

FOR MENTORS

CONFLUX

# INTRODUCTION.

Mentoring has always been an important part of education and career development. In Conflux, we believe that mentoring is an amazing tool for personal, professional and academic growth. It is a way to connect and create value for students, universities, alumni and companies in the industry through personal relations.

This guide is for you, as a mentor in the Conflux mentorship program. We are happy to welcome you to the second round of the mentorship program, where we have gathered and matched 160 mentors and 160 mentees across different engineering and technical backgrounds. We are building on top of our previous experience, with an even bigger program than before. This time, you will be a part of it.

In this guide, you will find information on how to get the best possible output and experience from your mentoring progress. Through interviews, scientific papers and a number of different books, we have understood the crucial parts in making a mentoring program successful. The conclusion is that there is a lot you can do yourself to increase the chances of learning and making the experience valuable.

To be a mentor is not just about meeting over a lunch and answering generic questions about resumés or LinkedIn profiles. It is an important role which requires engagement in your mentee's challenges and dreams, and which gives you the opportunity to have a positive impact on a student's future, starting from your own experiences and success stories.

With this guide, we will give you the best possible starting point for a meaningful and impactful program.

# CONTENT.

This material is divided into eight different parts.



## 1. Program and Network



## 3. Challenges and Pitfalls



## 5. The First Meeting



## 7. Final Meeting



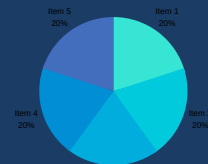
## 2. The Committed Mentor



## 4. Preparation



## 6. Meetings in Between



## 8. Evaluation

We recommend that you read the entire guide before the kick-off and try to run through all of the reflection exercises. After the kick-off event, the guide is intended to be revisited depending on where you are in the program.

We hope that you enjoy reading this material.

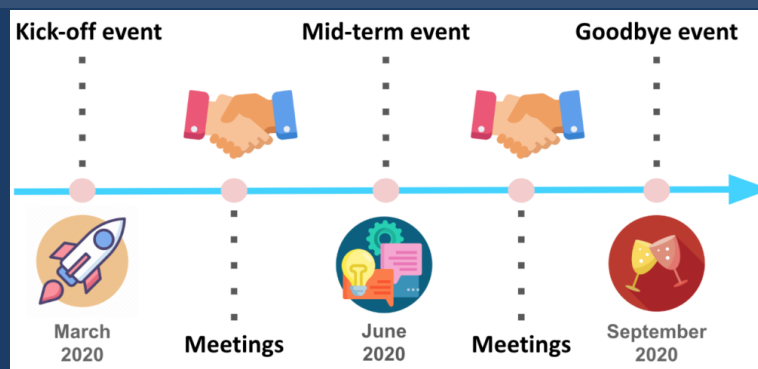


Sincerely,

The Conflux Team

# THE CONFLUX PROGRAM & NETWORK.

The essence of the mentorship program is in the relationship between you and your mentee. Our job here at Conflux is to make sure that we have the right setting in place for that to happen. That is why we have decided to invite all participants in the program to attend three events: A kick-off event, a mid-way event and a final event.



## The kick-off

The most important event of the program is the kick-off event. At the kick-off, you will meet your mentee for the first time. It will be in an informal setting and we will provide you with tools to start off your relationship. Besides getting the chance to introduce yourselves to one another, the event will consist of:



Inspiration from our guest speaker from the industry who will talk about their own experiences of having and being a mentor



Talks and workshops to be done together with your mentee



Dinner, drinks, and networking with the other participants in the program

The kick-off event will touch on a lot of topics addressed in this material, which is why we recommend that you use this as a preparation for it.



# THE CONFLUX PROGRAM & NETWORK.

## The mid-way and final event

During the course of the program, we will reveal more information about the mid-way event and the final event. These events are intended to keep you and your mentee on track and ensure that you reflect on progress, challenges, and learnings both during and at the end of the program. These will take place in June and September.

## The Conflux Network

During the program, we will release a number of newsletters. The newsletters will contain interviews from participants in the program and keep you updated with the network of Conflux participants, both on the mentor and mentee side.

Being part of the program is not only about your relationship with your mentee. It is also about expanding your network among other students and professionals, and that is why our events will always include time to for you invest in building new relations. As part of the Conflux network, you will also be added to a LinkedIn group with all participating mentors and mentees, so you can reach out to the people you meet.



# THE COMMITTED MENTOR.

As part of the program, we expect that you are a committed mentor to increase the likelihood of making the program the best experience for both you and your mentee. First and foremost, the committed mentor takes a starting point in their mentee's challenges, needs and dreams. As a mentor you must be a confidential and honest discussion partner, ready to listen, ask, and guide. It is also important that you as a mentor are willing to open up your network and help your mentee build its own, for instance by taking a guided tour around the company or similarly. Overall, the committed mentor has the following core competencies:



## LISTEN ACTIVELY

The committed mentor listens actively and engaging to their mentee and does not make drastic conclusions. The best relation requires that you both feel seen and heard. Asking clarifying questions or challenging your mentee's thoughts, before elaborating your own, creates a stronger relation.



## SET GOALS AND BUILD COMPETENCE

Focus on specific goals and skills. To know that the program has been successful requires agreement on the goal. Take advantage of your large toolbox of personality tests, books, frameworks and contacts to build up capacity and competencies in your mentee.



## BUILD TRUST

The committed mentor creates a space where the mentee can ask the questions they need answered. Also the "dumb" questions. This trust can build up by showing your mentee that it is okay to make mistakes; and knows that you commit to the appointments you make.



## BE ENCOURAGING AND INSPIRING

The committed mentor brings out the best sides of their mentee. You might be able to see sides of your mentee that they are not able to see in themselves. Be sure that you acknowledge the results and development of your mentee, and that you show your mentee what is possible to achieve.

Ultimately, your mentee has the responsibility for their own learning and benefits, and they cannot expect you as a mentor to do all the work. However, you still have some of the responsibility of ensuring that you both gain something from the relationship, with the authority and experience you have.

# CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS.

It is hard to avoid challenges or pitfalls in some mentoring relationships. Even though a match might look good on paper, there might still be personal issues that arise between two people. In this section, we try to explore some of the pitfalls that can arise during a mentoring relationship, and how we can help you out in the Conflux program.

## **Not prioritising meetings**

It can easily be demotivating if your mentee keeps showing up late or is postponing meetings. If you do the same, this might also derail your relationship. This is one of the most common pitfalls in mentoring relationship - and is one of the easiest to solve. After all, it is a matter of prioritization and logistics, and not about the match itself.

## **Personality issues**

Sometimes, pitfalls occur between a mentor and mentee due to personality issues. Things just don't click, or you don't like the way your mentee communicates. In some cases it is unavoidable, and the best way to handle it is to be honest about it. If you are open about it with your mentee, you might be able to discuss what you can do to make it through, set new expectations and still gain something from the match.

# CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS.

## A helping hand

Resolving issues in a mentoring relationship can be intimidating, and it is not always easy to bring up one of the above issues with your mentee. If you are encountering an issue with your mentee - maybe he or she is not prioritizing your meetings, and you are either not comfortable confronting them yourself or it has simply not worked - **then please reach out to either Christian or Deina from the Conflux team:**



**Deina Kellezi**

deina@conflux.dk

+ 45 26 11 06 08



**Christian Bøgelund**

christian@conflux.dk

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BWe are able help you out in a number of different ways. As a neutral party, we can facilitate contact to your mentee and help figure out what has gone wrong. For us, it is crucial that issues are resolved and not ignored.

If it is a fundamental issue on a personal level it is sometimes the right solution to end the relationship. This process is often difficult; which is why we can also help facilitate the separation between you and your mentee to minimize disappointments for both parties. Agreeing that things don't work out is more constructive than ignoring the issue and each other.

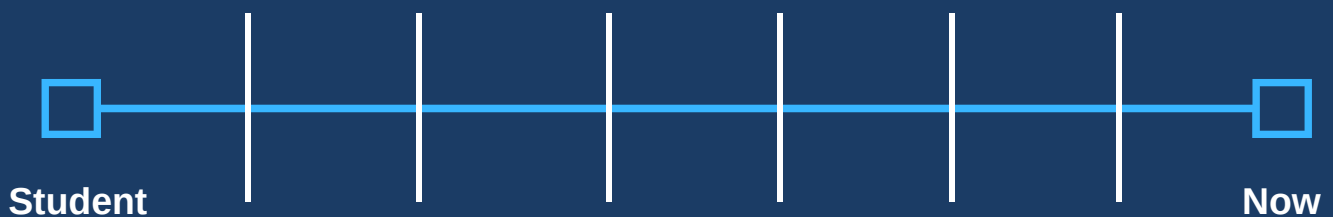
All communication that goes through us is completely confidential, and we will not share anything with your mentee without consulting you first. Everything you discuss with us, stays with us.

# PREPARATION.

Before the first meeting, there are a couple of things that might be a good idea to reflect on. As a mentor, you have far more experience than your mentee both professionally and personally. These experiences and competencies set the foundation for you as a guidance partner for your mentee.

## Your journey

This is your career journey: From your study time to today. Reflect on this journey and fill in the most important events and milestones you have encountered during your journey. Challenges, disappointments, successes, transforming events. Supplementing this, reflect on the following questions before the first meeting.



Which three to four milestones have contributed the most to my personal and professional development?



What are my top three professional or personal successes, and what have I done to achieve them?



What has been the largest professional and personal challenge that I have met, and what did I do to overcome them?

Think about the questions in relation to your entire professional timeline and write them down. The answers to these questions might bring out a number of valuable stories, advice and knowledge sharing that could be relevant for your mentee.

# MENTORING ROLES.



The key to understanding the learning opportunities for both you and your mentee in mentoring is in understanding the different roles you can take on as a mentor. See it as wearing different hats. The hats represent the many different ways you, as a mentor, can facilitate learning. Choosing which hat to wear in a specific situation or conversation depends on the context. For example what your mentee needs, who the mentee is, and the background and personality of you as a mentor.

To help figure this out, you can evaluate the mentee's starting up, by considering the mentee's maturity, educational level, personality, self-confidence, and career and academic ambitions. The more aware you are of the learning and development opportunities that comes with wearings different hats, and the more you use these different hats to consciously help your mentee, the better chance there is for you to increase the mutual learning of your relationship.



## 1. The Guru

The Guru shares professional knowledge about career, leadership and professionalism. Knowledge that your mentee does not know he or she is actually lacking, or knowledge that your mentee might specifically request.



## 2. The Coach

The Coach focuses on the power of questions. They support the mentee's learning through questions and correct timing of questions. The Coach doesn't try to provide the mentee with the answer - but instead encourages the mentee to figure it out themselves.



# SITUATIONAL MENTORING.



## 3. The Networker



The Networker supports mentees in developing and using networks. On a general level, by sharing how to build networks for different purposes in life and career. The Networker might also open up their own network to their mentee. Maybe to a colleague that has some knowledge you don't - and you believe the mentee would gain from having a chat with them. The mentee can benefit from connecting with people they might not have been exposed to otherwise, opening doors for the future.

## 4. The Buddy



The Buddy ensures a safe environment that includes empathy, support and genuine interest in the mentee's thoughts and challenges. The Buddy might ask questions that are more related to how the mentee feels about things on a more personal level, and not from a purely professional or academic standpoint. The Buddy is also open to talk about more difficult, personal issues.

# MENTORING ROLES.



## 5. The Storyteller



The Storyteller tells stories and anecdotes from their own life and career. By sharing these stories and experiences, the mentee gains new perspectives, inspiration and food for thought. By listening to real-life stories, the mentee might be able to relate the stories to their own life and situation, or gain insight into how certain actions can affect career.

## 6. The Devil's Advocate



The Devil's Advocate helps mentees learn by making them explain their ideas and views, and then challenging these ideas and views, introducing different arguments, viewpoints and provocative questions.



# THE FIRST MEETING.

During the first meeting with your mentee, the focus will be on laying the foundation for your relationship. That also means that you will get to know each other on a more personal level and set the frames for your relationship.

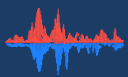
When mentoring relationships go wrong, it is often because of miscommunication or misunderstandings between the two parties. It can be the expected number of meetings, the definition of success criteria and so on. The more you plan and communicate, the more you will both get out of it and avoid challenges and pitfalls.

## Mentoring Contract.

A strong tool for ensuring a good relationship with your mentee is writing a mentoring contract from the very beginning. These are the general rules of your relationship that both of you adhere to.

That is why we have reserved time for you to clarify this with your mentee at the kick-off. It is a good idea to reflect on the contents beforehand.

**An example of a mentoring contract could be:**



**Frequency:** We meet once a month for a one hour duration, except for exam periods.



**Follow-up:** We follow up on each meeting via email, two - three weeks after.



**Contact:** Your mentee is welcome to contact the mentor between meetings with questions over email or phone.



**Time:** Our meetings start and finish at the scheduled time.



**Booking:** Your mentee is responsible for booking meetings, and we should always have a meeting scheduled in the calendar. After each meeting, we schedule the next.



**Agenda:** We agree on an agenda before each meeting.



**Participation:** We are both committed to actively engage in the relation.



**Closure:** The mentor program includes an official closing event. However, discuss and agree on how to formally end the mentoring commitment and how to evaluate on it. You could agree beforehand that, no matter what happens with our mentoring relation, you will plan a final meeting.

Make sure you write down the key points of what you agree on.

The mentoring contract ensures that you have a framework to start from, so that you can avoid misunderstandings and disappointments. The contract does not **have** to follow the above formula, but is recommended to get around the mentioned areas.

# PERSONAL LEARNING GOALS.

Your mentee has applied to become part of the program for a reason, and we have matched the two of you for a reason. Your mentee wants to achieve something, gain clarity and learn, together with you, an experienced professional who might be able to help them get there. Structuring these reasons into tangible goals is crucial for maximizing the output of a mentoring program. During the first meeting, you and your mentee should make sure to outline these goals together.

To help the two of you with the process, we recommend using SMART goals. SMART is an acronym that you can use to guide your goal setting. Your role as a mentor is to help ensure that the goals are in fact SMART, so that the likelihood of reaching them at the end of your mentoring increases. SMART goals ensure that goals are clear and reachable, by adhering to certain criteria:



## Specific.

The goal should be clear and specific, otherwise it becomes difficult to focus your efforts or feel truly motivated to achieve it. When drafting a goal, your mentee should try to answer these five questions:



*What do I want to accomplish? Why is this goal important? Who is involved? Where is it located? Which resources or limits are involved?*

**Example:** Your mentee is currently a student, working part-time at a supermarket next to their studies. They want to obtain a student position that is more academically relevant to their studies, at a big engineering company.

A specific goal your mentee could set: “I want to gain the skills and experience necessary to become a student worker at a big engineering company, so that I can start building up relevant experience.”



## Measurable.

It is important to have goals that are measurable, so that you and your mentee can track progress and stay motivated. Assessing progress helps you meet deadlines, and feel the excitement of getting closer to the finish line. A measurable goal should address the following questions:



*How much? How many? How will I know when it's accomplished?*

**Example:** You might agree to measure the mentee's goal by the number of job interviews they gain, the number of interview cases they practice on, or the number of extracurricular projects they do at university.



## Achievable.

Your mentee's goal needs to be realistic to be successful. It should stretch their abilities and challenge them, but still remain possible. An achievable and realistic goal will usually answer questions such as:



*How can I accomplish this goal? How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?*

**Example:** Is the goal realistic, based on the mentee's existing experience and qualifications. For instance, does he or she have the time to gain enough extracurricular activities? Are the necessary resources for interview practicing available? Make sure you minimize external influence when helping defining goals for your mentee. If the goal is: "Get a student position at company X", then the chance of obtaining a student position depends on who else applies for the position, and on the recruiter's decision. If you rephrase it to: "Get the experience and training that I need to be considered for the position", it is entirely up to your mentee, and thereby makes the goal more fair.

## Relevant.

A relevant goal is a goal that truly matters to your mentee. It aligns with other relevant goals, so that reaching one goal also helps moving forward on others. A relevant goal can answer yes to the following questions:



*Does this seem worthwhile? Is this the right time? Does this match our other efforts / needs? Am I the right person to reach this goal? Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?*

**Example:** Your mentee might want to gain the skills and experience needed for that a specific student position. However, is it the right time to start gaining this experience, or to start working towards additional qualifications? Maybe it is too early in in your mentee's studies, and it might be better for them to focus on their studies, until they reach a later semester.

## Time-Bound.

All goals need a deadline, so that you have something to work towards. This part of the SMART goal criteria helps to prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over long-term goals. A time-bound goal will answer these questions:



*When? What can I do six months from now? What can I do six weeks from now? What can I do today?*

**Example:** Gaining the skills to obtain a student worker position will take time. How long will it take your mentee to acquire these skills? It is important to give them a realistic time frame for accomplishing the smaller goals that are necessary to achieving your final objective.

# Confidentiality.



It is important that you can both be honest in your relation, even about confidential topics. A mentoring relation can go on after the Conflux program in other professionals contexts.

It is important to understand that “what happens in Conflux, stays in Conflux”.

# MEETINGS IN BETWEEN.

At this point, you have gotten to know each other better. You have maybe agreed on a mentoring contract, set some goals for what your mentee wants to achieve, and laid the foundation for your relationship going forward. Here, we want to provide you with some ideas and advice on how to get the most out of your future meetings.

## USE YOUR TIME WISELY

Put away your computer and cellphone and write notes on paper. It is a pity if you meet once a month and spend part of the meeting on your phone. You owe it to each other to respect your appointments, so come prepared for meetings - else, you are wasting both your own and your mentee's time.



## WRITE NOTES BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER



We have all been in a situation where some great points have been made, but you forget it an hour later. To make sure something like that does not happen, write down your thoughts during the meeting and reflect on them afterwards, especially for when you prepare for the next meeting.

## ITERATIVE FEEDBACK

If something goes wrong during your meetings - for instance, if meeting appointments aren't held or progress isn't made - then talk about it. None of you are mind-readers, so the only way to know if meetings are going well is by talking frequently about it and by being transparent.



## FOLLOW UP ON GOALS AND EARLIER MEETINGS



Focus on your mentee's - and your own - development throughout the program, and follow up on milestones you have agreed on. If there is no progress or if your mentee is encountering challenges along the way, ask your mentee if you can help them get to the finish line.

# MEETING TOOLBOX.

Your mentee might have a general idea of the goals they want to meet, and what to discuss in order to reach them when first going into the mentorship. However, sometimes general inspiration helps get a better overview of our development both career-wise and academically. We have therefore gathered a number of different ideas for meetings topics, tools and frameworks that you might want to consider incorporating in some of your meetings to overall help the development of your mentee.



## **Cultural Differences**

In this year's mentorship program, we have many mentees from diverse international backgrounds. Your mentee might be an international student looking to make a career in Denmark after they finish their studies, but find it difficult to understand the culture in Danish workplaces compared to their home country's. Or, your mentee might lack the network that most of their Danish peers have.

However, culture is not only limited to national differences, and is just as relevant for Danes to address. Cultural differences can vary in different company cultures. The culture within a startup company might be different from a large, established enterprise. Discussing these cultural differences is relevant for both Danish and international students. Both in terms of figuring out how to fit in a company, as well as which kind of company or industry might fit you best from a cultural perspective.



## **Transition from university to workplace**

Students are often very consumed in their studies - both the academic content itself and social life. Graduates might not know what to expect when entering "the real world", and might have difficulties adapting to life in the workplace. Depending on where your mentee is in their studies, it might be relevant to address these differences. Tell your mentee about your own experience; and how you handled your transition into the workforce.



## Other topics that you can discuss:



- Improving job application processes: Feedback on motivational letter, CV, and conducting mock interviews
- The importance of networking throughout your studies and career; this could be how to improve networking skills, and how to utilize network
- Discuss your current job position and what a typical day looks like for you
- The mentor's future perspectives and past experiences of their work and career
- How to balance work and private/family life
- Unwritten rules or code of conducts at work places or in the field that might be surprising or different from university life
- Your mentee's academic interests, experiences and skills from current studies or next to current studies
- Your mentee's career prospects, dreams and goals
- Discuss which academic direction your mentee wants to go in, and how they might be able to direct it through the available academic choices, both at university and outside it
- How to handle stressful periods in school and work



## Personality Assessment Test

Doing an online personality test in the beginning of the program is a good way to help your mentee outline their behaviour, and what makes them thrive in a professional setting. There are a number of free online tests that serve well for this purpose. Sometimes, you might also be able to gain access to some of the professional tests using in the HR department at your company. Discuss the mentee's results and ask questions to help the mentee clarify their own profile.



## Personal SWOT Analysis

A personal SWOT analysis is a tool used to identify a person's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in academic and professional contexts. The following figure shows the questions that a personal SWOT analysis focuses on.

Have your mentee fill out the SWOT analysis as preparation for a meeting, or do it together as part of one of your meetings. Then go over their assessment of themselves together. Not only does it help them outline their general competencies, it also gives a clearer picture of how your mentee views themselves. It might for instance be the case that they are underselling themselves and their capabilities.

### Strengths.

- What are my academic skills?
- What are my professional skills?
- What are my personal skills?
- What resources do I possess? (Network, connections etc.)
- When do I perform best in a team?

### Weaknesses.

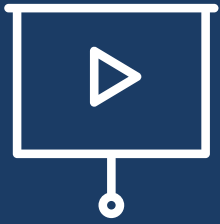
- What do I not do well?
- What will I need to improve?
- In which areas do my peers do better than me?
- What am I afraid of?
- When do I fail?
- What are the reasons for my failures?
- How do I handle difficult times?

### Opportunities.

- What activities are available at university?
- What activities are available outside of university?
- Which jobs will benefit my CV and career?
- How can I use my network?
- How can I grow my network?

### Threats.

- Which obstacles are in the way of my success?
- What competencies generally demanded by employers do I not have?
- What are the trends and future perspectives in the industry I aspire to join?
- How will technology / trends influence the value of my competencies?



### **Presentation Skills**

Preparing and delivering presentations are needed in most job functions, whether you are a specialist or generalist. Your mentee might benefit from training their presentation skills and building confidence in public speaking, and it can be rewarding to incorporate this focus in one of your meetings.

Try to agree on a topic for a 5-minute mock presentation. Discuss what the contents and key points of the presentation should be, and try to have your mentee deliver the presentation to you. It could even be inspired from an actual presentation they have to deliver in an academic or professional context. Give feedback to your mentee. They might find it intimidating at first, so remember that you are not assessing them for anything else than their own sake, development, and growth.



### **Personal Elevator Pitch**

An elevator pitch is a 30 - 60 second presentation of who you are, your strength, and why you are the right candidate for a specific position or company. It is an effective tool for branding yourself professionally, by boiling down the most important aspects of your profile. Have your mentee prepare an elevator pitch and deliver it to you. Nailing their elevator pitch could come in handy for the mentee later on.

# THE FINAL MEETING.

The mentorship program will end off with a farewell event where all mentors and mentees are invited. This event will help provide tools for future work and development after the program finishes and round off your learnings from the program. Before participating in the event, it might be a good idea to plan for a final “official” meeting with your mentee. For the final meeting, we encourage you to go through the below areas together.

## **Loose ends:**

If you have previously set milestones or talked about specific challenges that haven’t been handled yet, this might be your final chance to talk to them about it. It might be a good idea to look through notes from previous meetings.

**Three key points that are important to address are:**

### **1. OUTCOME**



#### **Reflect on the outcome and learnings from the program.**

Go through what you have learned by being part of the mentoring program together with your mentee. Discuss whether or not your overall objectives of the program have been met. If the objective has not been fully reached, make sure to discuss with your mentee why this is the case, and how they can continue to work towards their goal.

### **2. FORWARD**



#### **Reflect on what the mentee should use the learnings for.**

Go through what your mentee has learned together, then talk about what it can be used for and how you can apply it in your life. What is your mentee able to do in the future with the knowledge and experience that they have now?

### **3. RELATION**



#### **Plan for the future relation.**

Some choose to stop their mentoring relationship at the end of the program, others continue, less frequently or in a more informal fashion. If you do decide to continue your relationship, think and talk about what your relationship with your mentee would look like and what changes you will need to make. What will your mentoring contract look like in the future? How will it affect your relationship?



## **CELEBRATE SUCCES!**

Remember to celebrate that you have completed the mentoring program. You can for instance agree to go out for dinner, grab a beer at the company friday bar, or invite your mentee over for an informal company lunch.

# EVALUATION.

Thank you for being part of the Conflux mentoring program. We are extremely grateful for your participation and wish to bridge the gap between students and professionals. As a student organization wanting to make a difference, we want to learn as much as possible from this year's program so we can keep improving the program for future participants. Thanks to your participation, you're helping us to do so. That's why we want to hear about your experiences in the following ways:

## QUESTIONNAIRE.

Throughout the program, and following our events, we will send you a questionnaire to get an overall idea of how the participants have felt about the program. These data points are extremely important for us, since it gives us a better view of what can be improved for future mentorship rounds from our mentor's perspectives.



## PERSONAL INTERVIEWS.

To gain a deeper understanding of your learnings from the program, we will conduct a number of interviews with different mentors. Real-life stories gives us a more tangible idea of what can be gained from the program. If you have 30 minutes available, we would greatly appreciate if you would sign up for an interview.



## THANK YOU!

This program wouldn't exist if you had not been eager to participate. Our only job is to set up the framework; and then you fill it out. If you know someone who could be a good match - either as a mentor or mentee - please don't hesitate to send them our way. They might be able to give a helping hand in future Conflux mentorship programs. **You can recommend people from your network through the following form:**