CMIT Mentor
Guide

CMCI

CMIT

**Supporting aspiring professionals
and students in the CM industry**

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CMIT MENTOR PROGRAM

Background

The Construction Manager Certification Institute (CMCI) is a not-for-profit organization that was formed to promote the profession of Construction Management (CM) and the use of qualified CM's on projects. CMCI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA). The Construction Manager-in-Training (CMIT) program is a certificate program administered and maintained by CMCI via the CMIT Committee.

The CMIT is a professional credential that recognizes practitioners who have displayed the desire to learn how to become competent, successful construction managers. The CMIT designation demonstrates competence in the practice of CM early in an individual's career. Individuals who have earned their CMIT designation demonstrate to employers and clients that they are invested in the industry as well as in their own professional development.

The CMIT program works to continuously promote and enhance the expanding community of aspiring professionals and students in the CM industry. The CMIT program encourages professional growth, facilitates new connections, and offers guidance through mentorship. After an individual applies for the CMIT and subsequently passes the exam, they then enter the mentor phase of the program.

Mentoring Definition

Mentoring is a human development process that facilitates personal and professional growth. As a part of the process, a relationship is formed in which an experienced individual shares their wisdom and knowledge, while providing support, advice, and counsel that helps less-experienced individuals to grow, develop, and eventually assume positions of greater authority and responsibility.

Purpose

The purpose of the CMIT Mentor Program is to provide guidance for early career professionals, graduate students, soon-to-be graduates, and recent graduates to assist them in becoming successful leaders within the CM industry.

Mission

CMCI's mission for the CMIT Mentor Program is to create a supportive environment for growth and development in which mentors provide guidance, share experiences, and offer advice and support to CMIT mentees.

Vision

The vision of the CMIT Mentor Program is to connect mentors with CMIT mentees that will enable them to become successful professional construction managers.

Objectives

Objectives and goals of the CMIT Mentor Program include:
- Establishing and building relationships.
- Equipping mentees with understanding and tools to make informed and ethical decisions.
- Developing leaders and professional construction managers.
- Fostering and encouraging information sharing.
- Expanding advancement within the CM industry.

CMIT Mentor Guide

This guide describes the CMIT Mentor process, including:

- ✓ Mentor guidelines
- ✓ Mentee guidelines
- ✓ Mentoring program phases
- ✓ Tools and tips to assist throughout the mentoring process
- ✓ Sample forms and templates

Disclaimer

All individuals who have signed up to be a mentor for the CMIT mentor program are volunteers. CMCI does not guarantee mentoring or career advancement through the mentor program.

MENTOR GUIDELINES

Mentor Definition

A mentor provides guidance in the form of information and knowledge sharing that will enable and assist mentees to become professional constructions managers and leaders within the industry. Guidance can be provided in the form of offering advice, sharing experiences, and assisting with problem solving. Mentors will also provide a safe, trusting, and non-judgmental environment in which the mentor-mentee relationship can develop, grow, and thrive.

Why Become a Mentor?

There are many reasons to become a mentor, some of which you can find outlined below, but the most important is the ability to transfer knowledge, experience, and skills that have been gained by veteran professionals to the next generation of construction managers. In order to prepare the next generation of constructions mangers, it is important that this experience and information continues to be passed along.

Benefits

Mentoring can be a valuable and rewarding tool for the mentor as well as the mentee. The benefits of becoming a registered CMIT mentor include:

- Opportunity to share knowledge as well as learn from the mentee who might have new or different perspectives.

- Ability to review accomplishments and challenges, and share lessons learned.

- Leaving a legacy through sharing experiences and guiding another's career path

- Personal satisfaction in helping someone grow professionally.

- Opportunity to build new relationships.

- Developing skills as a teacher, guide, and advisor by assisting individuals in developing career goals and advising how they can achieve them by leveraging their strengths.

- Recognition and gratitude from their mentee.

- Registered mentors that are an active Certified Construction Manager (CCM) can earn renewal points for participating.

MENTOR GUIDELINES CONTINUED

In the future, another benefit of the Mentor Program is the ability to earn recognition coins though CMCI's Coins of Excellence initiative. Mentors have the opportunity to earn Coins of Excellence based on the number of CMITs they mentor and the number of individuals they assist throughout the CCM certification and recertification process.

Role and Responsibilities

CMCI appreciates the commitment, flexibility, and availability mentors can provide while working with mentees and recognizes that as leading industry professionals, mentors are volunteers and will often be busy. Mentors should also be knowledgeable, patient, respectful, and supportive. All mentors who wish to be recognized for participation in the program must register on the CMAA website.

The mentor's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Taking time to understand mentee's career and personal aspirations.

- Offering knowledge, insights, perspectives, wisdom, and feedback, and sharing experiences useful to the mentee's growth.

- Providing insights to the mentee on different aspects of the industry and offering advice.

- Creating an open and candid relationship to encourage growth and trust.

- Attempting to recognize when a mentee may need assistance from outside parties (other professionals, institutions, etc.).

- Supporting and facilitating the mentee's development of professional and interpersonal competencies through strategic questioning, goal setting, and planning.

- Agreeing to and respecting scheduled time and resources of the mentee.

- Staying committed, accessible, and engaged throughout the process.

- Serving as a positive role model and respecting individual differences.

- Encouraging professionalism throughout the mentorship.

- Maintaining confidentiality.

How to Become a Mentor

To become a registered mentor, you must sign up on CMAA's website. By signing up to be included on the CMIT Mentor List, you will be searchable by CMITs and they will have the option and ability to reach out to you and request that you be their mentor. All mentees are encouraged to solicit a variety of mentors for guidance, however, some mentors may be selected based on demographics and availability.

Inactive Mentors

Registered mentors can become inactive due to lack of involvement or by their own request. Inactive mentors will be removed from the CMIT Mentor List. Mentors can request to be removed from the CMIT Mentor List at any time by emailing CMIT@cmaanet.org. To reactivate mentor status, individuals will need to register through CMAA's website again. CCMs who become inactive mentors will not be able to claim CCM renewal points.

MENTEE GUIDELINES

Mentee Definition

A mentee is an early career professional, graduate student, soon-to-be or recent graduate, or a professional transitioning their occupation that is taking a proactive approach to advance their career while investing in their personal and professional development. Mentees are committed to learning and aspire to become successful leaders within the CM industry.

Why Become a CMIT/Mentee?

The CMIT program helps young professionals launch and develop successful careers within the CM industry. After an individual successfully becomes a CMIT, they will be given access to the mentor directory, enabling them to expand their networks and connect with leading industry professionals.

Becoming a CMIT and taking advantage of the mentor program is a great way for individuals to show current and prospective employers that they are committed to the CM industry as well as to their own professional growth and development.

Benefits

The mentor program is a valuable tool for mentees to learn more about the CM profession and to build lasting relationships within the industry. Some of the benefits a CMIT may take advantage of in the mentoring process include:

- The ability to learn from experienced mentors.

- Establishing new relationships and networking with industry professionals.

- Guidance on creating developmental goals.

- Developing skills as both a communicator and leader.

- Receiving feedback from an industry professional.

- Acquiring knowledge, skills, tactics, and competencies.

Role and Responsibilities

CMCI has developed the mentor program to assist CMITs with industry growth and transfer of knowledge, however, CMCI cannot guarantee a mentor for all CMITs and the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship. Mentors are volunteering their time and knowledge to help the advancement of the mentee.

In return for a mentor's time and commitment, CMCI's expectations of all mentees include, but are not limited to, the   following:

- Respecting the mentor's time and coming prepared to each meeting.

- Understanding the role of the mentor is not to provide all the answers, but is to guide the mentee towards reaching their goals.

- Upholding the highest level of professionalism during the entire process.

- Staying committed, accessible, and engaged throughout the process.

- Maintaining an open and candid relationship to enable growth and trust.

- Remaining respectful and receptive to new ideas, approaches, coaching, and feedback.

- Taking responsibility for one's own development.

- Maintaining confidentiality.

- Willingly working with the mentor to set specific and obtainable goals and objectives.

- Exercising initiative in establishing and maintaining the mentoring relationship.

How to Become a Mentee

To become a mentee, individuals must first successfully complete the CMIT application and pass the CMIT exam. After passing the CMIT exam, individuals are sent further information to access the mentor directory. For more information about how to sign up and become a CMIT, please visit CMAA's website or see the CMIT Handbook.

PROCESS AND PHASES

Phase 1: Initiation

The first phase provides the foundation for building a relationship of trust and respect. During this phase, the mentee and mentor meet and get to know each other. Meeting and communications can occur in person, over the phone, or through email.

Parts of the initiation phase include:

✓ *Find and select a mentor.*
✓ *Establishing a relationship.*
✓ *Setting expectations and guidelines.*

How to Find/Select a Mentor

Once an individual has applied for the CMIT program and has successfully passed the CMIT exam, they will be provided access to the mentor directory. They will then be able to search the directory and seek out mentors that they believe would be a good fit. Phone and email communication can be used to stay in touch, therefore mentors do not need to be located within the same organization or in the same geographical area.

Establishing a Relationship

After selecting several possible mentor candidates, CMITs should reach out to each one to introduce themselves and ask if they would be available to be their mentor. Everyone found in the directory signed up to be listed as a mentor, however, CMITs will want to first make sure the mentor currently has time available. Once the mentee has ensured the mentor is available and they will be the best fit, they can complete the "Declare Your Mentor" form found on CMAA's website. CMCI does not guarantee a mentor will be responsive or have adequate time available upon request.

Setting Expectations and Guidelines

Expectations and guidelines are important to establish early in the relationship. Together, the mentee and mentor should agree on a meeting schedule to best manage the time that the mentee and mentor have together. Points to consider include: how often and when you meet, how you will communicate, how long each meeting will last, etc.

Phase 2: Engagement and Development

After the CMIT has found a willing and available mentor, the relationship has been established, and expectations and guidelines have been set, the next step is engaging and developing the relationship. This can be done by first setting goals and then creating the action steps needed to be taken to reach the established goals. Together, the mentor and mentee will identify the steps and then the mentor will be able to provide guidance as to how to prioritize the steps to successfully reach the goals. During this phase the mentor will share advice and lessons learned through their previous experiences with the mentee. Feedback, support, and encouragement are exchanged during this phase.

PROCESS AND PHASES
CONTINUED

Parts of the engagement and development phase include:

✓ *Setting goals.*
✓ *Learning and growing.*
✓ *Having yearly checkpoints.*

Setting Goals

Discuss ways to gain Responsible in Charge (RIC) experience, as advancing and seeking leadership positions are often some of the main goals that CMITs have. After setting a goal, action steps should be created that establish what will be done by the mentee and how success will be measured. The goals established in the mentor program should be realistic performance-based objectives.

Make sure that the goals pass the "SMART" goals test, meaning they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound. The goals that are set in the beginning may change during the mentoring experience. If this happens, make sure to identify new action steps that will be followed to reach the new goal. It is also recommended that the mentee keep a mentoring journal and write down their goals and action steps.

Learning and Growing

Most of the learning will likely take place during this stage. After goals are established, the mentor is able to share lessons learned based on their previous experience. The mentor will also be able to provide advice to the mentee in regards to the steps they believe should be taken to reach those goals.

Having Checkpoints

Below are the recommended checkpoints. However, these are just recommendations. Mentees and mentors are encouraged to work together and create their own schedule for what works best for both parties.

- **Month 1**: Informal meeting and getting to know each other. During this meeting, the mentee can share and discuss career goals with the mentor. This meeting should also be used to establish expectations and guidelines.

- **Month 3**: Put pen to paper. Establish goals (using the SMART method) and discuss the action steps needed to meet them.

- **Months 6-9**: Review what action steps have already been followed and what is still left to do. For example, if the mentee's goal is to gain enough RIC experience to be eligible for the CCM, they will want to examine how their current experience can count toward the RIC requirements and then figure out how to gain experience in other identified categories.

- **Month 12**: Recap and review goals. The mentee can also modify and change the goals and action steps as needed. During this time, the mentee and mentor will also want to plan for the year to come.

CMAA also has an evaluation form available on the website that can be used by the mentee and a separate form for the mentor to assess the success of the relationship. These can be submitted at any time during the process. The evaluation forms help keep CMAA informed of the progress as well as serve as a tool for the mentee and mentor to evaluate the relationship. If something is not going according to plan, the evaluation forms will help to identify it and then the mentee and mentor can work together to fix it.

PROCESS AND PHASES CONTINUED

Phase 3: Separation

The last phase, separation, naturally occurs after a specific time predetermined by both parties has been reached. There is no set amount of time that mentees and mentors are expected to work together, however, once the mentor has assisted the mentee and provided all the guidance and support that they can, the mentor relationship will naturally dissolve. At this time the mentee will have gained an independent identity, will be well-equipped to continue working on reaching their goals, and will be able to plan for the future. While communication is still encouraged, the formal meetings and mentoring will no longer occur.

TOOLS AND TIPS

Possible Challenges and How to Overcome

Below are some examples of challenges other mentors and mentees have faced and resolved.

Challenge - not enough time in the day: The most common challenge is finding adequate time to get everything done in the relationship that you want. Despite good intentions, other priorities from both work and personal life can possibly interfere or create a disturbance in the relationship.

Solution: Focus on the smaller aspects rather than the bigger picture ones, especially in the start of your relationship. This will help you to focus on each step and not become overwhelmed with the tasks ahead. It is also important for both the mentor and mentee to avoid promising more time than they can deliver. Mentors should check with the mentees to be sure they are both comfortable with the time that they spend working together and with the teaching and learning that is currently occurring.

Challenge - building trust early on: With limited contact in the beginning of the relationship, it is not easy to build the kind of trust you both would like to have.

Solution: Strategies that can be used include signing a confidentiality agreement, listening carefully to the other person, and demonstrating credibility (for the mentor this can be done by sharing mistakes and lessons learned and for the mentee this can be done by being attentive and always on time, ready to learn). It is also important for both mentor and mentee to keep promises and adhere to their meeting schedule. If something comes up and a meeting time must change, reach out to the other person immediately and reschedule with them as soon as possible.

Challenge - the mentor is not an expert on everything: The mentor is not expected to be an expert on everything or to even know how to help the mentee with every goal they establish. The mentor will serve as a guide to the mentee to point them in the right direction, but not give them all the solutions.

Solution: The mentor can reiterate their role as a "facilitator" early in the relationship. The mentee will need to understand that the mentor will not have all the answers. When a topic is approached that the mentor is unfamiliar with, this may be a learning opportunity for both parties.

TOOLS AND TIPS CONTINUED

Challenge - conquering differences: Differences will become apparent from the very beginning, but they should be seen as a catalyst, not a hindrance to building the relationship.

Solution: In addition to discovering all the similarities, which is done during the interview process, mentors and mentees should also work to identify the differences between them. Once the differences have been stated, mentors and mentees can break through any barriers that might exist by communicating about them directly. Differences should not be seen as negative, but as an opportunity for learning and exploring. This will lead to a more well-rounded mentee in the end.

Communication Skills: Generating Discussion

An effective mentor needs to have strong communication skills. It is the mentor's responsibility to maintain a dialog with the mentee. Many people think that the secret to a productive meeting is to ask the mentee questions. However, it is more effective for the mentor to begin the meeting with a statement that tells the mentee the direction in which the discussion will focus. The mentor then can follow the statement with a provocative question.

Avoid asking "why" questions because they tend to put people on the defensive. To encourage an open discussion, ask questions that begin with "how" or "what."

Guidelines for Giving Constructive Feedback

When the performance of the mentor or mentee is not going as planned, either party may have to provide feedback. Feedback is not criticism. Rather, feedback provides the concrete data needed to take corrective action(s) and improve performance. Constructive feedback occurs only when you are a good listener and genuinely care about the other person. Consider these "Guidelines for Constructive Feedback" and make them a routine part of your mentor relationship.

Specific action(s): Before providing feedback, carefully review the actions and decisions that led up to it. Phrase the issue as a statement rather than a question. Contrast, "When are you going to stop being late for meetings?" with, "I feel annoyed when you are late for meetings." The question format is controlling because it implies that "you" the respondent are expected to adjust your behavior to accommodate "me" the questioner. We tend to become defensive or angry when spoken to in this way; whereas the "I" statement allows the respondent to perceive what effect his/her behavior had on you.

Context of the action(s): Context is the most important characteristic of feedback. Never simply walk up to a person, "drop" your feedback, and then leave. Always identify "where," "when," "why," and specifically "what" led up to the event.

Impact of the person's action(s): Restrict feedback to only those things which you know for certain. Hearsay has no place within the context of "constructive feedback." State the exact impact of the person's actions on themselves, you, others, or the organization.

Suggestion for a remedy or coaching: Talk first about you. Use "I" as the lead word, e.g., "I would appreciate it if you would come to the meetings on time" or "I feel annoyed when you are late for our meetings."

TOOLS AND TIPS CONTINUED

Feedback Tips

To make sure that your feedback is accepted and favorably received, mentors can use the following feedback tips:

- **Be descriptive:** Focus on behavior. Identify what you saw the other person do, or what you heard the other person say. Give specific examples. Avoid judgmental language. Rather, describe the situation and avoid "preaching" about it.

- **Stay focused:** Be clear, specific, and unambiguous. Do not use labels like: "unprofessional," "messed-up," and "irresponsible." Stick to the point at hand and resist the temptation to generalize or judge.

- **Cite examples:** Avoid being vague by citing specific, clear examples when giving feedback.

- **Be brief**: Be sure to keep your feedback short. Once you are sure the mentee understands the point, you can stop. Do not exaggerate and be exact. Exaggerating only invites the recipient to argue with the exaggeration rather than respond to the real issue.

- **Keep it simple:** Try to concentrate on only one issue at a time.

- **Be aware of timing:** Know when to offer feedback. Give feedback immediately or as soon as possible after an event is observed.

- **Consider the mentee's needs:** Match the feedback to the person and the severity of their actions. Even if your position/rank is higher than that of the recipient, strive for an adult-peer context.

- **Check for understanding:** Check to be sure your feedback is clearly understood.

- **Speak only for yourself:** Do not refer to absent or anonymous people. Encourage others to speak for themselves.

How to Receive Feedback

To make sure feedback is successfully received, mentees can use the following tips for receiving feedback:

- **Breathe.** We are conditioned to react to stress as though it is a physical assault. Muscles tense, pulse rate increases, and we tend to breathe rapidly and shallowly. Breathe deeply and then consciously allow the body to relax.

- **Listen actively and carefully.** Do not interrupt or do anything which might discourage the person from providing you the feedback. The feedback they provide can be very valuable to your own growth.

- **Ask questions for clarity.** You have the need/right to receive clear/understandable feedback. Ask for specific examples when you are unclear.

- **Acknowledge the feedback.** Paraphrase the message in your own words to let the other person know that you have heard and understood what was said.

- **Acknowledge the valid points.** Agree with what is true and what is possible.

- **Acknowledge the other person's point of view.** Try to understand their reaction as well.

- **Take time to process and sort out what you have heard.** You may need time for processing before responding to the feedback. It is reasonable to ask the individual for time to think carefully about what he/she said and how you feel about it and then make a specific appointment for getting together to close the loop.

TOOLS AND TIPS CONTINUED

Listening Skills

Effective communicators are also the best listeners. Listening is more than just hearing what has been said. Listening shows genuine interest in the other person, lets them know you are concerned for them, and makes them feel comfortable in sharing their ideas and feelings.

Simply hearing words is not sufficient to achieve an understanding of what another person is saying. Active listening is an important skill used to obtain information about what the other person is thinking and feeling.

Remember that developing good listening skills are an important part of your professional growth in CM. The components of good listening skills include:

- **Silence:** Use silence effectively. Listen quietly to what others are saying.

- **Attentiveness:** Acknowledge the speaker. Maintaining eye contact, using body language such as gestures, movements, and facial expressions to promote or discourage participation, or acknowledging with a brief, one-word phrase or expression your understanding or approval of what the other person is saying.

- **Paraphrasing:** Restating in your own words what you thought the speaker said without adding any judgment or interpretation.

- **Reflection:** Clarifying the feelings you think the other feels to show empathy.

- **Open-ended questions:** Using questions that require extended responses or encourages others to talk provides you with more information and assists you in clarifying issues. Open-ended questions begin with words such as what, how, or could.

USEFUL FORMS

▶   **Mentor Evaluation form**

▶   **Mentee Evaluation form**

▶   **Declare Your Mentor form**

▶   **Mentor Sign-Up form**

▶   **Appreciating Differences form**

▶   **Work Plan**

USEFUL FORMS

Appreciating Differences	MENTEE	MENTOR
Areas of Expertise		
Professional Accomplishments		
Personal Accomplishments		
Physical Location		
Work Experience		
Company Position		
Personal Goals		
Professional Goals		
Expectations of the Relationship		
Other		

USEFUL FORMS

Work Plan

Instructions to the protégé: *Completete this worksheet with your Mentor.*

GOAL(s)   *Use the space below to record your goal(s).*

OBJECTIVES
Use the spaces below to identify objectives to accomplish your goal(s). Then assign a priority to each action step and record the number in the box

USEFUL FORMS

Work Plan

Instructions to the protégé: *Use the space below to identify actions to overcome barriers that may prevent you from completing your objectives.*

POSSIBLE BARRIERS	ACTIONS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

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