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## AUXILIARY MENTORSHIP GUIDE



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June 2019

## Auxiliary Mentorship Guide

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**Purpose**

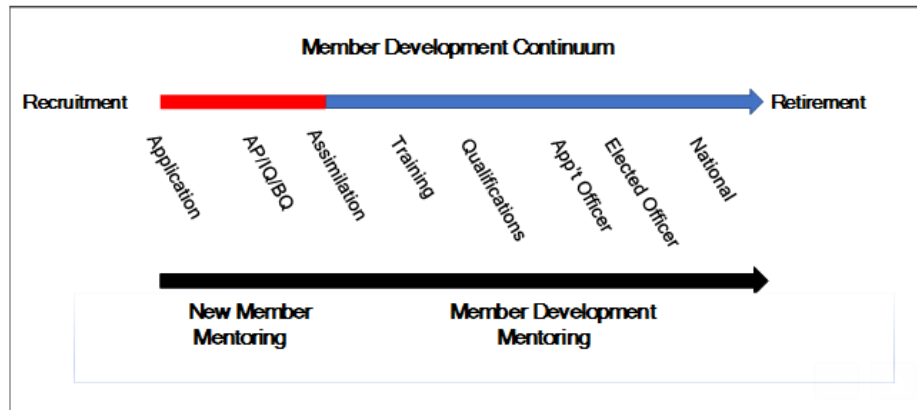
This guide is designed to present practical information for beginning or continuing a mentorship. It is based on experiences with formal, structured mentoring programs proved across organizations. It will explain the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees, describe expectations, and supply tools to ensure successful partnerships.

**Mentorship**

Mentoring is a powerful tool for professional and personal development. It offers an opportunity for members to expand their leadership, interpersonal, and technical skills. Mentorship, in its simplest form, is one person helping another to develop and grow. Mentoring comes in many forms. Some mentorships are part of structured programs while others form organically. In the Auxiliary we can provide proper mentoring from the moment an applicant applies to the retirement time.

The Auxiliary Member Development Continuum

Mentorship is a key part of the member development continuum. This process describes a member’s journey from recruitment to retirement.



Formal and Informal Mentoring

Formal mentoring is characterized by:

- An explicit agreement between mentor and mentee;
- A specific set of goals;
- A structured process for the mentoring to take place (e.g. a meeting schedule, explicit roles, and responsibilities, etc.)

Informal mentoring has a looser structure and can even lack an explicit agreement – this structure is often seen when a mentee is “taken under someone’s wing.” The relationship typically forms without the mentor and mentee negotiating specific agreements on how they will work together or on what they will work. Instead, the mentor provides advice,

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insight, and supportive challenge as they consider appropriate or as sought by the mentee.

### Mentoring Process

Ultimately, the mentoring process has around six distinct phases:

- Decide whether mentoring is for you.
- Find a mentor or mentee.
- Set up the mentoring relationship.
- Keep the mentoring relationship on track.
- Evaluate progress.
- Close the mentoring relationship.

### Why Mentor?

Successful partnerships help both the mentee and the mentor through continuous learning. Mentorships keep members involved and they can reveal underutilized talents, encourage intentional career growth, and nurture flexibility.

### *Benefits to mentees*

Mentees receive help from an effective context for learning because their mentor is typically outside of their chain of leadership. They can ask questions, get advice, receive feedback, and learn from the experience of their mentor. They get ongoing support and development opportunities as they progress through their career.

### *Benefits to mentors*

Mentoring is a bilateral partnership, and mentors often get as much from the experience as their mentees. Mentors experience renewed enthusiasm, develop their own leadership skills, and broaden their understanding of their organization.

### *Benefits to the organization*

Mentorship programs increase vertical and cross-functional communication. Members become more knowledgeable, capable, confident, and increase the mission effectiveness.

### Typical Goals

While a mentoring relationship can be used to work on any goal or set of goals, they are often used to develop:

- Time management
- Networking
- Professional relationship management
- Public Speaking
- Managing competing priorities
- Technical skills
- Political savvy
- Conflict management
- Leadership skills
- Liaising with other organizations

### **Successful**

The most successful mentorships share five characteristics: clarity of

<b>Mentorships</b>	purpose, explicit expectations, commitment, respect and appreciation for differences, and confidentiality and trust (Drahosz, 1999).
Clarity of Purpose	Mentoring partners must understand what they are trying to conduct together. What are the goals? What are the skills to be developed?
Explicit Expectations	The partners need to understand their roles and responsibilities from the beginning of the relationship. What does each partner need from the other to succeed? How often will meetings be held? Who will start communication?
Commitment	Mentoring depends on how much effort is put into it. Mentees need to follow through with action after meeting with their mentor and must actively seek their mentor's aid. Mentors need to keep their commitments to their mentees and remain available for them. These partnerships can be vulnerable, and commitment is how they are strengthened.
Respect and Appreciation for Differences	Both sides bring unique perspectives and experiences to the partnership. The choice of mentor / mentee is an intentional one; if there were no differences between the partners, there would be nothing to learn from each other.
Confidentiality and Trust	Trust is needed in the mentoring relationship so that meaningful information can be shared. As part of setting explicit expectations, the partners should discuss what subjects should be confidential and what constitutes confidentiality before embarking on the mentorship.
<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>	Both the mentor and the mentee have specific roles and responsibilities within the context of the mentorship. Unlike in formal education where the instructor's and student's roles are typically limited to transmission of knowledge and skills, mentors and mentees are in a dynamic relationship and are more responsive to each other. Their roles are correspondingly more complex.
Mentee's Role	<p>Successful mentees have four roles: learner, planner, communicator, and driver (Drahosz &amp; Rhodes, 1998).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a <i>learner</i>, the mentee is taking advantage of the opportunity to grow and take in new information. They actively solicit feedback and try their mentor's suggestions even (or especially) when it feels uncomfortable.</li> <li>• <i>Planning</i> requires the mentee to have a sense of personal direction with realistic, identifiable goals and an idea of how to achieve them – or at least well-articulated questions about where to go next.</li> <li>• Mentees must openly <i>communicate</i> their thoughts, goals, challenges, and concerns. They must discuss learning goals,</li> </ul>

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barriers, and provide feedback to their mentor on what is and is not working.

- Lastly, they are *drivers* in that they maintain the momentum of their own learning. Mentees must follow through on developmental activities and ask for help when needed.

### Mentor's Role

The mentor should be a teacher, guide, counselor, and challenger (Drahoz & Rhodes, 1998).

- In the *teacher* role, the mentor helps the mentee assess their career goals and outline plans to achieve them. They make time to understand where mentees are coming from, identify their strengths and weaknesses, what they value, and what they want to become. The mentor shares their own experience, knowledge, and insight.
- As a *guide*, the mentor helps the mentee navigate the politics, norms, and unwritten rules of the organization, while also aiding with networking.
- When *counseling*, they supply space for the mentee to explore solutions to problems and challenges by actively listening, keeping confidence, and sharing their own lessons learned without giving answers directly.
- Lastly, as a *challenger*, the mentor works to reveal the mentee's blind spots, give honest feedback, and help the mentee think through potential consequences for their proposed actions.

### Supervisor's Role

Unless a mentee is being mentored by their supervisor (typically their elected or appointed leadership), the supervisor is usually "outside" of the mentoring relationship. In some cases, the mentee may choose not to disclose the mentoring relationship to his or her supervisor.

In most cases, however, supervisors can be real assets in the mentoring process, even from the sidelines. As a mentee, you should not overlook your supervisor as a potential source of support for your mentoring activities.

Supervisors might support a mentee in several key ways:

- Providing input – The mentee's supervisor can be an excellent source of input into the mentoring goal-setting process. They have observed the mentee on the job and will therefore know where the mentee's strengths and weaknesses lie.
- Setting parameters – Especially if a new member, the mentee may appreciate guidance about how much time to commit to an Auxiliary mentorship, and supervisors are in good positions to help set parameters. The supervisor can help the mentee to prioritize their other Auxiliary goals and tasks to accommodate the mentoring activities.
- Providing support and feedback – The supervisor can support the



mentoring relationship simply by asking how it is going, offering support, and providing feedback. They might also help the employee find developmental opportunities in common unit activities.

**Making a Match**

People often believe that mentors and mentees who are similar make the best matches, and while this may create an easy relationship, it may not result in the most learning. The best matches are often the ones in which there are key differences, such as age, gender, race, personality style, or career background.

Finding a Mentor

When starting the selection process for a mentor, begin by clearly defining your mentoring goals and use those to create a description of an ideal mentor. If you are looking to increase your technical knowledge, be sure to include that in your description; if you are wanting to work on leadership skills, a mentor with a strength in leadership should be high in your description. Using that description, develop a list of potential mentors, select the top candidates, and ask to have exploratory conversations with them. During these conversations, ask to hear their story and be willing to share your own. Decide on who the best mentoring match would be and communicate that to them. Be sure to thank anyone else you did *not* ask to mentor you for their time and conversation... these may be people with whom you later look to partner.

*Set mentoring goals*

One of the first steps in identifying a mentor is to clearly understand your developmental goals. Where do you want to be five years from today? What are your career aspirations? What are you interested in learning to help you get there?

*Describe your ideal mentor*

How would you describe your ideal mentor? What capabilities and characteristics would they possess? Are you looking for someone with your same functional background or would you like someone to help you bridge into a new career field? Are you interested in a mentor who has a certain niche or someone who brings a broad background rich with organizational experience? Are you interested in someone who has a similar behavioral style, or would you prefer someone who brings a contrasting style? In terms of personal characteristics, you might want to look for someone who is:

- Willing to commit time to the mentoring process
- Experienced
- Resourceful and knowledgeable about the organization's vision, mission, and organizational relationships
- A strong contributor to the growth of the organization
- Contrasting in behavioral style
- A good listener
- Trustworthy, keeps confidences

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### *Create a list of potential mentors*

Once you have clarified your mentoring goals and identified the characteristics of an ideal mentor, it is time to create a list of potential candidates. Look for people who possess the traits you wish to develop. For example, if you are looking to develop technical expertise, look for technical experts as potential mentors. However, if you are looking for political skills, think about the people in the organization who seem to be very politically astute and competent.

- Do not limit your consideration to people within your own technical function. In fact, one of the best ways to increase your learning is to pick someone who comes from a different background or perspective than your own.
- Also, do not limit your consideration to people who are higher in the management chain. A peer may possess the characteristics you are seeking.

### *Select five candidates*

Select five potential candidates from your list. Research the candidates' backgrounds and interests. Consider getting information and advice from outside sources (e.g., your supervisor or people in your professional network). Gain as much information as you can about the candidates' accomplishments and character. Prioritize your top five mentoring choices and clarify why you would like to be matched with them.

### *Arrange meetings with your choices*

Arrange face-to-face or telephone meetings to explore the possibility of establishing a mentoring partnership. As you arrange each meeting, let the person know that you are looking for a mentor, and that he or she is someone you are considering. Ask the candidate whether he or she might be open to an exploratory conversation.

During the meeting, ask to hear the mentor's story; how he or she got where they are and what factors made a difference (e.g., skills, challenging projects, or being at the right place at the right time). Be willing to share your background, accomplishments and areas needing development.

### *Prepare for the close*

Prepare for "the close". Think about how you will ask for a mentor's commitment. Prepare for three different outcomes to your meetings.

1. You select a mentor, ask them to mentor you, and they accept. First, how will you communicate your interest in being mentored by the person you choose? Be forthright and ask them directly if they would consider being your mentor. Be sure to communicate your expectations, time commitment and, most importantly, how his or her talents match your developmental needs. Set up a next meeting.
2. You select a mentor, ask them to mentor you, and they decline. It is important to remember that the candidates have the right to say

yes *or* no to you. Prepare your approach so that it is as comfortable as possible for the mentor to say no.

3. You decide not to ask a candidate to mentor you. How will you communicate this? You will need to balance directness with respect.

*Send thank you notes*

Send a thank you note to everyone with whom you spoke. Thank each candidate for taking the time to meet with you. In the note to your mentor, review next steps (i.e. your next meeting date and time).

*Mentor Selections*

Elsewhere, mentors are often one to two levels above the mentee within an organization. In the Auxiliary, this guideline is blurry since we do not hold “rank” and often serve in multiple positions at various levels. In many ways, this allows for a broader view of who can make an excellent mentor since experience, rather than position, will be the driving factor in the choice.

A list of mentors should be available at the district level. This list will ideally encompass all members who want to be and are qualified to be a mentor. FCs, VFCs, and FSO-HRs can encourage qualified members to become mentors as leadership is knowledgeable about the skills possessed by their members.

*Finding a Mentee*

The process works essentially the same for someone ready to become a mentor themselves. Define your mentoring goals, paying special attention to the skills you want to teach. Explore what time you can realistically commit to a mentorship, and what you are looking for in an ideal mentee. Finally advertise your willingness to mentor, explore candidates’ backgrounds, meet with them, and if it seems like a good match, offer to be their mentor. Remember also to know your own strengths and weaknesses – if someone asks you to mentor them on skills that you don’t feel you can help with, or if you don’t have time or interest in mentoring them, it is perfectly acceptable to decline.

*Clarify your mentoring goals*

Clarify your mentoring goals. One of the first steps in finding and selecting a mentee is to think in advance what skills or knowledge you would like to pass along. Highlight any particular qualities you plan to bring to a mentoring partnership:

- Leadership/supervisory experience
- Confidante/sounding board
- Optimistic, positive attitude
- Political, organizational savvy
- Commitment to helping people grow and develop
- Writing skills
- Networker
- Team builder, player

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- Listening skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills
- Public speaking skills
- Successful career paths
- Highly regarded technically

### *Explore time commitment*

Explore time commitment. Realistically, how much time do you have to dedicate to the mentoring process? What type of obstacles could potentially get in the way? Are you willing to dedicate personal time to the mentoring process (e.g., lunch with your mentee)?

### *Describe your ideal mentee*

Describe your ideal mentee. Once you have clarified your mentoring goals and identified the characteristics you bring to the table, the next step is to explore the traits to look for in an ideal mentee. Think for a moment...how would you describe the qualities, capabilities, and character of your ideal mentee? Are you looking for someone who wants to hone their technical expertise in a certain area, or would you prefer someone who wants to broaden their leadership and organizational experience? Are you looking for someone who is new to the organization or would you prefer a seasoned employee who has hit a plateau? Are you looking for someone who has a similar behavioral style, or would you prefer someone with a contrasting style and outlook? Based on experience, we have learned that the mentees who benefit most from the mentoring experience tend to share some common traits:

- Passion for learning
- Lives up to his/her own potential
- Good communicator
- Follows through on commitments
- Receptive to feedback
- Trustworthy, keeps confidences

### *Advertise your willingness*

Advertise your willingness to mentor. Talk to your supervisor, human resources and training offices, and people in your professional network. Let them know you are interested in mentoring. Once you get the word out about your availability, people will start coming to you for mentoring.

### *Explore candidates' backgrounds*

Explore the candidate's background. When someone expresses interest in being mentored, consider finding out more about him or her from outside sources (e.g., people in your professional network). Gain as much information as you can about the potential mentee to see if he or she is someone you might want to work with.

### *Arrange meetings*

Arrange a meeting. Arrange face-to-face or telephone meetings with the potential mentee to explore the possibility of a mentoring partnership.

Ask to hear the mentee’s —story. Explore career aspirations and areas needing development. This will help you determine if you have the experience or knowledge to help him or her.

*Prepare for the close*

Prepare for “the close”. If you and the mentee feel you would like to go forward with a formal mentoring relationship, decide upon the next steps.

**Planning the Mentorship**

Planning is the most effective tool available to avoid problems later in the mentorship. Planning will not only help to crystalize your purpose and expectations; it gives a framework against which progress can be measured. Both a Mentoring Development Plan and a Mentorship Agreement can (and should) be used to define the partnership. These should both be adjusted as needed over the course of the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring Development Plan

A Mentoring Development Plan (MDP) outlines the mentee’s job-related learning goals and activities. This is separate from, but can be used in conjunction with, an [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#). The primary difference between the MDP and IDP are that the Mentoring Development Plan focuses on a specific mentoring relationship or goal, while the Individual Development Plan typically covers professional development and career planning.

Create a specific plan for what learning activities will be used and the time frames in which they will be completed. Activities might include shadowing their mentor, the mentor providing observation of and feedback for the mentee, the mentee taking on a project, or engaging in independent study. While a plan may include classroom instruction, it *should not* be the focus of the plan; the point of a mentorship is to learn from one another. Be sure to include in the plan how success will be measured.

Mentoring Agreement

The Mentoring Agreement (MA) outlines how the mentor and mentee will work together. It should specify, at a minimum:

- How often you will meet;
- What happens if a meeting is missed;
- Availability of both members between scheduled meetings;
- Responsibilities of both the mentor and mentee;
- Confidentiality expectations.

Distance Mentoring

Not every mentorship requires the mentor and mentee to meet face-to-face. Many excellent partnerships are either virtual or otherwise long-distance. The Auxiliary is a national organization and members interested in mentoring should not feel constrained to stay within their own flotilla, division, or even district.

Distance mentoring is not without challenges, however. To overcome these, use technology such as videoconferencing and document sharing (there are several popular services available, both free and paid) and maintain consistent phone appointments. A side benefit of distance mentoring is that it forces both members to plan carefully for their conversations, sometimes even creating an agenda. Do take advantage of opportunities to meet face-to-face when they arise; district and national meetings are excellent venues.

**Troubleshooting** There may be times a mentorship is not going the way it should due to conflicting values or goals, a lack of interest or interaction, a breach of trust, or any of a variety of other reasons. When this happens, the key to resolving the issue and getting the partnership back on track is to refer to your original agreements and plan, and to communicate with your mentor or mentee. Remember that both the MDP and the MA can be adjusted if needed. Do not be reluctant to express that you feel something is awry with the partnership or that your situation has changed. Most issues can be resolved with early and sincere communication.

**Assessing the Mentorship** Periodic Assessments do not need to be an overwhelming process. Most healthy mentoring partnerships evaluate their effectiveness on a quarterly basis. A mentoring partnership will want to evaluate effectiveness in three vital areas (Drahosz 1999):

*Time commitment* Time is one of the greatest challenges to the mentoring partnership and yet it is the glue that holds the relationship together.

- How often are you meeting?
- Are you satisfied with that amount of time you are investing?
- What changes could be made to increase the amount of time dedicated to the mentoring partnership?

*Mentoring relationship* Although it can be a bit uncomfortable, it is vital to check in periodically on how the partnership is going. Refer to the Mentoring Agreement you crafted at the beginning of the relationship. Questions you may want to ask each other include:

- Are you getting what you need?
- Does the mentor have the experience and resources?
- Is the mentor/mentee committed to the process?
- What is the mentor/mentee doing well?
- What would you like your mentor/mentee do more of?
- Less of?

*Accomplishments* It is also important to make sure that you are on track with the learning goals and activities you set out in the Mentoring Development Plan.

- What are the three most important accomplishments?
- What developmental activities have made the biggest impact?

- What barriers, if any, have stood in the way of our goals?
- Do we need to adjust the goals, or remove the barriers?

**Ending the Mentorship**

When a mentorship has run its course, close out the relationship as intentionally as it was started. Meet in-person, if possible, and explore what was learned and accomplished. Decide whether you will stay connected after the formal mentorship has ended. Focus on the benefit it has been to both the mentee and mentor; there are positive lessons to take from every experience.

**Conclusion**

Mentorship is a potent tool to develop members within the Auxiliary. Its benefits range from transmission of “organizational memory” to skill building to enhancing members’ engagement. Mentorship certainly develops leaders better and faster than anything else – as we look ahead as an organization, remember that the leaders mentored today will determine the Auxiliary’s success tomorrow.

**Further Reading**

For further reading, see:

- Coast Guard Mentoring Program, [COMDTINST 5357.1A](#).
- Coast Guard Mentoring Toolkit <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Civilian-Human-Resources-Diversity-and-Leadership-Directorate-CG-12/Office-of-Leadership-CG-12C/Courses/Coast-Guard-Mentoring-Program-Toolkit/> .
- “Creating a Successful Mentoring Partnership”, USCG Office of Leadership and Professional Development, April 2011.
- [Coast Guard Auxiliary Individual Development Plan Guide](#).
- The [Commandant’s reading list](#).
- Drahosz, K and Rhodes, D. Dynamic Mentoring, Montclair: The Training Connection, 1998.
- Drahosz, K. Dynamic Mentoring: An Orientation Guide. Montclair: The Training Connection, 1999.
- Drahosz, K. Dynamic Mentoring: Mid Point Energizer. Montclair: The Training Connection, 1999.
- Drahosz, K. The Keys to Mentoring Success. Montclair: The Training Connection, 2004.

## **Appendix A - Mentoring Development Plan**

### Learning Goals and Objectives:

What are the goals of the mentorship? What skills or competencies does the mentee want to strengthen?

### Measures of Success:

How will development of skills and competencies be measured? What does success look like? What milestones are there to recognize progress?

### Developmental Activities:

What are the learning activities you will use to develop the skills and competencies identified? When will the activities be completed?

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Description</b>

*Continue on additional pages as needed.*



## Appendix B - Mentoring Agreement

### Meetings and Contact

When / Where / How long will meetings be?	
Cancellation and rescheduling procedure:	
Time commitment:	

### Roles and Responsibilities

Mentor is responsible for:	
Mentee is responsible for:	

### Mentoring Relationship

Confidentiality (be specific with what is / is not permissible to discuss with others):	
How will conflicts be addressed if they arise?	
When and how will the mentorship be closed? If either person wishes to end the mentorship early, how will they do so?	

We accept that this is a voluntary partnership and agree to the above,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee signature

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

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

## Appendix C – Individual Development Plan

### Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Coast Guard Civilians / Officers / Auxiliaries

Encl. (4) to COMDTINST 5537.1A

U. S. Department of Homeland Security CG-8021 (10-05)		Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Coast Guard Civilians/Officers/Auxiliaries	
Name:		Unit / Flotilla:	
Position Title and Grade/Rank:			
<b>Developmental Goals for Current Job</b>			
<b>Goals:</b>			
Competency/ (Knowledge/Skill/Ability to develop)	Developmental Activity, On-the-job Training, Education or Classroom Training	Outcome Desired	Intended Completion Date A. Cost

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT: 5 U.S.C. 552(a) Privacy Act; A. AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 501 Departmental Regulations; B. PURPOSE: To collect information to permit effective IDP counseling; C. ROUTINE USES: The information on this form is to be used by units, supervisors and members in the counseling of employees in career development and goal setting; D. DISCLOSURE: Mandatory for first-term junior officers (active duty and reserves); Voluntary for civilian employees, all other military officers, and Auxiliaries.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, (3820) CG-8021 (10-05)

**Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Coast Guard Civilians/Officers/Auxiliaries**

**Future Professional Development Goals**

**Short-term Goals (usually 1-2 years):**

Competency/ (Knowledge/Skill/Ability) to develop	Developmental Activity, On-the-job Training, Education or Classroom Training	Outcome Desired	Intended Completion Date 8/08/08

**Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Coast Guard Civilians/Officers/Auxiliarists**

**Future Professional Development Goals**

**Long-term Goals (usually 3-5 plus years):**

Competency (Knowledge/Skill/Ability) to develop	Developmental Activity, On -the-job Training, Education or Classroom Training	Outcome Desired	Intended Completion Date & Cost
I will pursue the training and development outlined in this plan. However, I understand that this is not a contract for training.		I will support the training and development outlined in this plan. However, I understand that this is not a contract for training.	
Member Signature:		Supervisor Signature:	
Date:		Date:	
6 month review date:	1 year review date:		