The mentoring you receive from your faculty advisor is one of the most important elements of your University experience. You can shape your mentoring relationship in significant ways.

1 | Find the Right Advisor for You
Start by understanding your own needs:

- Write down your topical interests, career interests, and desired skills.
- Request meetings to discuss the above points with potential advisors.
  - Do your interests align?
  - Can you communicate with each other clearly?
- Speak with other students about working with this professor.

2 | Be a Diligent Advisee
Your adviser will not do your work or keep you organized. S/he is there for advising!

- Request regular meetings. Set a brief agenda in advance each time.
- Be honest and professional about any research problems you face. Problems will happen.
- Consider having a ‘renovation’ meeting. Explain to your adviser what you need, and find out what s/he expects from you. Visit the Duke-advisee-tips website for details (see More Information).

3 | Discuss Your Career Goals with Your Advisor
- Make an individual development plan. This is a short list of your career goals, and the skills/experiences you need to achieve them.
- Schedule a careers meeting to discuss your plan with your advisor. This helps your supervisor learn what you want, and encourages them to focus on ways to get you there.

4 | Maintain and Build Connections
Your advisor may be your primary mentor, but s/he should not be your only mentor.

- Reach out to other faculty, staff and more senior students with similar interests or career trajectories.
- Maintain your connections to past advisors. An ongoing connection will make it easy to ask for reference letters, advice, or future work opportunities.

5 | Facing Difficulties?
- Your Director of Graduate Studies has a responsibility to ensure that you are adequately advised.
- The Graduate School has advisors who can provide assistance if you’re still facing problems.
- If you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, the Duke Counseling and Psychological Services offers free support for all Duke students: studentaffairs.duke.edu/caps

6 | More Information
- For much more detail on this topic, visit our companion website: duke-advisee-tips.weebly.com
- Visit the official Graduate School mentoring website: gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/cultivating-culture-mentoring

Compiled by students of the Emerging Leaders Institute program, run by the Duke Graduate School and the Duke Office of Postdoctoral Services.