



# **Association of Image Consultants International**

## **CIM Mentor Guide**



## Why this CIM Mentor Guide?

Individuals, who are preparing their CIM portfolios, are embarking on a very important task: their quest for the highest level of certification with AICI. This endeavor requires many hours of work assembling all the documents to verify their accomplishments. Another challenge is interpreting the requirements for each of the CIM application sections. Every effort has been made to ensure the application is easy to follow, but questions about the meaning of certain requirements do surface.

A CIM Mentor provides support to the CIM candidate by listening to the candidate's questions and concerns. In addition, a CIM Mentor can share her/his experiences from having gone through the same process and provide valuable insight to the candidate on challenges encountered and overcome. Specific questions regarding the requirements of each section can be directed to the VP of Certification.

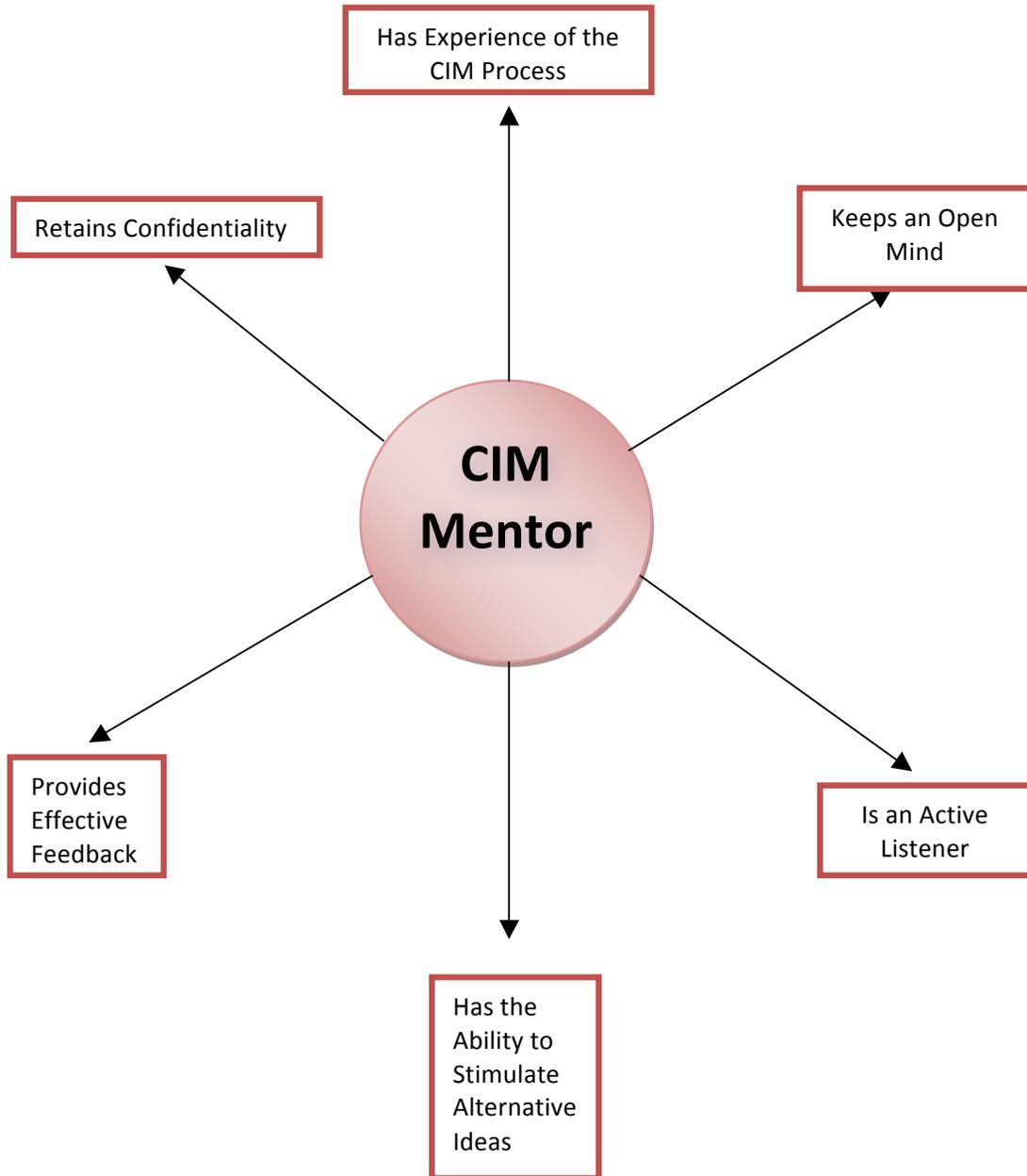
CIM candidates should be very experienced consultants and business people. Having them navigate the CIM Application process is a challenge that they should be able to meet because of their own skills. They have to earn their CIM through their own efforts. A CIM Mentor is a guide, a support, an attentive ear and not a consultant, decision-maker or teacher.

This guide has been written to describe the purpose and role of the CIM Mentor and to answer any questions about the responsibilities this role includes.

## What a Mentor Does and Doesn't Do

<b>A mentor...</b>	<b>A mentor does not...</b>
✓ Keeps confidentiality	× Talk to others about the candidate's issues
✓ Is committed to providing support	× Provide inconsistent support
✓ Listens carefully	× Talk too much( instead of listening)
✓ Is non-judgmental	× Make judgments about the candidate's experience/materials
✓ Offers suggestions and resources when asked	× Tell the candidate what to do
✓ Guides the process	× Control the process
✓ Provides encouragement	× Discourage the candidate

## The Qualities of a Successful CIM Mentor



## **Experience of the CIM Process**

A CIM Mentor is an AICI CIM i.e. an AICI member who has successfully achieved her/his CIM. An individual, who has already been through this challenging experience, is best equipped to provide mentoring support to a candidate. This CIM can draw on her/his own application experience and share that learning with the candidate. Procedures and policies are updated from time to time and candidates are encouraged to direct their questions about specific application requirements to the VP of Certification.

## **Keeps an Open Mind**

It is the role of the CIM External Reviewers, who examine the candidate's portfolio, to judge whether a candidate's portfolio meets quality standards. The CIM Mentor's role, on the other hand, is not to judge, but to keep an open mind. The CIM Mentor must remember that this application is the candidate's responsibility; it is not the Mentor's and as such might include approaches with which the Mentor does not agree. The candidate is the decision-maker; it is her/his application. However, if the candidate asks for the Mentor's opinion, then it is appropriate for the mentor to voice that opinion.

## **Active Listener**

A quality of major significance to a CIM Mentor is that of an active listener. As an active listener, the Mentor is more focused on hearing the CIM concerns than giving instructions or telling the candidate what to do. It is the CIM Mentor's role to listen and look for clues, about what the candidate needs, from the candidate's voice and demeanor. Active listening will help to determine what assistance can benefit the candidate.

## **Ability to Stimulate Alternative Ideas**

A CIM Mentor can have a huge impact on a candidate by assisting her/him to think about other possibilities. "Have you thought about including this or that in your portfolio?" Having stimulated the candidate to consider alternatives, the CIM Mentor steps back and lets the candidate decide whether to embrace the idea or not. A Mentor will say, "I had a similar experience and this is what I did", rather than, "I think you should do such and such".

## **Provides Effective Feedback**

If the candidate asks for feedback from the CIM Mentor, then it is appropriate for the Mentor to provide her/his opinion and the reason for that perspective. It is helpful when

giving feedback to use the “sandwich” approach. Begin by stating something that is positive to the candidate about how she/he addressed the item under consideration. Then the Mentor might say, “When I was looking at this item, this is how I handled it.” The Mentor would then finish up with another positive statement, which completes the “sandwich”. This is a way to encourage the candidate, rather than point out what the Mentor might see as a deficit. A CIM Mentor has agreed to take on the mentoring role because she/he wants the candidate to be successful. The CIM Application is an intense, time consuming process that requires a lot of energy. It is part of the CIM Mentor’s role to encourage the candidate to keep going, to continue to invest what is needed to work through and complete the application.

## **Retains Confidentiality**

It is important that a CIM Mentor realizes the importance of retaining confidentiality. The Mentor should make sure at the beginning of the mentoring relationship to state to the mentee that all discussions between them will remain confidential. It is also very important that the Mentor does not use her/his certification status in AICI to advance the candidate’s application.

## **Steps to Help as a Mentor**

1. Complete an “AICI CIM Mentor Form”, which the candidate will send to AICI HQ with her/his CIM Application
2. Come to an agreement about the mentoring relationship. Include:
  1. A timeline for CIM Application completion
  2. Frequency of meetings
  3. Methods of meeting i.e. in person, by phone, via Skype etc.
  4. Assurance of confidentiality
  5. Clarification on the mentor role of listening and supporting and the mentee role of making decisions and taking responsibility for the CIM portfolioBy putting the agreement in writing and signing the document, shows commitment to the outlined approach.
3. Read the CIM Application packet. There have been some changes in the content and organization of the application and with the options that are available for submitting portfolios. Make a note of information that is new or seems particularly important to remember.
4. Meet with the candidate you have agreed to mentor and discuss the mentoring agreement with each other. “I am here to assist and support but not to tell you what to do or to make decisions for you. This is your application. How can I help you?”

5. Listen to the candidate's questions and concerns. Share some thoughts, offer some options, and make some suggestions then step back. It is up to the candidate to decide what actions to take.
6. If the candidate has questions pertaining to interpretation of the application, discuss the items for clarification. If the instructions are still unclear, encourage the candidate to contact the V.P. of Certification for answers.
7. Offer to take the candidate through every section of the portfolio, once the candidate has assembled all the materials. This will be a way for the candidate to double check that the requirements for each section have been met to the best of her/his ability.

**If you follow the guidelines we have outlined, you will be providing the CIM candidate a huge service. Thank you for giving your time and sharing your expertise with a CIM candidate. You are also helping to strengthen the image profession and AICI.**