

DACUM Occupational Profile for On-Farm Mentor

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Duties		Tasks		
A	Prepare for On-Farm Mentoring on your Farm	A-1 Clarify personal mentoring goals (e.g., what you hope to achieve as a mentor)	A-2 Assess personal traits & skills (both strengths & weaknesses; as a farmer & as an educator)	A-3 Assess personal & family considerations (e.g., privacy, time, shared farm vision)
		A-8 Affirm that on-farm mentoring is right for you & your farm		
B	Develop On-Farm Mentoring Program Plans	B-1 Develop program philosophy, goals & objectives	B-2 Identify necessary on-farm mentoring skills	B-3 Identify necessary resources (physical, financial, personal/educational)
		B-7 Prepare program financial plan (e.g., program fees, wages, budget & cash flow, capitalization, impact on whole farm budget)	B-8 Assemble comprehensive program plan (including 1-year, 5-year & long-range projections; annual plan for upcoming year)	
C	Set Up On-Farm Mentoring Program	C-1 Acquire needed skills (e.g., teaching, conflict resolution, communication)	C-2 Prepare curriculum program & syllabus	C-3 Acquire educational materials (e.g., handouts, supervised practice supplies & equipment, reference materials)
		C-8 Prepare living quarters & learning facilities	C-9 Develop cooperative relationships with schools & farms	C-10 Network with other mentoring programs
D	Recruit Trainees	D-1 Prepare trainee job description(s) & application forms	D-2 Prepare promotional materials	D-3 Solicit program applicants (e.g., advertise program, distribute application material, seek referrals from former trainees)
E	Orient Trainees	E-1 Provide trainees with orientation information package	E-2 Review program plan (e.g., program philosophy, goals & objectives, relationship to farming business, program calendar)	E-3 Review farm & program policies & expectations (e.g., safety, personnel, visitor, accountability, grounds for contract termination)
		E-9 Initiate team-building activities	E-10 Orient trainees to community	

A-4 Research mentoring programs & models	A-5 Consider impact of on-farm mentoring on farm business (e.g., profitability, workload, labor needs, time)	A-6 Assess available resources (e.g., physical, financial, personal/emotional)	A-7 Evaluate suitability of farm & infrastructure for mentoring program (e.g., living & learning facilities, utilities, farm production activities & facilities)	
B-4 Conduct market research (e.g., identify target audiences, such as entry- & mid-level trainees, new farmers; need for mentoring program; competition)		B-5 Research legal requirements for on-farm mentoring programs (e.g., labor, housing, compensation)	B-6 Determine program design (e.g., organizational structure, annual calendar, learning environment, teaching "tools" & methods, mentor's role(s), role of trainees in farm labor plan)	
C-4 Establish program policies & expectations (e.g., safety, personnel, visitor, "house rules," accountability, grounds for contract termination)	C-5 Create work & learning contract templates	C-6 Acquire needed resources (e.g., office supplies, finances, personal support network)	C-7 Set up program office (e.g., filing & record keeping systems, storage, mentor/trainee conference area)	
D-4 Select suitable applicants (e.g., review applications, arrange farm visits, conduct interviews, obtain references, refer qualified applicants to other programs)	D-5 Negotiate individual work & learning contracts, including agreement on compensation			
E-4 Review required paperwork (e.g., timesheets, W-4's, journals)	E-5 Introduce trainees to farm, family members & program staff	E-6 Orient trainees to farm (e.g., fields, farm buildings & infrastructure, tools & equipment)	E-7 Orient trainees to living arrangements, educational facilities & resources (e.g., library, learning "tools")	E-8 Review safety & emergency procedures (e.g., safe tool use & equipment operation; accident & fire response/reporting)

Duties		Tasks			
F	Administer On-Farm Mentoring Program	F-1 File required forms (e.g., tax, immigration, labor)	F-2 Maintain filing & record keeping systems (e.g., time sheets, bookkeeping, labor reports, disputes & injuries, trainee files)	F-3 Maintain general correspondence	
G	Provide Education & Hands-on Training	G1 Assess learner readiness, skills, learning styles & work styles, training needs & goals	G-2 Confirm individual learning & work contracts (including agreement on compensation)	G-3 Prepare daily education & work plans	G-4 Review daily education & work plans with trainee(s)
		G-10 Provide supervised practice & "dry run" opportunities	G-11 Work alongside trainees	G-12 Supervise farm work (e.g., monitor performance, safety & well being; communicate, motivate, resolve disputes)	
H	Evaluate Trainees' Performance	H-1 Monitor trainees' progress (based on learning & work contracts)	H-2 Reassess trainees needs at regular intervals (mentor & trainee)	H-3 Review trainees' learning & work contracts at regular intervals (mentor & trainee; encourage self assessment)	
I	Conduct Annual Evaluation of On-Farm Mentoring Program	I- 1 Conduct mentor evaluation (verbal & written; mentor & trainee; together & independently)	I-2 Evaluate program effectiveness (verbal & written; mentor & trainee; together & independently)	I-3 Celebrate program successes!	
J	Review & Re-plan On-Farm Mentoring Program	J-1 Review program records (e.g., safety, financial, employment; evaluation reports)	J-2 Assess program impact on farm business; on you & your family (e.g., cost/ benefit, quality of life)	J-3 Evaluate on-going value of on-farm mentoring program to past trainees (e.g., are you achieving your personal mentoring & program goals?)	
K	Review & Re-plan On-Farm Mentoring Program	K-1 Help recent trainees identify future needs & opportunities (training & farming)	K-2 Help recent trainees find needed resources (e.g., machinery, land)	K-3 Help recent trainees establish peer networks	K-4 Share resources (e.g., equipment, labor)

F-5 Collect program fees	F-6 Compensate trainees (wages or stipends)	F-7 Publish farm program activities (e.g., newspaper articles, conference displays)	F-8 Comply with regulatory requirements (e.g., state & federal employment law: fair wage, workers' comp, unemployment, equal opportunity, sexual harassment; volunteer protection)		
G-5 Assign readings (based on syllabus & learning contract)	G-6 Share farm plans & records with trainees (e.g., marketing plan, planting schedule, financials)		G-7 Conduct classes	G-8 Conduct hands-on training sessions (OJT)	G-9 Demonstrate farm tasks & skills
G-13 Assign independent work (delegate specific responsibilities; provide for independent ventures)	G-14 Lead discussions (both formal & spontaneous)	G-15 Conduct field trips (e.g., to farms, twilight meetings, farmers' markets, conferences)		G-16 Link trainees with other training opportunities (e.g., conferences, classes, other mentoring farms)	
H-4 Observe & listen (use informal & constructive means to gain feedback; be sensitive to unspoken concerns)		H-5 Conduct final trainee evaluations (verbal & written; mentor & trainee; together & independently)		H-6 Help trainees set realistic training goals (if any) & determine next steps	
J-4 Review program plan (see Duty B)	J-5 Revise program plan as necessary (see Duty B)	J-6 Develop annual program plan for coming year (see Duty B)			
K-5 Keep former trainees informed (e.g., about workshops, conferences, classes, work opportunities)		K-6 Act as reference & advocate	K-7 Respond to needs of former trainees (e.g., through consultation, communication, coaching, friendship)		

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DACUM Occupational Profile for On-Farm Mentors Occupational Characteristics Lists

On-Farm Mentor General Knowledge & Skills

Extensive farming knowledge & experience	Listening
Teaching (academic & vocational) & mentoring	Writing
General agricultural Administration	Speaking
Personnel management	Safety
Financial management	First aid
Risk assessment & management	Group dynamics
Program development & evaluation	Mediation; conflict resolution
Organizational development	Communication
	Learner assessment (e.g., learning style, competency)

On-Farm Mentor Behaviors & Characteristics

Patient	Reflective	Innovative
Organized	Self-reflective	Just
Humble	Questioning (probing)	Sensitive
Confident	Accountable	Energetic
Discerning	Self-motivated	Articulate
Dependable	Inspirational	Wise
Ace as role model	Even-keeled	Ethical
Sense of perspective	Inquisitive	Persistent
Sensitive to cultural & gender issues	Analytical	Forbearing
Attentive to big picture & details	Empathetic	Reliable
	Non-judgmental	Fair
	Sense of humor	Honest

Future Trends & Concerns

Aging farm population
 Competition from higher-paying jobs
 Loss of open space/farmland; urbanization
 Irrelevance of Northeast agriculture to "global supermarket"
 Food quality & safety issues
 Lack of understanding of farming & rural lifestyles
 Lack of respect & capacity for physical work
 Increasing government regulation (including labor)
 Public safety/liability issues; risk
 Increasing community interest in protecting local farm landscapes
 Increasing consumer interest in buy-local & direct marketing initiatives (e.g., farmers' markets, CSA)
 Increasing market for on-farm "hospitality" activities
 Increasing interest in organic & "healthy" foods
 Increasing hunger for contact with the Earth
 Development of "niche market" opportunities
 Lack of farming skills (generally)
 Disappearance of high school & 2-year agricultural programs
 Decreasing pool of well-prepared trainee applicants
 Limited training options for new-entry farmers
 Need for accredited mentors
 Need for more formal training programs in place
 Limited resources for training programs

Tools, Equipment, Supplies & Materials

A suitable farm
 Comprehensive on-farm mentoring program plan
 Farm equipment (with appropriate guards & safety devices, including equipment for practice sessions)
 Farm shop (with appropriate guards, signage & safety devices, including tools for practice sessions)
 Farm plan & records
 Library of agricultural books, periodicals, shop & repair manuals; teaching & learning "tools"; equipment & supplies
 Trainee & program evaluation "tools"
 (Access to) trainee accommodations (living & learning space)
 Well-equipped office & trainee conference space
 Resource lists
 Clear signage around farm site, including well-marked safety or "off-limits" zones
 First-aid & fire safety supplies
 A "mirror" (i.e., the ability to look closely at your own actions)
 A sounding board (i.e., someone neutral to vent to)
 Network of on-farm mentor colleagues

On-Farm Mentor DACUM Verification Report

The DACUM Occupational Profile

DACUM (Design A CURRICULUM) is a vocational training tool used to develop occupational profiles for job training. In November 1999, NESFI convened a panel of eight experienced on-farm mentors to develop a profile for "On-Farm Mentor." The resulting profile is the result of two intensive days of work by panel members, followed by months of peer review, verification and editing. It divides the job of on-farm mentoring into *duties* (broad categories of work such as "Provide education and hands-on training") and *tasks* (smaller chunks of work within the duties such as "Prepare daily education and work plans" and "Demonstrate farm tasks and skills").

The Verification Process

After the DACUM team agreed on a final version of the profile, a survey was sent to 100 additional on-farm mentors identified by team members. They were asked to verify the profile's accuracy and to identify priorities for training. The survey asked the following four questions about each task:

- Do you, or did you, perform this task as part of your mentoring program (yes or no)?
- How important is this task to successful mentoring (scale of 0 to 5)?
- How difficult is it for mentors to learn to do this task well (scale of 0 to 5)?
- Do you think materials and training should be offered to mentors for this task (yes or no)?

Mentors were also asked questions about the particulars of their mentoring operation; to rate the relevance of items on the Profile's lists of knowledge, skills and behaviors; and to indicate interest in proposed educational materials for prospective and/or practicing mentors.

Survey Results

The survey achieved a 27% response and offered the following information:

1. Overall Ranking: Duties

Combined scores (for all four questions) were calculated for each duty. The duties were ranked for importance as follows:

1. Recruit trainees	7. Set up on-farm mentoring program
2. Evaluate trainees' performance	8. Administer on-farm mentoring program
3. Prepare for on-farm mentoring on your farm	9. Conduct annual evaluation of on-farm mentoring program
4. Provide education and hands-on training	10. Provide former trainees with ongoing support
5. Develop on-farm mentoring program plan	11. Orient trainees
6. Review and re-plan on-farm mentoring program	

2. Overall Scoring: Tasks

Following are the tasks with the highest overall scores.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select suitable applicants2. Observe and listen3. Determine program design4. Comply with regulatory requirements5. Assess (trainee) readiness, skills, etc.6. Supervise farm work7. Assess personal traits and skills (of mentors)8. Establish program policies and expectations9. Assign independent work10. Develop program philosophy, goals, etc.11. Negotiate individual learning and work contracts, including compensation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">12. File required forms13. Acquire needed skills (for mentor: conflict resolution, teaching, etc.)14. Identify necessary on-farm mentoring skills15. Help trainees set realistic farming goals and realistic next steps16. Prepare trainee job descriptions and application forms17. Conduct hands-on training sessions18. Maintain filing and record-keeping systems19. Reassess trainees' needs at regular intervals20. Demonstrate farm tasks and skills
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3. Overall Scoring: Results by Question

There were seven tasks that were performed by 100% of responding mentors. All of these tasks were related to training, managing and orienting trainees. Selecting trainees was rated as both the most important and most difficult task. The top three tasks for which mentors wanted training materials developed were all related to understanding and complying with regulations.

<p>a. Tasks performed by the most mentors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduce trainees to farm, family members and program staff2. Share farm plans and records with trainees3. Demonstrate farm tasks and skills4. Work alongside trainees5. Supervise farm work6. Assign independent work7. Link trainees with other learning opportunities8. Have fun!9. Observe and listen10. Respond to needs of former trainees	<p>b. Tasks rated as most important:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Select suitable applicants2. Demonstrate farm tasks and skills3. Supervise farm work4. Observe and listen5. Review safety and emergency procedures6. Introduce trainees to farm, family members and program staff7. Work alongside trainees8. Compensate trainees9. Assign independent work10. Respond to needs of former trainees
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c. Tasks rated most difficult

1. Select suitable applicants
2. Assemble comprehensive program plan
3. Determine program design
4. Prepare program financial plan
5. Acquire needed skills
6. Comply with regulatory requirements
7. Evaluate program effectiveness
8. Conduct classes
9. Observe and listen
10. Develop program philosophy, goals and objectives
11. Assess learner readiness, needs and style, etc.

d. Tasks for which mentor training materials should be developed

1. Research legal requirements
2. Comply with regulatory requirements (start-up)
3. Comply with regulatory requirements (ongoing)
4. Select suitable applicants
5. Determine program design
6. Assess personal traits and skills
7. Acquire educational materials
8. Prepare trainee job description(s) and application form
9. File required forms
10. Maintain filing and record-keeping systems

4. Overall Scoring: Characteristics

Characteristics are listed based on the % of mentors that identified them as important.

Most important knowledge and skills

- 100% - Communication
- 100% - Listening
- 96% - Personnel management
- 96% - Safety
- 93% - Speaking
- 93% - Teaching

Most important behaviors

- 100% - Accountable
- 100% - Dependable
- 100% - Ethical
- 100% - Honest
- 100% - Patient
- 100% - Self-motivated

5. Mentor Farm Information

The survey also collected information about the mentors' farm operations. Of responding mentors:

- Most hosted trainees for periods of from 3-to-6 or 6-to 12 months.
- About two-thirds were owner-operators; one third managed institutional farms.
- They were roughly split evenly between those who had been hosting trainees for from 1-to-5, 5-to-10 and over 10 years.
- Eighty-nine percent paid their trainees; none charged trainees to work for them.
- The great majority listed both labor and training new farmers as reasons for hosting trainees.
- Safety was by far the highest-rated factor impacting the farm, followed by personal privacy, liability and legal issues (particularly with regard to housing).
- Most felt that education competed with farm production "to a moderate degree."
- The great majority (84%) trained their interns in the operation of farm equipment. (They were not specific about what kind.)
- Seventy-one percent include formal safety training as part of their training sessions.