

Professional Development Plan

We encourage all University of Calgary postdoctoral scholars to complete a professional development plan (PDP) early in their postdoctoral appointment. Completing a PDP will help you identify what skills you need in order to succeed in your chosen career, and help you create a plan for developing those skills.

We recommend that you involve your supervisor in the PDP process. They can provide feedback on your self-assessment, and offer recommendations for how to develop the skills you need for your desired career. Involving your supervisor will strengthen your working relationship with them, and ensure that professional development is an essential part of your postdoctoral appointment.

The PDP is divided into two parts: first, you will identify your chosen career and conduct a self-assessment of your research program and your skill level in the six core competencies. Second, you will develop a plan for how you will develop your skills in order to prepare for your desired career.

We recommend that you complete this plan early in your postdoctoral appointment, and track your progress throughout the year. Once a year has passed, we recommend completing it again from the beginning to assess your progress and plan your next year of professional development.

Part 1: Self-Assessment

Part 1 of the Professional Development Plan is to be used to assess the current standing of your research program, as well as your abilities in the six core competencies that have been identified as necessary for career success in both academia and industry.

The six core competencies are:

Teaching and Mentorship: The ability to effectively instruct individuals on concepts relating to your field of expertise. Those with exceptional ability in this competency enhance the quality of student learning and increase academic success in their classrooms and labs.

Communication Skills: Communication skills enable you to successfully share your ideas and research with an audience or in a job interview, using an approach that you have tailored to the situation. Those with exceptional ability in this competency are comfortable with both written and oral communication, and can confidently share their research in a way that is comprehensive and compelling.

Grant writing and Academic Skills: Exceptional grant writing abilities enable you to secure funding by effectively communicating the value of a research program to funding agencies. Postdocs at the University of Calgary are given the opportunity to participate in the grant application process as part of the training provided by their supervisor.

Those with exceptional academic skills are accomplished in both the scholarly and administrative requirements of academia, and excel at balancing the teaching, research, and service requirements of their institution.

Personal Effectiveness: Individuals with a high level of personal effectiveness are able to accomplish their personal and professional goals using superior problem-solving skills, time management abilities, interpersonal skills, and stress management techniques.

Leadership and Management Skills: Individuals with leadership and management skills are able to articulate a vision, inspire creative thinking, and stimulate the collective energies of a group in order to reach a common goal.

Entrepreneurship and Business Skills: Individuals with strong entrepreneurial and business skills are action and impact focused, and excel at innovation, problem solving, creativity, and collaboration. Strong entrepreneurial and business skills enhance your research, your impact, and your employability.

1) What is your desired career?

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2) How will you use the 6 Core Competencies in that career?

Teaching and Mentorship	
Grant Writing and Academic Skills	
Communication Skills	
Personal Effectiveness	
Entrepreneurship and Business Skills	
Leadership and Management Skills	

3) Grade your current ability in each competency:

	Exceptional ability	Satisfactory ability	Unsatisfactory Ability in some areas but not others	Unsatisfactory ability in all areas	Not applicable/ Unknown
Teaching and Mentorship					
Grant Writing and Academic Skills					
Communication Skills					
Personal Effectiveness					
Entrepreneurship and Business Skills					
Leadership and Management Skills					

4) What is the current status of your research? What have your significant accomplishments been in the last year? Include fellowships, teaching, mentoring, presentations, media engagement, etc.

6) What professional development activities have you engaged in over the past year that relate to your desired career? Include workshops, informational interviews, job interviews, networking, mentorship, publishing, etc.

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Part 2: Planning your professional development

We recommend that you use the SMART goal-setting metrics when planning your professional development and research program activities. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant to you and your work, and Time-bound to a specific date or set of dates for completion.

The Lynda.com course “Achieving your Goals” (<http://www.lynda.com/Business-Skills-tutorials/Achieving-Your-Goals/96757-2.html>) offers many helpful strategies on how to effectively set goals and achieve them. Lynda.com courses are available for free to University of Calgary postdocs. For more information on how to sign up, visit http://ucalgary.ca/hr/Lynda_com.

1) How do you plan to improve your ability in each competency to the level required for your desired career? Consider options such as workshops, informational interviewing, networking events, mentoring, etc.

Teaching and Mentorship	
Grant Writing and Academic Skills	

Communication Skills	
Personal Effectiveness	
Entrepreneurship and Business Skills	
Leadership and Management Skills	

2) What are your goals for your research program over the next year? What significant accomplishments do you wish to have in that time period? Include fellowships, teaching, mentoring, presentations, media engagement, etc.

3) When do you think you will be ready to begin your job search? (Six months, a year, etc.)

Part 3: Supervisor Feedback

1) How will you, the supervisor, be involved in this professional development plan?

2) Do you have any additional feedback on the plan that is described above?

3) Signatures and date

Postdoctoral Scholar Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date