Mentoring Policy for Undergraduate Students

Nirma University, Ahmedabad
(Recognised as 'Centre of Excellence' by the Government of Gujarat)

Title of the Policy

Mentoring Policy for Undergraduate Students

Domain

Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

Purpose of the Policy

This policy intends to provide a framework for mentoring undergraduate students and developing systematic ways to resume the implementation of the mentoring process.

Version

1.1

Prepared by

University IQAC

Approved by

Academic Council

Notification date

Review due

Four years from the date of notification

1. PREAMBLE

'Mentoring' has long been used as an enabler to enhance the outcome of the teaching-learning process. It assists and supports the academic and professional development of the 'mentee' through timely interventions: formal or informal. University life is commonly a first-time move away from family and home, especially for undergraduate students resulting in significant changes in their behaviour. This presents them with several opportunities as well as challenges often adding to the stress and anxiety amongst students.

Mentoring as a mutually beneficial relationship is important as it sets up a healthy relationship between the students and the faculty. The mentors help the mentees channelise their curiosity in the right direction. It avails them an opportunity of professional satisfaction inherent in the mentoring process of preparing the next generation of intellectual leaders. It is beneficial to mentees as it prepares them to deal more confidently with the challenges of intellectual work. It also helps them learn techniques of collaboration and networking for academic and professional growth. If the available opportunities are utilised and challenges are mitigated, students may achieve their full potential upon completion of studies and emerge as high-quality professionals.

2. DEFINITIONS

Mentor: A more experienced individual (mostly faculty but may include a senior student, alumnus, or an industry expert) who mentors a mentee for academic and personal development.

Mentee: A student enrolled in any undergraduate programme.

Mentoring: A process that involves a trust-based relationship for the overall development of the mentee. This involves periodic as well as need-based interactions to guide the mentee in areas in which the mentee needs support.

Institute level mentoring committee: Comprises the Head of the Institute (HoI), institute level coordinator, and faculty members nominated by the HoI.

University level mentoring committee: Comprises university and institute level coordinators, University Counsellor, Head of Students Welfare Board, and any members nominated by the Director General.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To raise awareness among students about mentoring and its importance.

2. To provide mentees a platform for sharing their problems related to academic and non-academic matters.

3. To raise awareness among mentees about the knowledge, skills, and attributes required for their academic development and career growth.

4. To provide appropriate assistance and guidance to mentees to resolve the identified issues, weaknesses, and challenges.

5. To monitor the academic progress of the mentees and identify slow and weak learners to provide them with enabling environment to grow and prosper.

4. MENTORING ORGANOGRAM

Mentoring organogram given in Annexure - I details the hierarchical position of various stakeholders and the order in which information shall flow on various activities related to the mentoring process, for smooth implementation of the policy and to achieve its intended objectives.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Responsibilities of the Executive Registrar

a) To provide the necessary IT interface for the digitisation of the mentoring process
b) To analyse the implementation status and monitor the progress

5.2 Responsibilities of University Level Coordinator

a) To monitor the overall implementation of the mentoring policy through the institute coordinators.
b) To oversee scheduling and conduct of mentoring sessions.
c) To provide support and guidance to institute level coordinators.
d) To ensure proper documentation and report to university authorities.

5.3 Responsibilities of Institute Level Coordinator

a) To organise the orientation session and sensitise the faculty members on their roles and responsibilities before the commencement of the academic semester.
b) To schedule mentoring activities on the timetable and inform students accordingly.
c) To ensure that mentoring sessions take place as per the schedule.
d) To compile the mentoring summary report, conduct periodic analysis, and present findings to the faculty IQAC meeting.
e) To provide support/guidance to mentors as may be required.
f) To refer matters to University Counsellor as may be required.

5.4 Responsibilities of a Mentor

a) To inform mentees about mentoring sessions (day, date, time, venue, etc)
b) To establish a trust-based relationship and raise awareness among the mentees.
c) To monitor the academic progress of the mentees, identify fast and slow learners, and provide the appropriate guidance for improvement.
d) To approve leave of mentees.
e) To guide mentees to partake in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for their overall growth and personality development.
f) To guide and help students make decisions on selecting a major or a minor.
g) To guide and help students choose an internship or a research project.
h) To guide mentees to handle peer pressure and become socially responsible individuals.
i) To refer the exceptional matters to the Institute level coordinator/HoI for appropriate interventions.
j) To keep track of employment or further study status of mentees after graduation.

5.5 Responsibilities of a Mentee

a) To attend mentoring sessions as per the schedule and submit the desired information and/or documents.
b) To share the academic challenges or difficulties faced with the respective mentors.
c) To put efforts into improving the academic performance or participate in other activities as guided by the mentor.
d) To treat all members of the mentoring process with respect.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF MENTORING POLICY

6.1 Appointment of Mentoring Coordinators

For effective implementation of this Mentoring policy, a coordinator at the university level shall be appointed. Similarly, there will be a coordinator at each institute to ensure the effective implementation of the mentoring policy across the university. The Director General shall appoint a university coordinator for mentoring process, while, the Head of the Institute or Head of the Department (as may be applicable) will appoint a senior faculty member of the concerned institute as the Institute Coordinator for the mentoring process.

6.2 Appointment of mentors and their orientation

All faculty members shall be appointed as mentors. Wherever required doctoral students may also be appointed as mentors. Prior to the commencement of the mentoring process, the faculty members will be oriented and sensitised regarding the importance and objectives of the mentoring process as well as their role in the process. They need to recognise that mentoring students is an integral part of their professional duty. The Institute level coordinator, who is usually a senior faculty member, will act as a resource person for this orientation session, which ideally shall be of 2 to 3 hours duration.

A brief module shall be developed to equip mentors with the necessary traits to effectively carry out the mentoring process. The orientation process shall also highlight the documentation required for the mentoring process.

6.3 Frequency of mentoring sessions

Though the mentoring is an ongoing process, it is proposed to have at least 4 formal mentoring sessions per year for the first two years and at least two formal sessions for the third and fourth years as may be applicable. The formal sessions shall be complemented by more formal and/or informal sessions as the need may be. The formal meetings shall be part of the timetable of the respective institute/department.

University level mentoring committee shall meet twice a year, preferably at the end of each semester to take note of the progress of mentoring activities and address issues that may need its attention, and propose changes in the policy and/or approach if any.

Institute level coordinators shall present a summary of mentoring sessions to institute level IQAC meetings after each round of mentoring sessions. The summary of mentoring sessions shall be discussed at IQAC meetings. The meeting shall discuss the progress of the mentoring process and the issues identified by individual mentors which may require a higher level of intervention/ support.

6.4 Allocation of students to the mentors

The concerned HoI/HoD shall assign a group of about 15-20 students to an individual faculty member. Preferably, the same faculty member shall remain as the mentor for the same group of mentees till the completion of the programme of study. Doctoral students may also be required to mentor undergraduate students wherever required. Additional mentors/guest mentors/industry experts /student mentors shall be appointed/ invited in specific cases to handle specific issues. Industry experts shall be invited as guest faculty during mentoring sessions to address specific issues as the need may be.

A preliminary allocation of mentees to a mentor shall be disclosed at the time of induction of the first-year students.

Their contact details shall be shared with both the students and parents. An introductory session about mentoring shall be a part of the induction programme which parents may also attend. There shall be a provision for reallocating students to other mentors if required by the circumstances.

6.5 Initial round of mentoring

After allocation, the mentor will plan for an initial round of mentoring. This round shall preferably be organised within the first month of the first semester. All the students will be informed about the mentoring session (day, date, time and venue, etc.) through an e-mail. The mentor shall explain the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and mentee as well as highlight the importance of the mentoring process. The mentees would be required to complete the Mentoring Agreement Form (MAF) online (Annexure – II), and highlight their career aspirations and academic areas where they need help.

The mentor shall try to create a bonding, based on trust so that students open up and share their concerns. The mentor shall make necessary remarks online. The form shall be accessible by the mentor, mentee, and the institute level coordinators. In the interim, the completed forms will be collected and filed by the mentor for use during subsequent meetings. The mentor shall also create a WhatsApp group for communication amongst the group members.

6.6 Follow up mentoring sessions and actions

At the time of second and subsequent meetings, students' demographic details and academic records shall be available online. Mentees shall complete other details such as behavioural issues, peer pressure, attendance-related issues, and participation in other activities. They shall highlight challenges faced during this period and areas they need help in. Based on all details submitted on the form MAF, the mentor shall engage the mentee further and come up with strategies/actions to help mentees with identified weak areas/challenges. In the process, the mentor will identify the academic category of the mentee i.e.; slow learner, advanced learner, or weak learner.

The mentor shall also identify if any challenges need an intervention at a higher level such as institute level or referring the matter to a university counsellor. The mentees identified as slow/weak shall be provided with opportunities to improve in their studies. Those identified as fast learners shall be guided to excel in studies and career paths and to partake in various activities. All interventions shall be recorded for future reference and remedial actions. The focus of mentoring during the first two years shall be on academic challenges and issues on campus, while third year onwards the focus shall be more on career guidance and further study opportunities. The mentors shall also keep track of the employment or further study status of mentees after graduation.

Among other issues, the second meeting shall discuss academic progress based on Continuous Evaluation Examination (CEE), attendance, and also orient them for Semester End Examination (SEE). The third meeting onwards shall discuss the overall performance of the mentee during the previous semester including SEE results. Towards the end of the academic year, the evaluation of mentors (by mentee) shall be conducted to allow feedback and implement changes, if required. Informal meetings shall be convened when a mentee requests any help or such meetings.

6.7 Closing round of meeting

The final round of mentoring shall be arranged during the penultimate semester of a programme. This final round shall also include orientation of mentees to become active alumni and become voluntary mentors.

6.8 Documentation (online)

The mentoring agreement form (MAF), as well as the mentor evaluation form (MEF), shall be online. The MAF shall be accessible to the mentor, mentee, and institute level coordinator/s. The mentor shall ensure that all the details are updated on time for all the mentees assigned to him/her. The mentor shall report the outcome to HoD/HoI regularly through institute level coordinators. Any cases requiring the attention of higher offices /University counsellor shall be reported immediately to the institute level coordinators for further action.

The mentor shall have access to the mentee profile, family details, attendance data, and their achievements in academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities to have a holistic view of their progress and to render appropriate advice.

The Executive Registrar shall make necessary IT interventions to help data accumulation and access by mentors and institute level coordinators. The mentor should be able to record attendance and major discussion points of meetings online.

As all the leave approval of the mentees would be through their respective mentor, the software programme shall accord access to the student – mentor – programme chair for leave approval. The software programme shall facilitate the generation of appropriate reports by mentors/ institute level coordinators.
The Executive Registrar shall facilitate the provision of all necessary hardware and/or software as may be required for the digitisation of the entire mentoring process.

7. ANALYSIS

The Executive Registrar shall ensure that a summary of mentoring sessions shall be presented at the university IQAC meeting and provided to the concerned Area Chair/ HOD/HoI, who will take necessary actions, wherever required.

8. EVALUATION OF MENTORS BY MENTEES

The evaluation of mentors will be conducted at the end of every academic year. The mentor evaluation form (MEF) is attached as Annexure – III.

9. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS/INTEGRATION

To allow better communication between various stakeholders involved in the mentoring process and easy access to information, the executive registrar shall ensure that the mentoring sessions shall be included in the timetable through the University Information System. The IT department shall provide an interface so that the relevant forms can be maintained online and mentors can access details regarding attendance, academic performance, etc. of their mentees, which will help them in conducting effective mentoring sessions.

10. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The policy will be reviewed every four years or earlier if the need may be.

References

Kaufman, S. R. & Sandilos, L. (n.d.). Improving Students' Relationships with Teachers to Provide Essential Supports for Learning Applications of Psychological Science to Teaching and Learning modules. American Psychological Association.
Available at: *https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/relationships.*

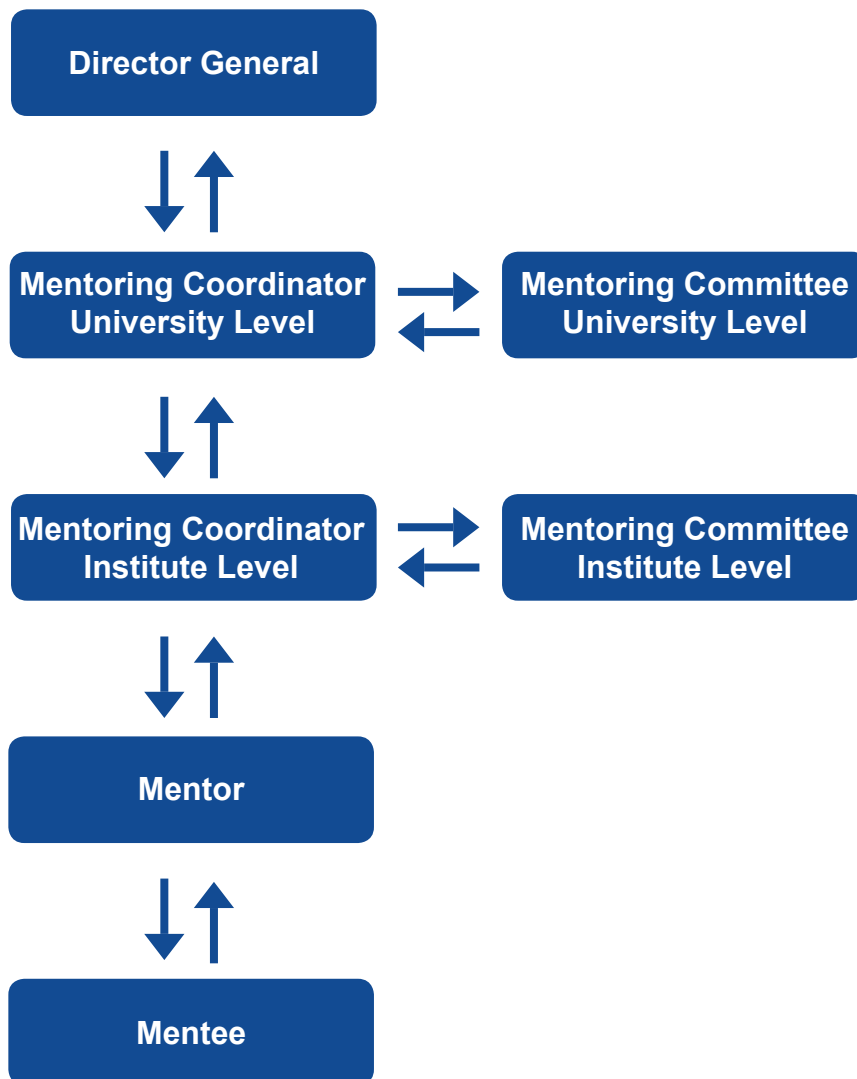University Grants Commission (2018). A Guide to Student Induction Programme. University Grants Commission. New Delhi.
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Annexure – I: MENTORING ORGANOGRAM

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          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │   Director General  │
          └─────────────────────┘
                    ↓↑
┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Mentoring Coordinator│  →   │  Mentoring Committee  │
│   University Level   │  ←   │   University Level    │
└──────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘
                    ↓↑
┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Mentoring Coordinator│  →   │  Mentoring Committee  │
│    Institute Level   │  ←   │    Institute Level    │
└──────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘
                    ↓↑
          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │        Mentor       │
          └─────────────────────┘
                    ↓↑
          ┌─────────────────────┐
          │        Mentee       │
          └─────────────────────┘
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Annexure – II: Mentoring Agreement Form (MAF) (To be online)

Purpose: This mentoring form is used to ensure that mentor and mentee develop a mutual understanding of expectations from the beginning of their relationship. This will help both mentor and mentee to establish a trust-based relationship and identify goals and other skills areas to be enhanced or improved.

A. BASIC INFORMATION OF MENTEE (to be fetched from student database)

1.	Full Name	
2.	Gender	
3.	Roll Number	
4.	Programme of Study	
5.	E-Mail	
6.	Whatsapp number	
7.	Phone Number (Parents/Guardian)	
8.	Mother Tongue	
9.	Career goals	
10.	Areas for improvement	

Declaration by Mentee: As a 'mentee' I agree to do the following:

- Meet as scheduled with my mentor and maintain regular communication
- Follow the professional advice / suggestions given by the mentor
- Review my progress and look for opportunities to enhance my performance

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Note: The above details should be accessed and verified during the initial round of mentoring.

B. ACADEMIC RECORD (Semester wise progress to be accessible online)

C. Issues/difficulties for discussion

These details should be entered online every time a mentoring meeting takes place (2nd meeting onwards)

Number of meetings: _____	Date of meeting: _____
1.	Academic issues/difficulties	
2.	Career-related issues	
3.	Personal issues/difficulties	
4.	Discussion:	
5.	Suggestions/Action proposed by mentor	

Signature of Mentee (online approval): _____

Signature of Mentor (online approval): _____

Annexure – III: MENTOR EVALUATION FORM (MEF)

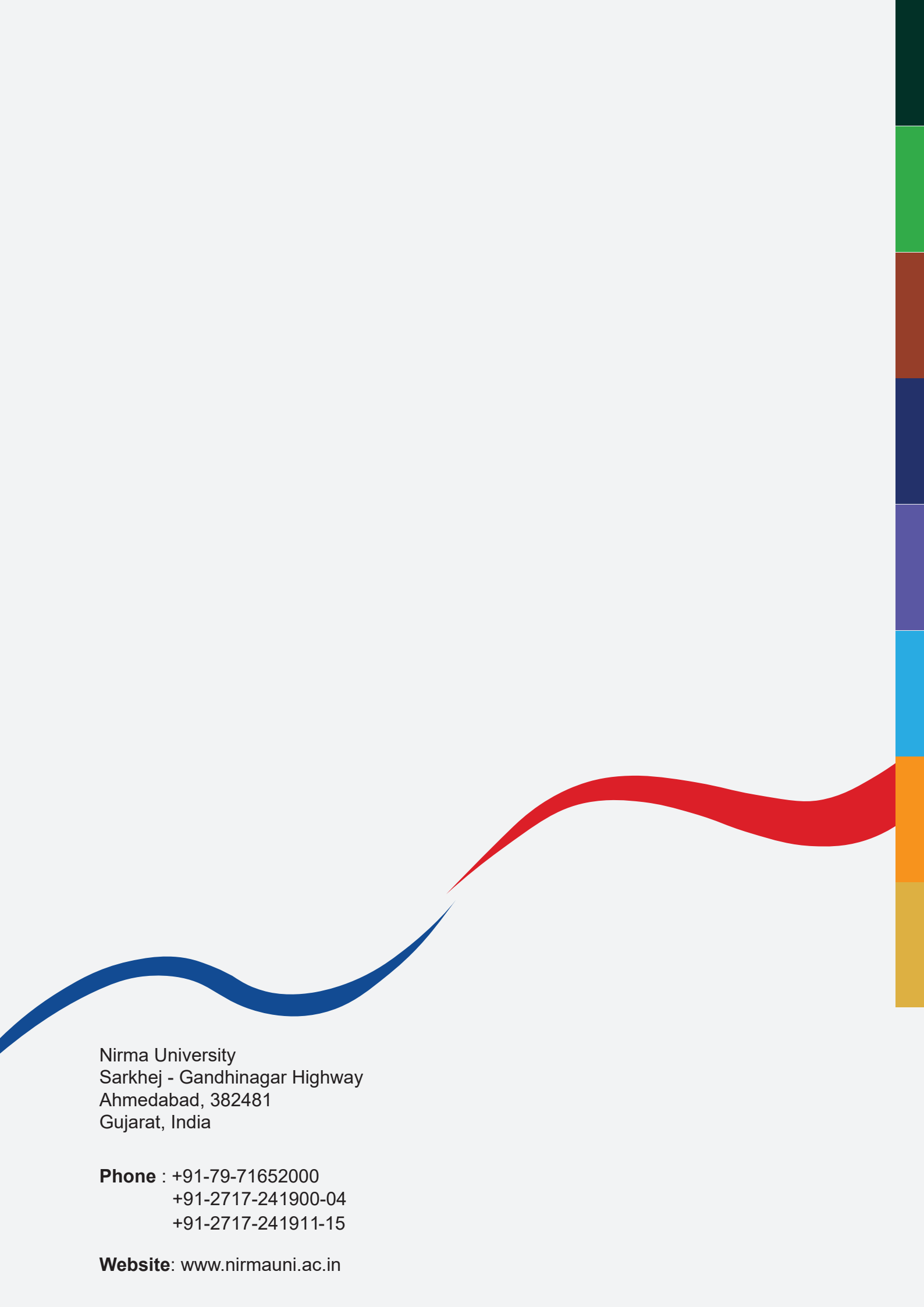(To be filled by the mentee at the end of every year)

Date	
Name of the Mentee	
Programme Name	
Roll Number	
Semester	
Name of the Mentor	

Instructions:

Evaluate your mentor on a scale of 1 to 4 by encircling the number of your choice, where:

4 – Strongly Agree
3 – Agree
2 – Disagree
1 – Strongly Disagree

1	Your mentor makes himself /herself available to you.	4	3	2	1
2	Your mentor addresses your concerns.	4	3	2	1
3	The guidance of your mentor has helped you.	4	3	2	1
4	Your mentor solves your academic concerns, if any.	4	3	2	1
5	Your mentor encourages you to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.	4	3	2	1