

Focus with Passion

Grant Program

Mentorship Guide

Supporting Creative Growth Through Collaboration and Shared Experience

Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for participating in the Focus with Passion Mentorship Program.

Creativity thrives when people are encouraged to pursue their ideas with confidence, purpose and belief. While financial assistance can provide opportunities, meaningful mentoring provides something equally valuable—the guidance, encouragement and shared experience that helps artists continue growing throughout their creative journey.

The Focus with Passion Mentorship Program has been established to connect experienced mentors with emerging artists and creatives who are committed to developing their skills, refining their ideas and achieving meaningful personal and professional growth. By bringing together people who are willing to share their knowledge with those eager to learn, the program creates relationships that strengthen both individuals and the wider creative community.

This Guide has been developed as a practical resource for both mentors and mentees. It explains the purpose of mentoring, outlines the responsibilities of each participant and provides practical guidance for building successful mentoring relationships. While every mentoring partnership will be unique, the principles of respect, trust, collaboration and encouragement remain the foundation of every successful relationship.

Throughout this Guide you will find practical advice, reflective questions and simple tools designed to help you make the most of every mentoring conversation. Rather than providing a rigid process, the Guide encourages flexible, meaningful relationships that support creativity, confidence and lifelong learning.

Section 1 – The Purpose of Mentoring

Why We Mentor

The Focus with Passion Grant Program recognises that financial support alone does not guarantee creative success. While grants provide the resources to begin or expand a project, mentoring provides encouragement, perspective and practical guidance that help artists make the most of every opportunity.

Mentoring is therefore much more than offering advice.

It is a partnership that seeks to:

- build confidence through encouragement;
- share practical knowledge and experience;
- encourage independent thinking and informed decision-making;
- strengthen professional capability;
- support personal and creative development; and
- foster meaningful relationships within the creative community.

Unlike teaching or supervision, mentoring encourages individuals to discover their own solutions while benefiting from the experience of someone who has travelled a similar path.

The mentoring process is designed to reward curiosity, commitment and continuous learning rather than perfection or professional status.

Section Summary

Every mentoring relationship is unique. The objective is to support personal and creative growth through collaboration, shared experience and genuine encouragement while respecting the individuality of every artist.

Section 2 – The Role of the Mentor

Mentors contribute significantly to the success of the Focus with Passion Mentorship Program.

Artists place considerable trust in their mentors by openly discussing aspirations, challenges and creative ambitions. Professionalism, empathy and integrity help ensure that trust continues to grow throughout the mentoring relationship.

As a Mentor you are encouraged to:

- create a welcoming and respectful environment;
- listen actively before offering advice;
- ask questions that encourage reflection;
- share relevant personal experiences;
- provide balanced and constructive feedback;
- encourage independent thinking;
- help the Mentee recognise and recover from mistakes;
- provide introductions and resource connections;
- maintain confidentiality and
- celebrate progress, regardless of how small it may appear.

Remember that your role is not to direct another person's creative journey.

Instead, your responsibility is to encourage thoughtful decision-making while supporting the mentee to develop confidence in their own abilities.

Building Confidence

Confidence often grows through encouragement rather than instruction.

Many artists already possess the technical skills needed to succeed. What they often value most is having someone who believes in their potential, listens without judgement and encourages them to continue moving forward during periods of uncertainty.

Focus with Passion Insight

The greatest gift a mentor can offer is belief. Genuine encouragement often has a greater impact than providing the perfect answer.

Section Summary

Successful mentors guide rather than direct. By listening carefully, sharing experience generously and encouraging independent thinking, mentors help artists develop confidence that extends far beyond a single project.

Section 3 – The Role of the Mentee

Successful mentoring depends as much upon the commitment of the mentee as it does upon the experience of the mentor.

Mentoring is an active partnership. While mentors provide guidance and encouragement, the mentee is responsible for applying new ideas, reflecting on feedback and taking practical action between meetings.

As a Mentee you are encouraged to:

- arrive prepared for each meeting;
- communicate openly and honestly;
- ask thoughtful questions;
- apply new knowledge and seek feedback;
- complete agreed actions;
- remain open to different perspectives;
- show initiative, ask questions and take risks;
- reflect on your progress;
- respect your mentor's time and experience; and
- take responsibility for your own development.

The more actively you participate, the more rewarding the mentoring experience becomes.

Preparing for Each Conversation

Before meeting with your mentor, consider:

- What progress have I made?
- What challenges am I currently facing?
- What opportunities have emerged?
- What support would help me most?
- What actions will I commit to before our next meeting?

Preparation helps every mentoring conversation remain purposeful and productive.

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Mentoring is something you actively participate in—not something that simply happens to you. Growth comes through curiosity, preparation and action.

Section Summary

Successful mentees take ownership of their development. By remaining curious, prepared and committed to learning, they create the conditions where meaningful growth can occur.

Section 4 – Building a Successful Mentoring Relationship

The strongest mentoring relationships are built on trust, mutual respect and shared commitment.

Trust develops gradually through honest conversations, active listening and consistency. Every meeting provides an opportunity to strengthen understanding, build confidence and encourage creative growth.

At the beginning of the mentoring relationship, take time to discuss:

- your shared expectations;
- meeting frequency;
- preferred communication methods;
- confidentiality;
- personal and creative goals; and
- how progress will be reviewed.

Establishing these foundations early creates clarity and helps both mentor and mentee participate with confidence.

Working Together

Successful mentoring relationships are characterised by:

- mutual respect;

- honest communication;
- reliability;
- openness to learning;
- shared responsibility; and
- a commitment to continuous improvement.

When challenges arise, discuss them openly and respectfully. Most misunderstandings can be resolved through honest conversation and a willingness to listen.

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Every mentoring relationship is strengthened one conversation at a time. Trust is built through consistency, respect and genuine interest in another person's success.

Section Summary

Strong mentoring relationships are built upon trust, communication and shared purpose. Clear expectations and mutual respect create an environment where creativity, confidence and collaboration flourish.

Section 5 – Meaningful Conversations

Why Communication Matters

Every successful mentoring relationship is built upon meaningful conversation. While projects, goals and creative ideas provide the focus for each meeting, genuine progress comes from the quality of the discussion rather than the length of the meeting.

Good mentoring conversations encourage curiosity, build confidence and help both mentor and mentee explore ideas together. They create an environment where successes can be celebrated, challenges discussed openly and new opportunities discovered through respectful dialogue.

Meaningful conversations are not about finding immediate answers. Often, the most valuable outcome is gaining a different perspective or recognising possibilities that were not previously considered.

Building Better Conversations

During every mentoring meeting aim to:

- listen without interruption;
- ask open and thoughtful questions;
- encourage discussion rather than provide immediate solutions;
- recognise achievements and acknowledge progress;
- discuss challenges honestly and respectfully;
- remain open to different ideas and perspectives; and
- finish with clear actions before the next meeting.

Simple, consistent conversations often produce the greatest long-term results.

Constructive Feedback

Feedback should always encourage growth.

Helpful feedback is:

- respectful;
- specific;
- balanced;
- timely;
- evidence-based; and
- focused on actions rather than personal criticism.

The purpose of feedback is to strengthen confidence while encouraging continuous improvement.

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Listening is one of the most valuable skills in mentoring. When people genuinely feel heard, they often discover their own best solutions.

Section Summary

Successful mentoring conversations encourage reflection, strengthen relationships and inspire confidence. Every discussion should leave both mentor and mentee with greater clarity and a shared understanding of the next steps.

Section 6 – Maintaining Momentum

Creative development is rarely a straight path. Every artist experiences periods of progress, uncertainty and change. Successful mentoring acknowledges these natural stages while helping both mentor and mentee remain focused on long-term goals.

Progress should not be measured solely by completed projects or public recognition. Increased confidence, improved decision-making and a greater willingness to explore new ideas are equally valuable signs of development.

Maintaining Progress

Throughout the mentoring relationship:

- meet consistently;
- review progress regularly;
- celebrate achievements;
- revisit goals when circumstances change;
- remain flexible;
- complete agreed actions between meetings; and
- recognise that meaningful growth often occurs gradually.

Consistency builds confidence, and confidence encourages continued learning.

Recognising Success

Positive indicators include:

- greater self-confidence;
- improved communication;
- clearer creative direction;
- stronger professional relationships;
- increased resilience;
- thoughtful planning; and
- a willingness to embrace constructive feedback.

These outcomes often become the foundation for future creative success.

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Creative growth is rarely measured by one significant achievement. It is built through many small moments of learning, encouragement and perseverance.

Section Summary

Maintaining momentum requires commitment, flexibility and regular reflection. By recognising progress and remaining focused on achievable actions, mentoring relationships continue providing value throughout the creative journey.

Section 7 – Mentoring Toolkit

Practical Resources for Every Meeting

Successful mentoring is supported by preparation, consistency and purposeful conversation. The following checklists provide a practical framework that mentors and mentees can use throughout the program.

First Meeting Checklist

Discuss together:

- your creative backgrounds;
 - personal aspirations;
 - mentoring goals;
 - meeting frequency;
 - communication preferences;
 - confidentiality;
 - expectations; and
 - one practical action before your next meeting.
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Mentor Checklist

Before each meeting ask yourself:

- ✓ Have I prepared?

- ✓ Am I ready to listen first?
 - ✓ How will I encourage independent thinking?
 - ✓ Have I recognised progress?
 - ✓ Have we agreed clear next steps?
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Mentee Checklist

Before each meeting consider:

- ✓ What progress have I made?
 - ✓ What challenges would I like to discuss?
 - ✓ What actions have I completed?
 - ✓ What questions would I like answered?
 - ✓ What will I commit to before our next meeting?
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Suggested Meeting Structure

A simple meeting agenda can help maintain focus.

1. Welcome and reconnect.
2. Review progress since the previous meeting.
3. Discuss opportunities and challenges.
4. Explore ideas together.
5. Agree practical actions.
6. Confirm the next meeting.

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The most valuable mentoring conversations often begin with a simple question and finish with renewed confidence.

Section Summary

Preparation creates productive conversations. Simple routines help mentors and mentees make the most of every meeting while maintaining focus on creativity, collaboration and continuous learning.

Conclusion

Every creative journey is unique, yet one principle remains constant—people are more likely to achieve their potential when someone believes in them.

The Focus with Passion Mentorship Program recognises that while grant funding creates opportunity, mentoring provides encouragement, perspective and confidence. Together they create an environment where artists are supported not only in developing their creative practice but also in developing themselves.

Throughout this Guide, mentoring has been presented as a partnership built on trust, respect and shared learning. Mentors contribute experience, encouragement and practical insight. Mentees contribute curiosity, commitment and a willingness to grow. Together they create relationships that strengthen individuals while enriching the broader creative community.

Perhaps the greatest legacy of mentoring is that it extends well beyond the formal program itself. Many mentees will one day become mentors, passing on the same encouragement, knowledge and belief that once helped shape their own creative journey. In this way, mentoring becomes an ongoing cycle of generosity that strengthens creativity across generations.

Final Reflection

As your mentoring journey progresses, take time to reflect together.

- What have we learned from one another?
- How has our confidence grown?
- What achievements are we most proud of?
- How will we continue applying these lessons?
- How can we encourage the next generation of artists?

Every mentoring relationship leaves a lasting legacy—not only through the knowledge that is shared, but through the confidence and belief it inspires.



Focus with Passion Insight

The greatest gift one person can offer another is belief. Belief inspires confidence, encourages creativity and empowers people to pursue opportunities they may never have imagined possible.

Final Summary

The Focus with Passion Mentorship Program demonstrates that creativity flourishes when encouragement, experience and opportunity come together. By fostering relationships founded on trust, collaboration and genuine belief, mentors and mentees strengthen one another while contributing to a creative community where knowledge is shared, confidence is nurtured and future generations are inspired to pursue their artistic ambitions with passion and purpose.