

Explanation Alumni Buddy System

Alumni Webpage: <https://csa-eur.nl/alumni/>

Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/6Q3MRse93kryPmtS6>

Greetings! Welcome to the beginning of the Alumni Buddy System!

This document will explain the core of the Alumni Buddy System (ABS) so you have an understanding of the ABS to help you in considering if you should sign up. Please read it carefully. It is the first time we are launching the Alumni Buddy System and is therefore also a trial for this active year of 2022-2023. We hope for great success that will bring lots of benefits and fun!

Although the text in this document may sometimes seem a bit formal, please understand that the system and all interactions between buddies can be as casual as you both want! ;)

1. Introduction & Purpose

The Alumni Buddy System is a new official initiative from the Alumni Committee. Its purpose is to facilitate and foster a relationship between an Alumni member (a former CSA-EUR Active member) and a current Active member. The relationship will be of a nurturing, learning, and fun kind! Together, the Alumni and Active member help each other improve and learn from each other in areas such as career, hobbies, and self-improvement. What this is, you decide entirely for yourself! For example, have you always wanted to learn how to plan better or what it's like to work in a particular industry/company? Then maybe we can match you with a suitable alumni! Or do you enjoy coaching and giving advice or teaching your hobby to other people? Then you are suitable to help an active member with this! Note that it is not necessary to be an expert on a topic, just being knowledgeable and wanting to help is what matters!

1.1 How It Works

We try to pair buddies based on their shared interests as indicated in the registration form (you may change your answers or add to them after having filled in the form). Together you can talk about what goals you have, things you'd like to learn, but also get to know each other better personally to maintain a strong and healthy relationship. The extent to which this is done, and preferred, is up to you. We suggest making a plan, preferably holding (short) consistent meetings every week or every few weeks to maintain contact and update each other on your progress (see Appendix I, II and III). Try to meet physically as well, as that will strengthen the relationship and give it a more personal bond (e.g. perform a shared hobby, interest together)!

1.2 Timeline

What?	When? (2023)
Start registration Round 1	4 January
End registration Round 1 - Before Introduction x Kick-off Event	20 January

The ABS Introduction x Kick-off event	27 January
Round 1 ABS	30 January - 12 March (6 weeks)
End registration Round 1 - After Introduction x Kick-off Event	1 February
Collect and implement feedback of Round 1 + start marketing and open sign-ups for Round 2 ABS	27 February - 12 March
Start registration Round 2	27 February
Round 2 ABS	20 March - 30 April (6 weeks)
End registration Round 2	12 March
Collect and implement feedback of Round 2	23 April - 10 May

2. Buddies Explained

Our suggestion (situation 1) is that an Alumni member is a mentor to an Active member, because we assume that in general an Alumni member has more (career) experience than an Active member. Example situation 1: the alumnus helps the Active member with their presenting skills.

If the Alumni and Active member prefer a relationship where both are a mentor and mentee to each other, you may certainly do that (situation 2). Example situation 2: the alumnus helps the Active member to improve their presenting skills and the Active member helps the alumnus to improve their writing skills.

Please discuss with your buddy how you would prefer to participate in the ABS.

Below are several benefits and expectations we have thought of as core starting points for buddies. We encourage you to ask each other how you can provide value to each other during your mentor or mentee journey.

2.1 Expected From Buddies:

- Be supportive of each other;
- Try to work issues out together;
- Be honest, open, and encouraging when communicating with each other;
- Contact us if you want help;
- Strive to have a consistent plan and consistent meetings to help each other improve;

2.2 Value for Mentee:

- Have someone who you can talk to and improve with to progress towards your goals;
- An accountability partner who will help to keep your progress and efforts towards your goals;

- Extend your network;

2.3 Value for Mentor:

- Improve your personal leadership skills and on giving advice;
- Become more open minded by seeing things from new perspectives;
- Build more confidence from teaching what you know and strengthen your own knowledge;
- Provide value back to CSA-EUR;
- Extend your network;

3. What the Alumni Committee Will Do

The Alumni committee will oversee the system from now until our active year ends, which is around June 2023. After that you can of course maintain buddies indefinitely (which we hope will happen!).

3.1 Introduction x Kick-off Event

Before the formal start of Round 1 of the ABS, we will hold an event where buddies can meet each other in person. We will have you play some games to get to know each other and break the ice. Alumni and Active members who have not yet signed up and do not have a buddy are also welcome to join! You may find the right buddy for you here. After the event, it is still possible to sign up for ABS. If this event is a success, then we will also organize one for Round 2.

3.2 Whatsapp Group Chat

We will make a Whatsapp group chat or Community with all buddies in which we will post updates for the ABS if there are any and it serves as a platform for buddies to ask other buddies for advice and help each other out! Bondings can also be organized with multiple pairs, for example: if two pairs (four buddies) like to play league of legends you can plan to play that together, or when two pairs want to learn how to present better you can give advice on your approaches together to achieve that goal.

3.3 Feedback ABS & Contact Alumni Committee

After one round of the ABS is over, the Alumni Committee will send out a survey to gather feedback as an evaluation of the ABS. Please leave feedback if you have any concerns, improvements or even a compliment! Together, we can improve this system for ourselves and future pairs.

Buddies are paired to the best of our ability, but it may happen that there is not always a "click" with your buddy or he/she may not respond. However, you can always contact us if your buddy does not respond at all. Please note that the whole buddy system is voluntary and you should only sign up if you are really interested in it. If you have anything you want to share with us before we send you the feedback form or any other questions, please contact us using our email: alumni@csa-eur.nl.

Sign up now if you are interested in a new experience and who knows, you might make a new friend along the way!

4. Appendices

Appendix I: Example ABS Meeting Structure

This is an example of the meeting structure buddies can use when partaking in ABS. The example is for one round of ABS with fixed weekly meetings.

General tips:

- Come prepared to meetings: ex. go over the agenda in advance and prepare questions.
- Send the agenda 24-48h beforehand.
- Maintain a strict eye on the time. Meeting duration can vary. 1 hour to 1,5 hour can be used as a starting point and adjusted as needed.

Meeting	When (2023)	Purpose	Agenda
Meeting #1	30 January	- Get to know each other -Discuss goals ¹ -Discuss plan	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min Decide how to maintain contact with each other and collaborate in the ABS - 20min Get to know each other - 20 min Specify goal(s) to achieve - 20 min Specify a plan to achieve the goal(s) - 20 min Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min
Meeting #2	6 February	-Discuss first steps taken -Reflect ² and decide on follow-up steps	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min Discuss steps taken - 20min Reflect on the steps taken - 30 min Discuss if the goal and/or plan should be adjusted and how - 20 min Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min
Meeting #3	13 February	-Plan an activity (or more!) together to bond (ex. gaming, sports, eat together)	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min Discuss steps taken - 20min Reflect on the steps taken - 30 min

¹ Start with the end goal in mind and break it down into small actionable sub-goals. Be reasonable with what is feasible given the timeframe and the goal itself.

² We suggest using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (similar to the STARR method, but with emotion).

Additional info can be found here:

1) <https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/media/MyCumbria/Documents/ReflectiveCycleGibbs.pdf>

2) <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle>

		<p>-Discuss steps taken</p> <p>-Reflect and decide on follow-up steps</p>	<p>Discuss if the goal and/or plan should be adjusted and how - 10 min</p> <p>Plan a bonding together - 20 min</p> <p>Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min</p>
Meeting #4	20 February	<p>-Hold bonding together</p> <p>-Discuss steps taken</p> <p>-Reflect and decide on follow-up steps</p> <p>-Discuss current collaboration</p>	<p>Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min</p> <p>Discuss steps taken - 20min</p> <p>Reflect on the steps taken - 30 min</p> <p>Discuss if the goal and/or plan should be adjusted and how - 10 min</p> <p>Decide if the way contact is maintained and you collaborate is still satisfactory for the ABS - 10 min</p> <p>Discuss previous bonding and maybe plan next bondings - 10 min</p> <p>Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min</p>
Meeting #5	27 February	<p>-Discuss steps taken</p> <p>-Reflect and decide on follow-up steps</p>	<p>Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min</p> <p>Discuss steps taken - 20min</p> <p>Reflect on the steps taken - 30 min</p> <p>Discuss previous bonding and maybe plan next bondings - 10 min</p> <p>Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min</p>
Meeting #6	6 March	<p>-Discuss steps taken</p> <p>-Reflect and decide on follow-up steps</p> <p>-Decide if you want to maintain the collaboration</p>	<p>Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min</p> <p>Discuss steps taken - 15min</p> <p>Reflect on the steps taken - 20 min</p> <p>Reflect on your collaboration together - 30m</p> <p>Decide on if you want to continue collaborating together and how - 20m</p> <p>Closing: plan possible next meeting, thank each other - 5 min</p>
Meeting #...	As the two of you wish	-Continue your shared learning journey	

Appendix II: Meeting and Buddy styles

It is important to at the beginning establish 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 out of 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	Outcome from a coaching agreement is <i>specific and measurable</i> , showing signs of improvement or positive change in the desired performance area.	Outcome from a mentoring relationship can shift and change over time. There is less interest in specific, measurable results or changed behavior and <i>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 won't 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?

Appendix III: Examples of improving by breaking down goals.

This template can serve as an example for breaking down goals. For instance, your major goal is to get better at giving presentations. Your sub-goals could relate to appearance (look and feel confident), content, tone, preparation and practicing beforehand for others.

Free Personal Development Plan (PDP) Example Template



What are my big goals?	Which goals need to happen first?	When do I want to achieve this?	What obstacles might get in my way?	How can I improve my chances of meeting my goal?	Where can I go for support?	Review: How am I doing?
Saving a deposit:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set aside 10% of my wage each month in an interest account that I cannot touch. 2. Set a goal for how much I want to save and figure out how long it will take to get you there. 	I want to have a £X,000 deposit by the age of 27.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not putting money into account. • Unexpected bills such as my car breaking down. • Choosing an interest account that is unsuitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a bank account that I cannot access until 27. • Create a standing order that transfers money on payday. • Speak to an advisor at the bank to get best account for saving a deposit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank. • Financial advisors. • Parents • Friends who've gone through the process. 	
Completing a PhD:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn about the PhD application process. 2. Find a suitable university and supervisor. 3. Look at funding routes. 4. Create and submit my PhD application. 5. Work on my academic CV by publishing a paper in my chosen field and attending conferences.. 6. Networking with academics (online and at conferences). 	I would like to have found a funded PhD place by the end of 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing out on PhD funding. • Lack of motivation. • Lack of knowledge or out of date knowledge. • A bad CV or application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up RSS feed and email alerts to notify me about new PhDs. • Keep focused on topic and continue to read around subject to keep up to date. • Read guides on how to apply and get advice on academic CV. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturers. • Careers advisors. • Websites like findaphd.co.uk and jobs.ac.uk. • University staff. 	