal network
- Improving communication skills
- Developing interpersonal skills
- Expanding one's worldview

### **Mentoring is NOT:**

- Effortless
- A therapy
- An advising service or tutoring
- A supervision

## **3. Mentoring Dos and Don'ts**

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### **Do:**

- Take the lead in mentoring relationship
- Make effort to build and maintain the mentorship
- Reach out to your IBP mentors when you need support or help

- Open to mentor's ideas and discussion topics
- Let your mentor know if you feel uncomfortable to talk about certain topics
- Reply your mentor's email/text within 3 days
- Understand that your mentor is a student, too, and they might have other priorities.
- Reach out to IBP board members if you have any questions or concerns

**Don't:**

- Assume your mentor know everything
- Think your mentor does not need your support and help, you should care for each other in this mentorship.
- End the mentoring relationship without letting IBP board members know

## **4. IBP Definition of Good Mentorship**

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**What does a successful mentoring relationship look like?**

- Mentor is willing to offer helpful advices/suggestions and share experiences to mentees
- Both mentors and buddies feel comfortable sharing ideas with each other
- Mentor and buddies are responsive in communication
- Mentor and buddies attend IBP events or other social events together
- A good connection between the mentor and buddies
- Both the mentor and buddies think this mentorship relationship fulfills their needs and expectations

## **5. What Can I Expect From The IBP Mentorship Program?**

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- **Help from an assigned mentor**
  - Answer your questions about campus life (e.g. Campus connector, building location, campus open-hours, etc.)
  - Answer some of the basic academic-related questions like how to check the registration date, etc.

- Answer some of the basic job-seeking questions
- Introduce campus resources to you
- **Connection with IBP community**
  - Friendship with IBP members, including board members, other mentors, and other buddies
  - Connection with people from different countries
  - IBP Instagram and Facebook page regularly
  - Cross-cultural learning opportunities
    - Learning new cultures
    - Gaining new language experiences
- **Fun events from IBP throughout the whole academic year**
  - ISSS Welcome Party
  - Thanksgiving Dinner
  - Small gatherings
    - And more to come!
- **Checking-in from IBP board members**
  - Being able to reach to the board members and give feedback about the program
  - Having conversations about a relationship with the mentor
  - Checking in with board members during Buddy in-person check-in

**\*\* To get the best out of the program and to fulfill your expectation, buddies should also put an effort to interact with mentors and being responsive\*\***

## **6. Requirements for Buddies**

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- **Interact (phone, email, Skype, in person) with your mentor at least twice a month.**
  - You and your mentor have the responsibility for making sure these interactions occur. We hope that you take the initiative on scheduling and conforming with your mentor for each planned meeting
- **Submit mentorship google form after meeting with your mentor every single time.**

- To make sure our buddies get the help they need from mentors, we highly recommend buddies submit a mentorship google form after meeting with your mentor. In the google form buddies are able to share their experience during the meeting. By doing this, IBP board members are able to help you when you encounter problems.
- **Complete feedback forms sent out by IBP.**
  - We highly recommend buddies complete all the feedback forms sent out by IBP. It helps us to improve in order to give you a good experience

## 7. How To Kick-Off The Mentorship

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### **Before the first in-person meeting with mentor:**

- Send the first email to your mentor
  - Email template is provided at the end of the buddy guide
- Read through the IBP Buddy Guide and clearly understand the program
  - Please do not hesitate to email IBP, if you have questions or concerns
- Response to your mentor's emails or texts within 72 hours
- Keep being responsive in communications

### **During your first meeting with your mentor:**

- Clearly define the relationship to meet the expectation of both buddies and mentor
  - Please feel free to use the Mentorship Agreement Contract as a mutual agreement to manage the relationship
- Complete the Action Plan together
  - Take time to discuss each others' needs, goals, and time commitment to the mentorshiping program
- Take a photo for the IBP Mentorship Hang-out Google Form

## 8. Recommendations On What Mentors and Buddies Can Do Together

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- **Things Mentors and Buddies can do together:**
  - Have a campus-tour together before the beginning of the semester
  - Attend IBP events throughout the semester and enjoy free food
  - Take short trip to Minnehaha Fall, Chicago, Duluth, etc, during the spring break
  - Get volunteer experiences together at local art museums such as Walker and Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA)
  - Go shopping for winter apparel at Twin Cities Outlets, Mall of America, etc
  - Go grocery shopping together
  - Study and chat at cafe near campus
  - Enjoy free movie at Coffman movie theatre every week
  - Attend Small World Coffee Hour Events biweekly Friday
  - Book a group breakout room at libraries and study together

## 9. Have Issues With Your Mentor?

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- Are you having troubles with:
  - Contacting your mentor?
  - Getting responses from your mentor in 3 business days?
  - Communicating because of certain barriers?
  - Feeling uncomfortable with your mentors?

**If you have any troubles with your mentor, please contact [ibp@umn.edu](mailto:ibp@umn.edu) to address the issues-** you may use an email template provided at the end of the IBP buddy guide. The IBP board team will assist you with communicating with your mentor. The mentor buddy communicator will be in contact with you shortly and communicate with you the next steps.

## 10. Email Templates

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### Introducing Yourself to Your Mentor

- Things to write in your email:
  - Introduce yourself (majors, minors, hobbies, fun fact)
  - Talk about why you joined IBP, what your expectations are, what makes you excited about IBP
  - Talk about method of communication that would work the best for you
  - Ending sentence

Hello [name of your mentor],

My name is [your name] and I am very excited to be your buddy for this year! I'm studying/planning to study [your (intended) majors, minors]. Some of my hobbies are [list of your hobbies]. I joined IBP because [reasons why you joined IBP]. And I'm excited to [things you want to do with your mentor] with you.

I am comfortable sharing [social media, phone number, other forms of communications]. Let me know what form of communication you would like or would work the best for you. I am looking forward to hearing from you and meeting you in person if possible.

All the best,  
[your name]

*Example:*

Hello Yan,

My name is Yvonne and I am very excited to be your buddy for this year! I'm studying/planning to study MIS. Some of my hobbies are watching movies and traveling. I joined IBP because I wanted to find a community on campus and learn more about cultures. And I'm excited to talk about what to do on campus, events we can go to, and exploring the cities with you.

I am comfortable sharing my phone number and GroupMe. Let me know what form of communication you would like or would work the best for you. I am looking forward to hearing from you and meeting you in person if possible.

All the best,  
Yvonne

### **Issue Report to IBP team**

- Things to write in your email:
  - You name
  - What troubles you're having with your mentor
  - Any questions you have for IBP

Hi IBP board,

My name is [your name] and [address problems you are having] Thank you for your hard work.

Best wishes,  
[your name]

*Example:*

Hi IBP board,

My name is Pear and my mentor has not been responding to my email in the past week. I was wondering if you could check up on my mentor and tell me what I could do in the future. Thank you for your hard work.

Best wishes,  
Pear

## Buddy Mentorship Agreement Contract

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understood the expectations outlined in the contract. I will do my best to contribute to the effectiveness of the International Buddy Program (IBP). I understand that it is my responsibility to sustain communication with my mentors, as well as set up meeting times and keep record of these interactions. In addition, as a qualified buddy, I need to fulfill all the required responsibilities listed in the contract.

I will participate in activities, programs and workshops as they relate to this program to the best of my ability. I will refrain from behavior that endangers the safety and wellbeing of my mentors or fellow buddies, and adhere to the nondiscrimination policy outlined by the program. If I am unable or unwilling to adhere to the policy therein, I understand that I will be asked to leave the program. I will uphold and fulfill the mission of the IBP program, and abide by the expectations of me held by the IBP board and the people involved in the program as a whole.

### Buddy disqualification process:

- IBP will gradually notify buddies if they do not meet the requirements and expectations
- Buddies should adjust their behaviors and reach out for help if needed
- If IBP does not see the change in buddies' behaviors overtime, their buddy status will be disqualified
- who are disqualified can re-apply to be mentors for the coming years but their previous performance will affect their candidacy

IBP Mentor Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
IBP Mentor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please list any concerns related to the program or your position**

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