

# ACE Mentor Program Mentor Training

# Mission and Goals

**All ACE volunteers** must take this brief training to successfully complete the registration. **If you do not complete this 5 minute training, you will NOT be registered for ACE!**

Every mentor/volunteer plays an important role in making the program a great success. This brief training course will provide you with information you need to be a successful, effective, and safe mentor or volunteer in our program!

Volunteers are the lifeblood of ACE and should be proud of ACE's impact on students and the A-E-C industry. The following training was designed for the mentor role, but every ACE volunteer must complete it, even if you are not working directly with students. It contains pertinent information you should be aware of as an ACE leader.

Thank you for your involvement!

# Mission and Goals

## 2021-2022 Program Year Note:

- Given the nature of the current pandemic, the ACE Mentor Program may operate in a different format than in past years. This training still applies and some policies may vary depending on the program format. Keep in touch with your affiliate leaders regarding any changes to the program, and visit [www.acementortools.org](http://www.acementortools.org) often for virtual resources and updates from ACE National.
- Be sure to stay informed and follow current CDC and local governmental guidelines to prioritize the safety of our students and mentors.
- Work with your affiliate leaders, partner schools, and mentor companies to ensure our ACE community stays healthy.
- Contact your affiliate leader immediately should someone on your team of volunteers or students be diagnosed or come into direct contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

# Mission and Goals

The mission of the ACE Mentor Program is to engage, excite and enlighten high school students to pursue careers in architecture, engineering and construction through mentoring, and to support their continued advancement in the industry.

ACE's primary goals are to:

1. Create a large, diverse, better prepared workforce for our industry.
2. Assist and guide students as they proceed along their pathways to opportunities related to our industry.

# Mission and Goals

## **Core Values:**

### **Inclusion**

*We will nurture and value the diversity of backgrounds, identities, talents, and beliefs of each individual involved in our program.*

### **Collaboration**

*We believe a spirit of mutually beneficial collaboration will produce the greatest results and maximize our volunteer and fiscal resources.*

### **Excellence**

*We aspire to deliver the highest quality and most impactful mentor program and commit to approach our work with fairness and honesty.*

# About ACE Mentor Program

- ACE's more than 70 affiliates operate in 37 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Toronto, Canada.
- Over 10,000 students and over 4,000 mentors participate each year.
- ACE awards millions of dollars in scholarships each year, and over \$20 million since the program's start.
- ACE received the 2010 Presidential Award of Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring.
- ACE also received awards from the American Institute of Architects for Collaborative Achievement in 2014 and Diversity Recognition in 2018.
- For more information and statistics, visit [www.acementor.org](http://www.acementor.org)

# ACE Mentor Program Impact

As an ACE mentor, you play an important role in assisting the program to achieve exceptional outcomes. Consider the following:

- ACE students graduate high school at a greater rate than non-ACE participants.
- Two-thirds of ACE graduates enter college majors linked to the design and construction industry.
- ACE increases the diversity of college students majoring in A-E-C.
- More than two-thirds of ACE graduates feel ACE gave them an edge over their peers in college.

# Purpose of Training

This training explains the ACE Mentor Program, and better prepares you to be a safe and effective mentor.

Within this training, you will find policies, best practices and tips for supporting and protecting students in the ACE program.

If you have any questions following the training, please contact your affiliate leader.



# Why Mentoring?

- Research confirms that quality mentoring relationships have powerful positive effects on young people in a variety of personal, academic, and professional situations.
- Mentors can develop leadership skills and gain a personal sense of satisfaction from knowing that they've helped someone. Students can expand their knowledge and skills, gain valuable advice from a more experienced person, and build their professional networks.
- By preparing young people for college and careers, mentoring helps develop talent for the future workforce.

# Ways to Support Students

A good mentor is:

- Safety-conscious
- Committed
- Respectful of students of all cultural backgrounds and identities
- A good listener
- Resourceful
- Persistent & consistent
- Open-minded
- Flexible

# Ways to Support Students

- Be sensitive and respectful of cultural differences and identities.
- Recognize a student's skills, interests, and knowledge levels.
- Communicate clearly and do not expect students to be familiar with technical terms and concepts.
- Guide students to formulate their own decisions and designs.
- Share your professional experiences, both successes and failures.
- Get to know students! Ask them about their interests and career plans.

# Ways to Support Students

- A student may be excited to see you during one meeting, and then miss the next meeting altogether. This is normal!
- Mentoring is not all “Kodak Moments.” It takes time, energy and commitment to build a meaningful relationship!
- Sometimes students may not accomplish as much as they hoped, that’s ok! Be sure to praise effort just as much as accomplishments.

# Responding to Difficult Questions

An ACE mentor's primary role is to support students in their pursuit of careers in the A-E-C fields. Although that is your primary role, do not be surprised if you develop meaningful relationships with some students.

Because of a mentor's unique relationship, students may bring you issues or concerns in their personal lives they need help navigating.

If you feel unprepared for a student-initiated conversation that is personal in nature, suggest that the student discuss this matter with another trusted adult such as a parent/guardian, guidance counselor, or other school staff.

While this program cannot foresee every topic of conversation between mentors and students, the next slide has some helpful hints for thinking through how to respond to difficult questions.

# Helpful Hints

Validate	<p>Pause to acknowledge and validate the student's question.</p> <p>“That’s a great question.” “A lot of people wonder that.” “Thank you for asking that question.”</p>
Clarify	<p>Make sure you understand what the student means. Check to see what they know about the topic. Clarify where the question is coming from. Pay attention to any signs that this question is a request for help.</p> <p>“Can you tell me what you already know about that?” “What do you mean by the word_____?”</p>
Identify	<p>Decide how to proceed based on what is being asked: Fact, Value</p> <p>Fact vs. Value</p> <p>A fact is something for which proof exists, or something for which there is information to support or back up. A value is an intrinsically held belief and cannot be proven true or false by any sort of scientific method.</p>
Communicate Message	<p>Answer all factual questions in a simple and factual manner. Identify personal and value-based questions as such.</p> <p>Discuss the range of values that exist.</p> <p>Decide on any next steps.</p>
Check Understanding	<p>Verify that you have answered the question.</p> <p>Make sure the student has understood your answer and leave the door open for follow-up questions.</p>

# Communicating with Students during ACE Sessions

As a mentor, you should take the lead in your relationship with students. The following tips will help you keep students engaged:

- Make sure all students have the opportunity to participate.
- Encourage students to ask questions.
- Praise effort instead of accomplishment.
- Use open-ended questions.
- Ask students for feedback and ideas on sessions.

Specific guidance regarding of situations in which a student may be a victim of abuse, bullying or neglect, or a danger to themselves or others, is provided later in this training.

# Important Policies

ACE attracts a diverse group of students. Their safety and security are of utmost importance. The next few slides introduce specific policies that all mentors must follow.

- *(During a pandemic, all physical contact should be ceased. Follow current CDC and local governmental guidelines.)*
- **Physical Contact** – Mentors must limit physical contact with a student to a handshake or a “high five.” A mentor must not meet alone with a student behind closed doors.
- **Sexual Harassment** - Students and mentors must always conduct themselves in a professional manner and refrain from any interaction that could be interpreted as inappropriate, such as sexual advances, verbal or physical conduct of an inappropriate or sexual nature, or requests for sexual favors.



# Important Policies, Cont'd

- **Confidentiality** – Personal information that mentors learn about students may be confidential. Divulging such information may have legal consequences and must be avoided. If mentors believe there is a legitimate need to divulge personal information about their mentees, they are advised to discuss the matter first with their affiliate leaders. Mentors must:
  - Limit the sharing of their own personal information with mentees.
  - Only use their business email and phone number for student communication.
  - Not share personal student information from the database.
  - Team leaders must only export student and mentor personal information from the database when absolutely necessary for team management. Save it in a secure, password protected folder and do not print or share it with anyone. When this information is no longer needed, please delete it promptly.

# Important Policies, Cont'd

- **Background Check** – All mentors and volunteers who attend 20% or more of ACE sessions (more than 2 meetings) and/or have access to student/mentor personal info in the ACE database, must undergo a criminal background check every three years, using ACE's provider, Sterling Volunteers.
  - If your role with ACE meets the above conditions, your affiliate leader will send you an email invitation to complete the background check. The email will come from Sterling Volunteers, not ACE. Please complete the background check application as soon as possible as it takes a few days to process.
  - Once you have been approved, your affiliate leader will notify you that you are eligible to begin mentoring and/or managing the database.

# Important Policies, Cont'd

- **Youth Protection Policy** – The safety and security of students are of utmost importance for ACE. It is the policy of ACE National that ALL adult volunteers participating in ACE are considered “mandated reporters of child abuse.” This means they must report any good-faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected or exposed to any form of violence or threat.
  - If a student discloses or a mentor suspects that a student is a victim of abuse, bullying or neglect, or is a danger to themselves or others, the mentor **MUST**:
    - Report this concern to your affiliate leader and work with your affiliate leader to inform your ACE Regional Director immediately.
    - Together with the affiliate leader, ensure that the concern is reported promptly to the student's school or guidance counselor, the on-site teacher or school champion.

# Important Policies, Cont'd

- Many states have laws requiring mentors to report such concerns, so it is essential that you take action both to protect the student and comply with relevant law – your affiliate leader is receiving specialized training and will be familiar with the requirements in your state.

## Note:

- Your affiliate leadership and the Regional Directors from ACE National have more detailed training regarding actions that should be taken should more challenging situations arise.
- These individuals are part of your support system and should be contacted whenever a situation arises that is outside the norm or of concern.
- Do not feel that you must "go it alone".

# Important Policies, Cont'd

- **Field Trips** – The ACE experience should include visits to different places such as construction sites, training facilities and/or mentor's offices. These visits provide incomparable learning opportunities.
  - For a field trip, each student must have a signed parental permission form.
  - Mentors must never transport students in their personal cars.
  - All students must have transportation to and from field trip site.
  - Only approved mentors, teachers, and students are allowed to be transported by busing service. No guests may be included.
  - Students are not to be left unattended during the trip.
  - If the site requires personal protective equipment such as hard hats, closed-toe shoes, eye protection, and safety vests, mentors must ensure each student is equipped with the required attire.
  - During a pandemic, CDC and local governmental guidelines for group travel should be followed.

# Important Policies, Cont'd

- **Gifts** – Gifts to individual students are not permitted. A sponsor firm may give all students an inexpensive gift such as a pen with a company logo. Never loan or give students any money.
- **Digital/Social Media Use** – Mentors must not connect with students via their personal social media pages. Instead, mentors may encourage students to follow ACE National's and an affiliate's social media platforms. Mentors may, however, connect with students using professional social media pages, such as LinkedIn.

# Important Policies, Cont'd

- **Photo and Image Use** – Before a mentor or affiliate uses an image of an ACE student in a publication or social media post, it **MUST** confirm the student has on file the ACE consent form signed by the parent/guardian.
- **Student Behavior** - The ACE Mentor Program is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence and bullying. If there is an issue with a student's behavior, please notify your affiliate leader. ACE's expectations of students are clearly spelled out in the Parent/Guardian/Student Consent Form.

# Sessions & Commitment

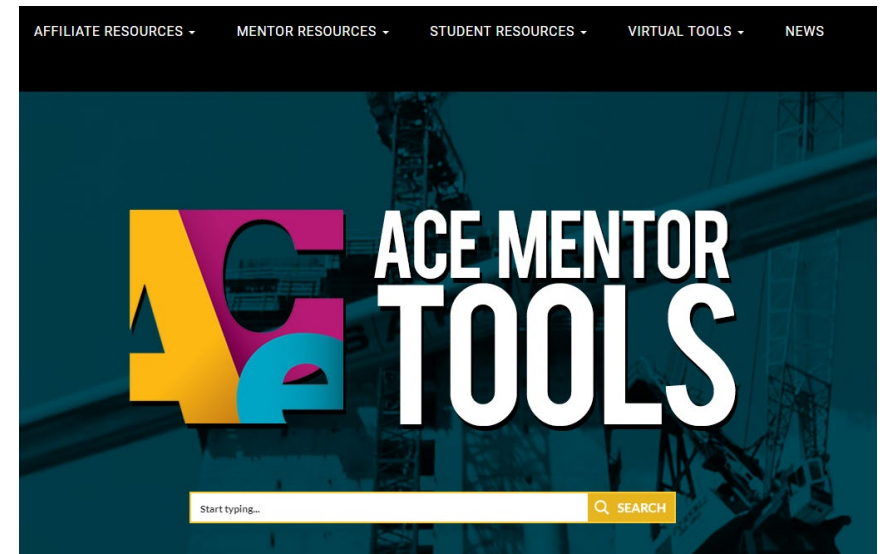
- Each session should be pre-planned by the mentor, with a specific topic in mind
- Students should be provided a written agenda or outline for each session
- Sessions should build towards the year-end project
- Sessions should include one or two short presentations as well as hands-on activities



# Year-end Presentations

ACE has developed an online resource for affiliates and mentors. On this website, affiliate leaders and mentors can find administrative information and policies as well as curriculum and activities for mentoring sessions:

- Visit [www.acementortools.org](http://www.acementortools.org) for information on:
  - Affiliate Resources
  - Mentor Resources
  - Student Resources
  - Virtual Tools



# Year-end Presentations

During the program, each team develops a mock design project and presents it at a year-end event.

Teams present their projects to an audience of mentors, parents and others.

Mentors should work with students on their presentation skills and preparation for the event. Mentors can find tools to assist students with their presentation skills and public speaking at [www.acementortools.org](http://www.acementortools.org) .

# Education & Scholarships

The ACE mission calls for supporting students' continued advancement through the A-E-C industry.

To help realize this goal, mentors should:

- Inform students about college requirements for the A-E-C fields.
- Offer to help students with college or skilled crafts program applications and write recommendations.
- Encourage students to apply for a local ACE scholarship.
- Explain to students how to utilize mentors as a valuable professional network in the future.
- Encourage seniors to register as alumni in the database and to keep in touch with ACE as they advance through their careers.
- Encourage and assist students in identifying internship opportunities.

# Thank You!

ACE alumni overwhelmingly report that mentors have a tremendous impact on their lives and careers.

Don't worry – you are not supposed to know it all!

We thank you for your commitment to the ACE Mentor Program and our student participants!

# Questions

Please contact your affiliate leader or your regional director with any questions:

- Katie Bawarski, Northeast/Mid-Atlantic: [kbawarski@acementor.org](mailto:kbawarski@acementor.org)
- Paulette Dallas, West: [pdallas@acementor.org](mailto:pdallas@acementor.org)
- Tzu Chen, Southeast: [tchen@acementor.org](mailto:tchen@acementor.org)
- Khalil Berryhill, Central: [kberryhill@acementor.org](mailto:kberryhill@acementor.org)

# Mentor Agreement

As a mentor, I agree to:

- Commit to the day and time of the team meetings and attend the meetings.
- Devote full attention to the students.
- Listen with respect.
- Portray a positive role model for the students by maintaining an attitude of integrity, courtesy and maturity.
- Remain confidential – I understand that all information I learn or am told about students is confidential.
- If any youth tells me something life threatening, I will report it immediately to my affiliate leader.
- Respect diversity.
- Limit physical contact to a handshake or "high five."
- Wear appropriate attire at all times.

# Mentor Agreement

As a mentor, I will not:

- Conduct one-on-one meetings with a student behind closed doors.
- Pursue one-on-one contact with a student outside ACE meetings for non-professional reasons.
- Attempt to serve as students' psychiatrist, priest, minister, rabbi, etc.
- Give money or individual gifts to a student.
- Share my personal information such as age, telephone numbers or address.
- Discriminate against any student based on age, sex, ethnic or socio-economic background, belief system, or sexual orientation.
- Transport students in personal cars.
- Use, possess, or be under influence of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or illegal drugs in the presence of students.