

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY



International Student Experience Exchange

Peer Mentor Handbook

International Student and Scholar Services
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Welcome!

We appreciate your commitment to DePaul's international students. Our new international students are excited to get to know you and learning more about Chicago and the United States. Thank you for being a facilitator of this adjustment process and helping to make studying at DePaul an enjoyable international experience.

Your primary goal is to assist mentees with adapting and adjusting to their new surroundings and to be a friend. You, in turn, will also benefit by developing leadership skills, confidence, cultural awareness, and appreciation of other cultures.

About The ISEE Peer Mentor Program

ISEE Peer Mentor Program Mission

Our mission is to support international students transitioning to the DePaul community, along with developing intercultural friendships by discovering Chicago and what it has to offer.

ISEE Peer Mentor Program Goals and Objectives:

- To help new students adjust and transition into DePaul life smoothly and identify campus resources
- To provide new students with an intercultural friendship to help them understand the nuances of American culture
- To help new students actively engage in extra-curricular clubs and student life activities

Being a Mentor

A mentor is defined by Merriam-Webster as a "trusted guide." Throughout the quarter, this will be your role between the new international students and DePaul. The best way to be a mentor is to try to be of assistance should they need it. These students, more than likely, will be undergoing an adjustment as they begin their studies at DePaul. We hope you will be seen as a friend/contact that they can go to when they need someone to talk to. Being a mentor is a helpful gift, but **remember: it is OK to have limitations.**

Mentor Responsibilities

Early Responsibilities:

We expect you to e-mail your mentees as soon as possible, to initiate the first step in beginning introductions and to find out about any concerns they may have

1. Attend mentor training.
2. Email your mentees. (See Appendix A for a sample introduction e-mail)
3. Follow the tasks guide provided by the ISEE Program

Term Long Individual Responsibilities:

- Plan social get-togethers with your mentees
- Maintain communication with mentees via phone, e-mail, Facebook, or whatever works best. Make sure that they know you are there if they need anything or have any questions
- Participate in events or activities (e.g. Global Coffee Hour; It doesn't have to be big)

Cultural Differences

Please be sensitive to and respectful of:

- The international students' cultural differences in the way they express their feelings, their approach to situations, and their understanding of personal relationships.
- Gender differences: please be aware that some cultures delineate gender roles and that things such as an evening meal together between a male and a female can be seen as a date. ***(Please Note: be friendly but keep it appropriate)***
- Have the international student help you practice pronouncing their names until you have it mastered.
- Answering questions about your country and culture without bias.

During the quarter

- **Keep in contact** with the people you made relationships with. Exchange phone numbers and email addresses.
- Your responsibilities as a mentor do not end with the quarter. **Even if you have a weak relationship with your assigned student, try to maintain contact to see how they're doing throughout the quarter.**

Maintain contact with the ISEE Peer Advisor. As a mentor, you are the connection between the international students and the ISS (International Student and Scholar Services) so your updates are important to share the well-being of the international students and of the ISEE Peer Mentor Program. **Suggestions are appreciated to build a better program so that the needs of the students are met.**

ISEE Mentor Award

The purpose of the ISEE Mentor Award is to recognize and encourage outstanding achievement by mentors volunteering for the ISEE Program.

To be considered for the ISEE Mentor Award, you should complete all the recommended tasks given by the ISEE program and develop a strong relationship with your mentee.

More information is available during the mentor training.

How to Stay Involved Throughout the Quarter

Remember to check the DePaul Activities calendar (<http://events.depaul.edu/>) frequently for weekly events. Additionally, there are departmental and community opportunities for you and international students to attend. Some of these programs are sponsored by ISS and some of them are hosted by students.

Attending Workshops sponsored by UCWBL

The University Center for Writing-Based Learning frequently sponsors workshops aimed at helping international students adjust socially and culturally into their new learning environment.

Appendix A: Template Introductory Email

You are strongly encouraged to write your own personalized e-mails to your mentee(s), but if you get stuck, here is an example for you to use:

Hi _____,

My name is _____ and I will be your mentor this quarter as part of the international program at DePaul. First off, I want to welcome you to the DePaul community! I am sure you will have a wonderful time here in Chicago.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything before or during your time in Chicago, don't hesitate to ask. That's what I'm here for! I am looking forward to meeting you in person on campus, but in the meantime we can get to know each other a little through email or social media. I don't know if you are on Facebook, but here you can find my profile ([link](#)). ([Optional phone number](#))

I'm a _____ year (**major**) student and this is my _____ year being involved with the international programs at DePaul. What are you studying at DePaul? What are you interested in or what are your hobbies?

I'm looking forward to meeting you in [month]!

Sincerely,
(Your Name)