

ICANN Fellowship Program Mentoring Guidelines

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1 Introduction

The aim of the ICANN Fellowship Program is to strengthen the diversity of the multistakeholder model by fostering opportunities for individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities to become active participants in the ICANN community. Fellows are exposed to the workings of the ICANN community, are assigned a mentor, and receive training across different areas of knowledge and skill building before, during, and after an ICANN Public Meeting.

The program was launched in 2007 at ICANN29 San Juan. In 2014, the program expanded considerably, allowing more eligible newcomers and returning fellowship alumni to participate. As the program grew, it became evident that mentors could help to strengthen the relationship between fellows and the ICANN community.

ICANN49 marked the commencement of a pilot process referred to as the “Fellowship Coaching process,” which was formally launched for ICANN52. Following a [community consultation](#), the mentoring process evolved; starting with ICANN65, Supporting Organizations (SOs) and Advisory Committee(s) are each invited to nominate one mentor, for a total of seven.

The goal of mentoring is to prepare new and returning fellows to participate actively in the ICANN community; mentors guide fellows through extensive pre-meeting preparation, provide on-site networking and advice, and work collaboratively to ensure fellows develop the resources and skills to contribute to ICANN’s work.

This document provides guidelines to ensure a consistent and effective mentoring process for all fellows. It includes feedback and suggestions from former mentors and fellows, as well as ICANN community members during the [community consultation](#) and [public comment process](#); a full list of community input is available [here](#).

Mentors are expected to adapt the recommendations to suit the needs of their mentees, while adhering to program requirements. The Fellowship Office is available to provide additional guidance as needed.

2 Initial Steps

2.1 Mentor Eligibility

Each Supporting Organization (SO) and Advisory Committee (ACs) is invited to nominate one individual each (for a total of seven) to serve in the capacity of mentor for the ICANN Fellowship Program.

Mentors will serve for three consecutive ICANN Public Meetings. If a mentor needs to step down, the relevant SO/AC will be invited to nominate a new mentor. Additionally, mentees will evaluate their mentors following each meeting; if multiple negative evaluations are received, the Fellowship Program can consider follow-up actions and may request a replacement mentor from the relevant SO/AC.

A call for mentors will be released each October as an announcement on [ICANN.org](https://www.icann.org), and SOs/ACs will have approximately two months to select their mentors. Self-nominations will not be considered; those interested should notify their SO/AC through the relevant channels.

Mentors are expected to devote considerable time to mentoring before, during, and after each meeting. This document details expectations for extensive pre-meeting preparation and on-site support, as well as post-meeting requirements.

2.2 Team Forming

Each mentor will coach a team of up to seven ICANN fellows. Mentors should be prepared to assist fellows with a range of experience levels, including newcomers, individuals who are somewhat familiar with ICANN and its ecosystem, and fellowship alumni.

Teams are set up at least two weeks before the mentoring process begins. While creating teams, the Fellowship Office considers a number of factors, including:

- ⦿ sectors of interest
- ⦿ common languages
- ⦿ time zones and regional proximity
- ⦿ fellows' and mentors' levels of experience

Mentors will have one week to review a list of the mentees on their team and confirm whether those assigned are a suitable fit. A mentee who is not comfortable with an assigned mentor may request to be placed on another team.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Below are the roles and responsibilities in the Fellowship Program Mentoring process:

Mentors Assist the mentee with developing the resources and skills to contribute to ICANN's mission and work	Mentees/Fellows Focus on learning, networking and identifying ways to contribute to ICANN's mission and work	Fellowship Office Provides support to mentors and mentees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Provide advice and guidance ⦿ Share experience as appropriate ⦿ Offer encouragement and support ⦿ Identify resources that will help mentees ⦿ Encourage mentees to join ICANN community groups based on sector of interest ⦿ Introduce fellows to community members ⦿ Participate in mentor post-meeting evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Complete required ICANN Learn courses ⦿ Identify goals for their fellowship experience ⦿ Be open to and seek guidance ⦿ Take an active role in their own learning and help drive the process ⦿ Attend mentor meetings ⦿ Follow through on commitments ⦿ Participate in post-meeting evaluation/report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Assigns teams ⦿ Organizes training for mentors ⦿ Organizes on-site meetings and logistics ⦿ Manages escalation of issues ⦿ Facilitates travel logistics

4 Mentoring Process

A mentor's role is to help fellows to prepare themselves effectively for the meeting and to provide opportunities for fellows to find meaningful ways to contribute to the ICANN community.

Mentors are expected to tailor the mentorship experience by keeping in mind their mentees' interests and backgrounds and to create a team support system that gives mentees the resources they need to engage with the ICANN community.

Mentors are not expected to have extensive knowledge/experience of all ICANN communities/groups. Mentors should ask other mentors, community members, and fellowship alumni for help in responding to mentees' queries. It is important to seek input from others to ensure that information about other communities or sectors is accurate.

4.1 Individual Goals and Deliverables

Mentors should assist mentees with establishing individual goals for their fellowship experience.

Mentors should encourage fellows to find ways to contribute to an SO/AC or working group(s) that interests them. The focus should be on assisting fellows to integrate into the community and engaging them with ICANN processes. Newcomers should have the necessary support to find their place within ICANN's multistakeholder processes, and returning fellows should understand how to participate actively.

Based on individual goals and program requirements, mentors should set deliverables for mentees during different stages of the program (pre-meeting, on-site, and post-meeting). See sections 4.3 - 4.9 for examples of deliverables.

4.2 Communication within Teams

Proper communication and coordination between the team members is a vital part of the mentoring process. After the mentoring teams are announced, a mentor should email the team members and introduce himself/herself, explain his/her role and experience within ICANN, and provide a list of interests. The mentor should also ask team members to introduce themselves and share their interests and backgrounds within a few days. A sample introductory email can be found in the Appendix.

Mentors and mentees can choose the most suitable communication channel (such as email, Skype, WhatsApp, etc) for their team. The Fellowship Program does not endorse or enforce use of any specific social media or communication platform.

Throughout the mentoring process, the mentor should remain in active communication with their mentees, sharing useful links and relevant information about ICANN. Before the meeting, a mentor can expect to host at least two online meetings to share information with the team and address any concerns.

Mentors are expected to respond to mentees at reasonable time frames before, during, and after the meeting. If the mentor notices that a team member is not responding to

communications and participating in the mentoring process consistently, the mentor should alert the ICANN Fellowship Office, who will remind the fellow that the mentoring process is a mandatory part of the Fellowship Program. Mentors may also copy the ICANN Fellowship Office in email communications for other urgent matters as needed.

Additionally, if a mentor is not responding to a mentee's queries and concerns or offering needed support, the mentee should alert the ICANN Fellowship Office, who can help to resolve the matter amicably.

4.3 Pre-Meeting Capacity Development

Mentors should remember to provide information to the fellows in a simple manner that is easy to understand and retain. It is useful for mentors to provide information to mentees in a progressive way rather than overwhelming them with too many details at once. Setting weekly progress deliverables is key; for example, a mentor could give weekly questions to the mentees based on the information provided and ask for their responses and related queries.

It is important to note that team members may not have the same level of experience with or understanding of ICANN. Therefore, deliverables and expectations may differ from mentee to mentee. Mentors should take a clear, consistent approach to the learning process so that each mentee receives approximately the same preparation before the meeting.

Mentors are expected to cover the following topics as part of pre-meeting preparation:

- ⦿ ICANN Learn courses
 - All fellows need to register on [ICANN Learn](#) and complete the required courses; the Fellowship Office will send an email with an enrollment key that will automatically enroll fellows in the mandatory courses
- ⦿ ICANN's work
 - ICANN's mission: what ICANN does and doesn't do
 - Policy Development Processes
 - Operation of Domain Name System
 - Security, Stability and Resiliency
- ⦿ ICANN's multistakeholder model
 - Overview of ICANN Communities
 - *Note:* Other mentors might be involved as support
- ⦿ Current topics of interest in ICANN
 - *Note:* A mentor is not expected to be an expert who knows everything. Rather, mentors should share resources of where to find this information and share webinars and policy reports that have either been archived or will occur pre-meeting
- ⦿ Expectations of the Fellowship Program at the meeting
- ⦿ How to network successfully at the meeting

Mentors should encourage all their mentees to take further steps to increase their knowledge of ICANN and their awareness of its SOs and ACs. Below are some additional suggestions for pre-meeting preparation that mentors could assign to fellows:

- ⦿ Join mailing lists for community groups of interest
- ⦿ Participate in existing community capacity-development programs (such as buddy groups)
- ⦿ Follow a path of self-study before the meeting; research topics or groups of interest beforehand

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- ⦿ Consider attending related events or engaging with National and Regional Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiatives ([NRI](#)), regional Internet registry events ([RIR](#)), or Internet Society ([ISOC](#)) events
 - ⦿ Identify relevant contacts in the ICANN community prior to attending the meeting, think of questions for that person, and plan to introduce yourself (or ask your mentor to introduce you) at the meeting

4.4 Personal Meeting Agendas

Mentors must work with their team members individually to help them build a personal agenda/schedule for the meeting. Mentors should assist fellows in matching their goals for the meeting to appropriate sessions.

Mentors are required to assign a minimum of five (5) sessions (per meeting) to their fellows, as well as a list of additional suggested sessions. The five mentor-assigned sessions should be in addition to the mandatory fellowship daily sessions assigned by ICANN Fellowship Office. Mentors are expected to collaborate with other mentors or community members for advice on sectors outside their area of expertise. It is important for fellows to have a broad and balanced understanding of ICANN and its ecosystem, especially for those who are new to ICANN. Mentors should encourage fellows to create an agenda that covers a range of subjects, including technical topics, policy development, and issues affecting the domain name industry and contracted parties. It is also helpful to suggest that fellows attend each constituency day. Schedules should also have time allotted for networking. During the meeting, mentors can recommend changes if necessary.

Mentors are responsible for checking in with their fellows and keeping track of the sessions they attended. Mentors should remind mentees that they should be seen actively participating at the meeting.

4.5 Building Confidence

Mentors are expected to be open, accessible, and approachable to mentees and to create a welcoming atmosphere in order to foster confidence in the mentees. Mentors should strive to be good listeners and communicators and to show a genuine desire to be helpful.

A number of Fellowship Program alumni have succeeded in taking leadership positions within ICANN and in the Internet governance world. Sharing success stories with the newcomers can help to boost their confidence about striving to achieve leadership roles. Mentors should share their learning experiences and difficulties at ICANN to increase the confidence level of the fellows.

Mentors should aim to ensure that newcomers have the confidence and resources to become active participants in ICANN's policymaking processes, rather than feel that expectations are above their capabilities. One way to do so is to organize the learning process in a progressive way so that information is provided in steps, rather than at the same time.

It is important that the mentee does not rely on the mentor but has autonomy and independence. Mentors should remain unbiased and ensure that mentees develop their own ICANN interests, which may be different to the mentor's.

Mentors should encourage fellows to ask questions, both before and during the meeting. It is important to keep in mind that mentees will have different abilities and needs and that mentorship requires a tailored approach to communicate and guide fellows effectively.

4.6 Facilitating Networking at ICANN Meeting

Mentors should prepare mentees for successful networking experiences through regular engagement and interaction with their team and by facilitating introductions for them with community leaders and members. Mentees should be encouraged to make a list of community members they would like to meet ahead of time and to feel empowered to introduce themselves to experts of interest. Mentors should help their mentees meet relevant contacts whenever possible.

4.7 Additional On-Site Activities

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind during the meeting:

- ⦿ Task each of your mentees with providing a brief recap of a session each day or have your cohort gather to share key takeaways each day
- ⦿ Have fellows introduce themselves to session leaders to ensure that proper support is provided
- ⦿ Encourage fellows to contribute to policy development work and ensure that they are prepared to do so
- ⦿ Ask that fellows work together to prepare one public comment rather than multiple individual comments; ensure that this comment focuses on a topic within ICANN's mission and remit
- ⦿ Allocate roles for your fellows, such as serving as a rapporteur or preparing a written summary of a meeting to share with your mentee group

4.8 Post-Meeting Reporting

Fellow Individual Post-Meeting Survey

After the ICANN meeting, the mentor is expected to remind his/her team members to complete the post-meeting survey. All team members need to submit their surveys individually before the deadline given by the ICANN Fellowship Office. The survey will gather details about mentees' expectations, meeting experiences, lessons learned, future plans, and feedback on mentors.

Fellowship Class Post-Meeting Report

Fellows are expected to work together to prepare a class post-meeting report; they are expected to do so autonomously but may seek mentors' input. This report will be published on icann.org.

Mentor Post-Meeting Survey

Mentors are required to provide feedback to the Fellowship Program on their experience with mentees as it helps to improve the mentoring experience.

4.9 Post-Meeting Support

Mentors are expected to identify those fellows with the skills to contribute and to liaise with the relevant SOs/ACs to encourage them to involve the fellows in policy development processes; they should also encourage the fellows to become actively involved and direct fellows towards useful contacts.

Mentors should assign fellows post-meeting tasks relevant to their skills and interests. Below are post-meeting suggestions for you to provide to your mentees:

- ⦿ Identify a working group of interest and take steps to become involved
- ⦿ Explore a topic within ICANN's mission from your local perspective and share it online, via a blog or social media
- ⦿ Join a relevant [Regional At-Large Organization \(RALO\)](#)
- ⦿ Connect with the [Global Stakeholder Engagement \(GSE\)](#) regional leads

5 ICANN Fellowship Mentoring Checklist

Note: A large bullet indicates a mandatory activity; a small dot indicates a suggested activity.

Week 1:

- ⦿ Review list of mentees from Fellowship Office and confirm suitability (ICANN Fellowship Office will then inform fellows of their teams)
- ⦿ Review ICANN Fellowship Program Mentoring Guidelines document thoroughly

Week 2:

- ⦿ Send introductory message to mentees and request introductions from them
 - Alert Fellowship Office if any mentees are not responsive
- ⦿ Determine most suitable form of communication for the group and times for group calls
- ⦿ Learn fellows' individual interests and goals
 - Notify Fellowship Office about questions mentees have about travel arrangements, if applicable

Weeks 3-6:

- ⦿ Set up at least two online meetings with the group of mentees
- ⦿ Communicate individually with fellows to assess goals and needs
- ⦿ Check in with fellows to ensure they are completing the mandatory ICANN Learn courses
 - Answer questions on the ICANN Learn message boards where relevant
- ⦿ Assign fellows tasks relevant to their interests/level of expertise; some suggestions include:
 - Join community mailing lists for groups of interest
 - Participate in existing community capacity-development programs (such as buddy groups)
 - Follow a path of self-study before the meeting; research topics or groups of interest beforehand
 - Encourage fellows to attend related events or engage with [NRI](#), [RIR](#), or [ISOC](#) events

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- Identify relevant contacts in the ICANN community prior to attending the meeting, think of questions for that person, and introduce yourself (or ask your mentor to introduce you) at the meeting

Weeks 6-7:

- Continue to host online meetings and check in with fellows about assigned tasks
- Assist fellows with creating a meeting agenda
 - Include 5 mandatory sessions
 - Suggest additional sessions (liaising with other mentors for sector-specific advice as needed)
 - Encourage mentees to create a list of individuals to meet and offer advice (with input from other mentors where relevant)
 - Set expectations about the on-site fellowship requirements

Week 8: At the Meeting

- Introduce fellows to relevant community members and assist with networking
- Offer continued advice and support, seeking input from others as needed; respond to queries and help resolve issues as needed
- Track sessions that your mentees attend
- Inform fellows of any relevant changes in the schedule
- Host regular check-in sessions with your group of mentees (for at least 15 minutes)
- Assign fellows tasks relevant to their interests and levels of expertise
 - Task each of your mentees with providing a brief recap of a session each day or have your cohort gather to share key takeaways each day
 - Have fellows introduce themselves to session leaders to ensure that proper support is provided
 - Encourage fellows to contribute to policy development work and ensure that they are prepared to do so
 - Ask that fellows work together to prepare one public comment rather than multiple individual comments; ensure that this comment focuses on a topic within ICANN's mission and remit
 - Introduce fellows to community members with similar interests for additional sector-specific coaching
 - Allocate roles for your fellows, such as serving as a rapporteur or preparing a written summary of a meeting to share with your mentee group

Weeks 9-12: Post-Meeting

- Complete survey evaluations
 - If needed, Fellowship Program staff will arrange skill-building webinars and provide resources for mentors based on feedback received from mentees
- Remind fellows to complete the post-meeting survey
- Identify fellows with the skills to contribute and work with SOs/ACs to involve them in policy development processes
- Encourage fellows to become involved and will direct fellows towards useful contacts
 - Identify a working group of interest and take steps to become involved
 - Explore a topic within ICANN's mission from your local perspective and share it online, via a blog or social media
 - Join a relevant [RALO](#)
 - Connect with the [GSE](#) regional leads

6 Useful Links and References

ICANN Organization

- ⦿ ICANN website | <http://www.icann.org>
- ⦿ ICANN Learn | <http://learn.icann.org>
- ⦿ ICANN Newcomers | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/newcomers-2012-06-18-en>
- ⦿ Event Calendar | <https://features.icann.org/calendar>
- ⦿ ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/gse-2012-02-25-en>
- ⦿ ICANN History Project | <https://www.icann.org/history>
- ⦿ ICANN Policy | <https://www.icann.org/policy>
- ⦿ Security, Stability and Resiliency Overview | <https://www.icann.org/octo-ssr>
- ⦿ ICANN 2016-2020 5 Year Strategic Plan | <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-10oct14-en.pdf>

ICANN Supporting Organizations

- ⦿ Address Supporting Organization (ASO) | <https://aso.icann.org>
- ⦿ Country Code Naming Support Organization (ccNSO) | <https://ccnso.icann.org>
- ⦿ Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) | <http://gnso.icann.org/en/>
 - ⦿ gTLD Registries Stakeholder Group (RySG) | <https://www.rysg.info/> and <https://gnso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/rysg>
 - ⦿ Registrars Stakeholder Group (RrSG) | <http://www.icannregistrars.org/> and <http://gnso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/rrsg>
 - ⦿ Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group (NCSG) | <http://gnso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/ncsg>
 - ⦿ Not For Profit Constituency (NPOC) | <http://www.npoc.org/> and <http://gnso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/ncsg/npoc>
 - ⦿ Non Commercial Stakeholder Constituency (NCUC) | <http://www.ncuc.org/> and <http://gnso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/ncsg/ncuc>
 - ⦿ Commercial Stakeholder Group (CSG) | <http://gnso.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg>

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- Commercial Business Users Constituency (BC) | <http://www.bizconst.org/> and <http://gns0.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg/cbuc>
 - Intellectual Property Constituency (IPC) | <http://www.ipconstituency.org/> and <http://gns0.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg/ipc>
 - Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers Constituency (ISPCP) | <http://www.ispcp.info/> and <http://gns0.icann.org/en/about/stakeholders-constituencies/csg/isp>

ICANN Advisory Committees

- At Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) | <http://atlarge.icann.org/>
 - Regional At-Large Organizations (RALOs) | <https://atlarge.icann.org/ralos/>
- Government Advisory Committee (GAC) | <https://gac.icann.org/>
- Security and Stability Advisory Committee (SSAC) | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/ssac-2012-02-25-en>
- Root Server System Advisory Committee (RSSAC) | <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/rssac-4c-2012-02-25-en>

Other Resources

- History of Internet Governance | <http://www.intgov.net/papers/35>
- Internet Society (ISOC) | <https://www.internetsociety.org/>
- National and Regional Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Initiatives (NRI) | <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-regional-and-national-initiatives>
- Regional Internet Registries (RIR) | <https://www.nro.net/about-the-nro/regional-internet-registries/>

Appendix: Sample Introductory Email

Dear all,

My name is _____ and I will be your mentor for the ICANNXX Meeting.

What we find works best is regularly scheduled communications from now until the ICANN Meeting starts. Other than email communication, we can use a number of different communication platforms. The first thing to decide is which communication platform and/or social media we are all comfortable with for our communication. Please let me know about your preferences by replying to this email.

I shall be setting up a Skype Group for us so that we can get together every other week for about 30 minutes to have a quick chat and opportunity to ask questions. Our first session may be a little longer as we go through introductions and get an outline for how we will work together moving forward. I have set up a Doodle poll with some suggested times to find the most reasonable time period for us to meet. *[Note to mentors: Skype is just an example here; use whatever platform works best for you and your group.]*

Once we get started, I will be facilitating your introduction to ICANN using the ICANN Learn website. This ICANN Learn experience is a requirement for all new and some returning fellows. Though I know some of you will be more aware than others about this information, we all will move through various courses designed to help you better understand ICANN and how the work of ICANN is completed with a fresh set of eyes.

I do encourage everyone to visit the ICANN website to keep updated on hot topics that will be discussed at the meeting, as well as referring to the ICANN meeting website (*insert website link here*) which will provide you the complete information about the meeting. The schedule of sessions for the full week will also be posted at this site closer to the meeting. In the schedule, you will see that there will be different track sessions; you have to follow the Fellowship Track in particular and others at your own choice.

If you are part of fellowship group, please keep looking at group discussions, which are helpful for everyone.

I would like to kick things off by asking for an introductory email from each of you so that we as a team get to know each other better.

In relation to myself, I work for XXX, doing xxx and have attended XX ICANN Meeting(s). I look forward to working with and meeting you all!

