

# Explanation Alumni Buddy System

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

Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/Enfv7wT5XYNbSeE69>

Greetings! Welcome to the Alumni Buddy System!

This document will explain the core of the Alumni Buddy System (ABS) so you have a better understanding of the ABS to help you consider it if you sign up. Please read it carefully. This will be the second year of the Alumni Buddy System launch. 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 and Purpose**

The Alumni Buddy System is an official initiative from the Alumni Events 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 one of nurturing, learning, and fun! Together, the alumni and active members help each other improve and learn from each other in areas such as career, hobbies, and self-improvement. In what aspects is this? It is totally up to you! 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, 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 completing the form). Together, you can talk about what goals you have and things you would like to learn. You can 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 Appendices I, II and III). We suggest to meet physically, as that will strengthen the relationship and give it a more personal bond (e.g., perform a shared hobby or interest together)!

## **2. Buddies Explained**

Under our assumption (in general) the Alumni member has more (career) experience than an active member (situation 1). Therefore the Alumni member is a mentor to an active member. Example situation 1: The alumnus helps the active member with their presentation skills.

If the alumni and active members prefer a relationship where they are both a mentor and mentee to each other, you may certainly do that (situation 2). Example situation 2: The alumnus helps the active member improve their presentation skills, and the active member helps the alumnus 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:**

- Having someone you can talk to and improve with will help you progress towards your goals.
- An accountability partner who will help you keep track of your progress and efforts toward your goals.
- Extend your network.

### **2.3 Value for Mentor:**

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

### **3. What the Alumni Events Committee Will Do**

The Alumni Events Committee will oversee the system from now until our active year ends, which is around June 2024. After that, you can, of course, maintain buddies indefinitely (which we hope will happen!).

#### **3.1 ABS meet-up event**

During the 1st round of the ABS, we will hold an event where buddies (participants) can meet each other in person. We will have you play some games to get to know other buddies. At the event the buddies can learn from each other's experiences and implement other ideas into their own schedule. You may even find a buddy for the second round of the ABS. After the event. If this event is a success, we will also organize one for Round 2.

#### **3.2 WhatsApp Group Chat**

We will make a WhatsApp group chat with all buddies in which we will post updates for the ABS if there are any. It also 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 Events Committee**

After finishing round 1 of the ABS, the Alumni Events 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 is unresponsive. 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](mailto: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; for example, go over the agenda in advance and prepare questions.
- Send the agenda 24-48 hours beforehand.
- Maintain a strict eye on the time. The meeting duration can vary. 1 hour to 1.5 hours can be used as a starting point and adjusted as needed.

Meeting	When (2023/2024)	Purpose	Agenda
Meeting #1	14 December	- Get to know each other  -Discuss goals <sup>1</sup>  -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	21 December	-Discuss the first steps taken  -Reflect <sup>2</sup> and decide on follow-up steps	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min  Discuss steps taken - 20 min  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	28 December	-Plan an activity (or more!) together to bond (ex. gaming, sports, eating together)	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min  Discuss steps taken - 20 min

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

Additional information 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>

		-Discuss steps taken  -Reflect and decide on follow-up steps	Reflect on the steps taken - 30 min  Discuss if the goal and/or plan should be adjusted and how - 10 min  Plan a bonding together - 20 min  Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min
Meeting #4	4 January	-Hold bonding together  -Discuss steps taken  -Reflect and decide on follow-up steps  -Discuss current collaboration	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min  Discuss steps taken - 20 min  Reflect on the steps taken - 30 min  Discuss if the goal and/or plan should be adjusted and how - 10 min  Decide if the way contact is maintained and you collaborate is still satisfactory for the ABS - 10 min  Discuss previous bonding and maybe plan next bondings - 10 min  Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min
Meeting #5	11 January	-Discuss steps taken  -Reflect and decide on follow-up steps	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min  Discuss steps taken - 20 min  Reflect on the steps taken - 30 min  Discuss previous bonding and maybe plan next bondings - 10 min  Closing: plan next meeting - 5 min
Meeting #6	18 January	-Discuss steps taken  -Reflect and decide on follow-up steps  -Decide if you want to maintain the collaboration	Start: discuss if anything should be added to the meeting points - 5 min  Discuss steps taken - 15min  Reflect on the steps taken - 20 min  Reflect on your collaboration together - 30 min  Decide on if you want to continue collaborating together and how - 20 min  Closing: plan possible next meeting, thank each other - 5 min
Meeting #...	As the two of you wish	-Continue your shared learning journey	

## Appendix II: 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 during 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 for 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 organizational 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 and 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 a mentoring relationship, <i>the mentee is more likely to ask more questions</i> , tapping into the mentor's expertise.
Outcome	The outcome of a coaching agreement is <i>specific and measurable</i> , showing signs of improvement or positive change in the desired performance area.	Outcomes 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 about. Do not forget, this should also be something fun! It is encouraged to talk about some casual and light things, about how your days went, and to lighten up the mood! Important: Be sure to make clear agreements on the non-disclosure of personal information. This way, both parties are sure of a safe environment during and outside of the sessions.

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