

Alumni Buddy System

Explanation document 2025/2026



The Alumni Buddy System (ABS) is an initiative by CSA's Alumni Events Committee designed to strengthen the relationships between alumni and current active members. The program's purpose is to create a welcoming and fun environment where buddies can learn from each other, offering guidance in areas like **career development**, **hobbies**, and **personal growth**.

How It Works

Alumni and active members are paired based on shared interests indicated in the registration form. The nature of the relationship can vary; *alumni often act as mentors due to their experience, but the relationship can also be in both ways, allowing both participants to be mentor and mentee*. Regular meetings are encouraged, ideally weekly or every two weeks. Together, you can talk about what goals you have, things you would like to learn, but also get to know each other better personally to maintain a strong and healthy relationship. It is mostly up to you what kinds of plans you want to achieve with your buddy. Try to meet each other in person as much as possible, as that will strengthen the relationship and give it a more personal bond (e.g. perform a shared hobby or interest together).

Timeline

The ABS is divided into 2 rounds, each lasting six weeks. Registration for Round 1 starts on the 27th of October. After Round 1, buddies can reapply for Round 2 or people who did not sign up in Round 1 could still do that in Round 2. Feedback is collected at the end of each round to improve the experience for future ABS rounds. Below you can see the timeline table for the ABS.

What?	When?
Start registration Round 1	27th of October 2025
End registration Round 1	24th of November 2025
Round 1 ABS	1st of December 2025 till 2nd of February 2026
Start registration Round 2	TBD
End registration Round 2	TBD
Round 2 ABS	TBD

Roles and Expectations

For Mentees, the program offers a chance to work towards personal and professional goals with the guidance of someone more experienced. Mentees gain an accountability partner, an expanded network, and a support system for achieving their objectives.

For Mentors, (alumni) mentors can enhance their leadership skills, gain new perspectives, build confidence, and give back to the CSA community while also expanding their network.

It is expected that both individuals are supportive, honest, and consistent in their interactions, maintaining open communication and working together to resolve any issues that arise. Importantly, as mentioned previously, the mentor/mentee role can be taken by both alumni and active members. This way, buddies can share their value both ways.

Support from the Alumni Committee

Support from the Alumni Committee comes in three ways, events, communication and feedback.

Event: The Alumni Committee organizes an ABS related event during Round 1 where buddies can meet each other and break the ice through games and activities.

Communication: During the ABS, the Alumni Committee will regularly check on the progress of the buddies by sending personal messages to share about their experience so far. You can also ask us for advice this way or anything else we could help with.

Feedback: After each round, a survey will be sent to gather feedback and improve the ABS. Participants can also contact the Alumni Committee personally with any concerns or suggestions throughout the program.

Flexibility and Adaptability

The ABS allows for flexibility in how mentoring is approached, whether through structured coaching or informal mentoring, based on the needs and preferences of the buddies. The program encourages participants to set clear goals, establish a meeting structure, and adapt their approach as they progress.

Additional Resources

In the appendix, you can find examples of meeting structures, potential discussion topics, and ways to break down goals into workable steps. These resources can offer a starting point for participants to explore further on their own.

The ABS is voluntary and intended for those interested in a meaningful exchange of knowledge and support. By participating, alumni and active members have the opportunity to build lasting connections, gain new skills, and potentially make lifelong friends.

Appendices

Appendix I: Meeting and Buddy Styles

It is important to establish at the beginning what your buddy wants to get out of the sessions.

- Does your buddy want to learn specific skills?
- Does your buddy want more knowledge about a certain field?
- How does your buddy want to develop him/herself?
- How does your buddy envision the sessions?

Be sure to determine **the goals of the buddy in the first session**. Based on that, discuss with your buddy what would be a pleasant structure for both of you for the following sessions.

Mentoring and coaching are two different forms of guiding an individual to personal development. Based on your background and what your buddy is interested in, you could take a more coaching-based or mentor-based approach. Or even a mix of both! See below the key differences between coaching and mentoring.

	Coaching	Mentoring
Structure	Traditionally more <i>structured</i> , with regularly scheduled meetings, like weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.	Generally, meetings tend to be more <i>informal</i> , on an as-needed basis, required by the mentee.
Expertise	Coaches are hired for their <i>expertise</i> in a given area, one in which the trainee desires improvement. Examples: Presentation skills, leadership, interpersonal communication, sales.	Within organization mentoring programs, mentors have more <i>seniority and expertise</i> in a specific area than mentees. The mentee learns from and is inspired by the mentor's experience.

Agenda	The coaching agenda is <i>co-created by the coach and the trainee</i> in order to meet the specific needs of the trainee.	The mentoring agenda is <i>set by the mentee</i> . The mentor supports that agenda.
Questioning	Unlike mentoring, coaching is non-directive which means that it is about posing the right questions, providing the space, trust and confidence for the individual being coached to consider how they can achieve more, reach their objectives and find capabilities within themselves.	In the mentoring relationship, <i>the mentee is more likely to ask more questions</i> , tapping into the mentor's expertise.
Outcome	The outcome from a coaching agreement is <i>specific and measurable</i> , showing signs of improvement or positive change in the desired performance area.	The outcome from a mentoring relationship can shift and change over time. There is less interest in specific, measurable results or changed behavior <i>and more interest in the overall development of the mentee</i> .

Ask your buddy to also come prepared to the sessions with any topics he may want to discuss or ask you. Don't forget, this should also be something fun! It is encouraged to also talk about some casual and light things, about how your days went; to also lighten up the mood! Important: be sure to make clear agreements on the non-disclosure of personal information. This way, both parties feel a safe environment during and outside of the sessions.

We could provide you with more background information about mentoring and coaching, but in the end, this will not necessarily be of better quality than what is on the internet. There may even be better sources or descriptions out there than what is written in this document.

Note that this is not a complete guide to mentoring and coaching, but more a little push on how you can get started. We suggest you look for more information on the topics of coaching and mentoring yourself. You can find plenty of information on the internet!

Potential General Questions:

- If you could learn any new professional skill (it doesn't have to be related to your current role or industry), what would it be?
- What is it that you really want to be and do?
- What are you doing really well that is helping you get there?
- What are you not doing well that is preventing you from getting there?
- What will you do differently tomorrow to meet those challenges?
- How can I help / where do you need the most help?
- What do you expect from me?

Potential Career Path Questions:

- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Where do you ultimately want to end up in your career (role, title, income, etc.)?
- What made you look into this role? How does it align with your long-term plan?
- Are you happy in your current environment/roles?
- What is your dream job, or do you feel you've achieved it?

Leadership topics

- How are you adjusting to your new role?
- Do you have any reservations about your responsibilities?
- What methods are you using to communicate effectively with your team?
- What are three words you'd use to describe your leadership style?

Long- and short-term goal topics

- What goals do you want to achieve within the next month?
- What quantitative goals do you want to achieve within six months?
- How do you measure your success?
- What other roles would you be interested in within a company?