



ALBERTA
POTTERS'
ASSOCIATION

APA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The APA Mentorship Program involves ceramic artists working together in a formal, peer-learning framework, with experienced artists mentoring evolving artists. The protégé's goals lead the pair's direction. Mentors are seasoned professionals who provide personalized and regular support, training, advice, encouragement, and feedback. The program is for APA members and operates through the APA.

The Mentorship Program does not take the place of education through formal educational institutions or artist-run workshops but augments the learning process for emerging artists. The Mentorship Program also is not an internship program for academic credit or where evolving artists would work for the mentor.

WHAT'S INVOLVED WITH THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM?

A mentor offers their knowledge, expertise, and advice to those with less experience. By leveraging their knowledge and skills, mentors guide protégés in the right direction. A mentor helps protégés consider opportunities for artistic growth, gain confidence, and base their support on their own experiences and learnings. Specifically, a mentor helps protégés explore their skill, technique, career options, set development goals, develop new contacts, and identify resources. Mentoring focuses on applying knowledge in practice. Many highly qualified teachers in the ceramic arts community enjoy the process of helping others grow. In turn, students greatly benefit from formal mentorship programs to augment their learning in school, workshops, and sessions to learn specific ceramic art techniques.

BEST PRACTICE

The APA Mentorship Program adheres to best practices in all aspects to ensure quality learning and a successful experience for mentors, protégés, and the APA. Six core standards of practice will apply to the mentoring project. The APA uses these

standards to provide a high-quality program in line with Alberta ceramic artists' needs.

Recruitment: Potential mentors are invited to apply via direct communication, the use of publicly written statements about the eligibility requirements (e.g., displayed on the APA website), and multiple strategies to recruit mentors (e.g., social media).

Screening Applicants: Mentor applicants must be willing to share their skills and knowledge with protégés, and the mentor's role evolves as the needs of his/her protégés change over time. Since mentors may have faced the same challenges as their protégés, they are more empathetic towards their needs and act as advisors and share knowledge based on their experience. The screening process determines their ability to be an effective mentor based on (a) their professional body of work, (b) training, and (c) demonstrated enthusiasm and interest in helping others in the arts. See Appendix C for the mentor application form.

Likewise, successful protégés demonstrate several characteristics, such as being open to feedback. Screening criteria for eligible protégés include (a) a willingness to be non-defensive and an ability to accept input, (b) motivation to succeed and a desire to learn, (c) a sufficient level of technical proficiency (not a new learner) to benefit from the mentoring experience. See Appendix D for the protégé application form.

Training: The mentor and protégé role may be new to ceramic artists. As such, each person will need to complete mentorship training to address various knowledge and skills. Mentor training will include content on their willingness to follow program requirements (e.g., length of relationship), methods to elicit protégé goals and align expectations, strategies to ensure the development and maintenance of the relationship, how to provide critical feedback (e.g. the Critical Response Process), use of industry standards, ethical behaviour, the APA code of conduct, and effective closing of the relationship. Protégé training would include identifying goals, obligations, attitudes for success, receiving feedback, industry standards, ethics, and the code of conduct.

Matching and Initiation: Matching protégés to prospective mentors will be critical for the success of the program, factoring in the characteristics of the mentor and the protégé.

Monitoring and Support: The APA provides ongoing monitoring and support to both the mentor and the protégé throughout the relationship to realize their goals to celebrate successes and work through challenges.

Closure and Evaluation: Ending a formal relationship is always necessary. The APA's process affirms the mentor's and the protégé's contribution and offers them the opportunity to prepare for the closure and assess the experience. This process incorporates the project evaluation. It helps the APA in determining the success of the project, modifying processes, encourages the mentor to take on another protégé, and the protégé to seek further learning experiences to enhance their practice and career.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Mentors find value in sharing their knowledge and helping protégés grow in their artistic endeavours. It also can be a revenue generation method. Protégés can benefit by learning from an experienced Alberta artist.

Mentoring fulfills the APA's mission by supporting members at the intermediate and senior levels of artistic endeavour. Mentoring builds potters' knowledge and skills and facilitates the artistic community through professional socialization and personal support. By adopting this program, the APA offers both senior artists an opportunity to enhance their careers and ceramic artists to learn from experienced potters.

WHO CAN BE INVOLVED?

Protégés within the APA Mentorship Program is for artists who have been developing their work over several years of studio practice and wish to rethink and re-evaluate their current work and examine ways of pushing and expanding it beyond familiar solutions or limits. Beginner and junior ceramic artists likely are best served through classes and workshops and not through the Mentorship Program.

Mentors are Alberta-based, experienced ceramic artists willing to share their time and knowledge with evolving ceramic artists.

WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME?

Typically, mentorship exists over an extended period. As such, initiative time frames will be four (4) to 12 months in length, which can be renewed at each person's request.

ETHICS: CODE OF CONDUCT

There is great potential in this program. To ensure its success, participants need to adhere to behavioural standards that provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment where ceramics artists can thrive, free from all forms of harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence.

The APA adapted the [Canadian Code of Conduct for the Performing Arts](#) to create the APA Code of Conduct (Appendix A).

A Mentorship Contract between mentors and protégés is used to clarify expectations, remuneration, and agreement to follow the Code of Conduct. The APA will be the conduit between mentors and protégés by setting guidelines and practical expectations, guiding mentors and protégés about expected behaviour through training, and being the province's resource to facilitate such relationships.

WHAT IS THE COST?

The APA offers this program as one of the benefits of being a member with no additional fees.

Many mentorship programs use a volunteer model. While this is admirable, volunteering can be the most significant barrier to success as busy people must carve out more time from their schedule to work with the protégé. It is hard to get qualified, free mentors. While many people are willing to give free advice, quality advice from a person with artistic expertise is likely more desirable and harder to acquire.

When people seek mentors, they do so not only for the quality of advice that mentors will offer but also for their connections. Relationships are everything in business (many artists strive to improve the business side of their practice), and sometimes you need to pay for them. Better connections mean better mentors.

The APA recommends Mentors be paid at the rate of \$25 per hour although some may barter (the trading of a good or service without the use of money) such as trading wedging clay for mentoring.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC PROCEDURES?

The APA will generate a list of mentors, and potential protégés can review the list of mentors to determine a good fit for their learning goals. Applications received by the

APA are reviewed, and potential matches are facilitated through a natural process of application review and discussion with mentors and protégés.

Applications for mentors and protégés are on the APA website.

Following an initial agreement between the mentor and the protégé, each party signs a contract, and the mentorship begins for the agreed-upon period. The APA provides support to both parties for the mentorship period.

APPENDIX A

THE ALBERTA POTTERS' ASSOCIATION CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of the Alberta Potter's Association pledge to create safe, inclusive, and respectful learning and working environments where ceramics artists can thrive, free from all forms of harassment¹, including sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence.

Harassment can take many forms, including unwanted sexual attention, inappropriate jokes or texts, threats, and other unwelcome verbal, written, visual, or physical communication or conduct.

Participants in the APA Mentorship Program agrees that every member, ceramic artist, volunteer, and employee should:

- Encourage the learning and creative process through transparent communication
- Promote actions that demonstrate mutual respect
- Not engage in harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence in all forms
- Speak out through appropriate APA channels when harassment, discrimination or violence takes place and support others to speak out and report abuses in good faith to the President of the APA
- Respect the personal and physical boundaries of others
- Always conduct work in a professional environment using industry-standard safety protocols
- Engage in consensual physical contact when necessary.
- Engage in the Mentorship Program only after a Mentorship contract is signed.

In support of these values and expectations, the APA commits to:

- Enacting policies and procedures that maintain zero tolerance for harassment, discrimination, bullying and violence
- Support this code in all our training and contractual procedures
- Ensure that Code of Conduct, policies, and procedures are reviewed at least annually and attached to all contracts and letters of agreement
- Ensuring that the APA Code of Conduct and all anti-harassment policies and procedures apply to all individuals who conduct work or volunteer on the APA's behalf or in an APA program.
- Ensuring that allegations of inappropriate behaviour are investigated and resolved in a confidential, thorough and timely manner and that the parties involved will benefit from the principles of natural justice by learning of the allegations against them and having the opportunity to respond to them

¹ **Harassment** is the act of systematic and continued unwanted and annoying actions of one party or a group, including threats and demands. The purposes may vary, including racial prejudice, personal malice, an attempt to force someone to quit a job or grant sexual favours, apply illegal pressure to collect a bill, or merely gain pleasure from making someone fearful or anxious.

- Enacting consequences for violations that are commensurate with the acts committed, including additional training, controls, suspension, or termination
- Ensuring that if a complaint is made that involves illegal conduct, applicable authorities will be notified per local, provincial, and federal laws, including human rights legislation and health/safety legislation

