Table of Contents

Background
Why a PD Requirement? 1
Overview of the PD Requirement 2
Steps for Completing Your IDP 3
Overview of the Eight Hours of PD Activities 3
Before You Begin: Top Tips for Your IDP and Beyond 4
IDP Step 1: Ideas Generation 5
IDP Step 2: Self-Assessment 6
IDP Step 3: Career Exploration 14
Mapping Your Eight Hours of PD Activities 16
IDP Step 4: Timeline 17
Individual Development Plan: Review 20
Individual Development Plan: Next Steps 23
Individual Development Plan: Re-evaluate [Recommended] 24
Appendix A | Factors To Consider When Building Your Timeline 25
Appendix B | Timeline Templates 26
Example 2: Masters (Thesis based) Student in the Sciences 27

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Please Note: Graduate students are required to complete the University of Alberta Professional Development Requirement, which includes the Individual Development Plan (IDP) and eight-hours of professional development activities. (Mandatory for students admitted September 2016 and onwards.)

For more information, contact the Professional Development Team: grad.pd@ualberta.ca
Professional Development Requirement
Individual Development Plan

Background
After consultation with the Graduate Students’ Association and consideration of economic job trends, the University of Alberta is the first Canadian university to implement the Professional Development (PD) Requirement (following some of the Ivy League colleges in the United States).

It is an exciting initiative to help you recognize your talents, pursue your interests, learn professional skills and make the connections that will help you excel in your chosen field. Although it is mandatory for all incoming graduate students, some departments have professional development already incorporated into their programs. Please check with your department to confirm how this requirement is fulfilled in your program.

Why a PD Requirement?
Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are a standard practice in the workplace. When IDPs moved into the academic arena, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students found they were more productive, more satisfied with their experience, and had fewer supervisory conflicts. Feedback from U of A students indicated they were motivated to network, they worked with their committees to finalize what was truly needed for their thesis, they were able to find activities that contributed to skill building and they were more prepared for their next career step.

The IDP offers you an opportunity to think about your professional goals in a structured and supported manner. It is a chance to think about where you want to be when you complete your degree and how you will complement the disciplinary knowledge you develop through in your program with skills and competencies that will set you on a path to achieving your professional goals. These goals may change during the course of your program.

Identifying professional development activities is part of the IDP process. The pursuit of professional development is a lifelong activity that professionals in all stages of their careers pursue. Your professional development needs will vary from other students depending on your background, discipline, and professional goals. The PD Requirement and its components (IDP and eight hours of professional development activities) are flexible and allow you to tailor the requirement to your individual needs. This IDP workbook will help you clarify your career goals, choose useful PD activities, and meet your academic requirements so you’re well equipped to achieve your career goals.
Overview of the PD Requirement

Getting Started

The PD Requirement has two components: 1) the completion of the IDP, and 2) eight hours of professional development activities. While work on your IDP cannot be counted as part of the eight-hour professional development requirement, it is designed to complement other PD activities. The three-part IDP Series can guide the completion of your IDP and can help you prepare to review it with your supervisor and/or career mentor. With the approval of your department, Parts 2 and 3 of the IDP series may count towards your eight-hours of PD activities. For distance learners or those that find it challenging to attend in-person workshops, the IDP Online Workshop can support your career planning. As you complete your IDP, ensure that you have set aside sufficient time to think deeply about where you want your degree to take you, the skills and competencies you already possess as well as those you want to develop. Finally, take the time to think carefully about your timeline for program completion and professional development activities, as it will help support timely degree completion.

Deadlines

To help you take advantage of internships and other great professional opportunities available on campus your IDP must be finalized and reviewed by your supervisor or career mentor by certain deadlines depending on your academic program. See chart below:

Professional Development Requirement

Completed and reviewed by your supervisor/career mentor within:
- 12 months of your program’s commencement for full-time master’s student
- 24 months of your program’s commencement for part-time master’s students
- 18 months of your program’s commencement for full-time doctoral student
- 36 months of your program’s commencement for part-time doctoral students

Eight Hours of PD Activities

Find, participate and log the eight hours of PD activities that interest you, proposed or inspired by your IDP and approved by your supervisor and department. To help you navigate the many professional development opportunities available to you, we have compiled a PD Opportunities guide.

The eight hours of PD activities must be completed:
- by time of degree completion for master’s students
- within the first three years for almost all doctoral students
Steps for Completing Your IDP

It is recommended that you update your IDP annually. As you move through your program your skills and competencies will grow, and your professional aspirations will evolve based on new opportunities that emerge. Regularly taking into account other factors that influence your career management such as shifting priorities and personal circumstances will also assist in ensuring that you’re preparing well for your professional goals.

The IDP has four main components and a recommended annual review. Each step is explained in greater detail as you move through the workbook.

Overview of the Eight Hours of PD Activities

When it comes to the eight hours of PD Activities, the PD Requirement is intentionally flexible to allow you to tailor your activities to your individual needs, disciplinary context, previous work experience, and professional aspirations. This means that the eight hours of PD Activities will vary greatly from student to student because it is tailored to YOU. As you complete your IDP, think about the types of professional development opportunities and workshops that will support the skills and competencies you want to develop. A professional development activity fulfils the requirement if it contributes to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and mindset, and includes **ALL** of the following three components:

- Comprises of formal training or active learning with an assessment component (self-assessment, reflection, quiz, write-pair-share, evidence of knowledge application)
- Falls outside of research methods training, capstone project, thesis or equivalent, and required practicum
- Supports the career goals and/or seven skills/competencies identified in the individual development plan

**TIP**

It is the responsibility of departments/faculties to determine what will and will not count towards the PD Requirement. If you have questions about whether a particular activity can count towards your PD Requirement, contact your department directly.

*I keep coming back to my IDP because I learn something new about myself every time.*  
-Graduate Student

*Reviewing students’ IDPs helps me be a better mentor.*  
-Graduate Student Supervisor
Before You Begin: Top Tips for Your IDP and Beyond

1. **Take adequate time.** It can take more than a day to fully explore your career options. Follow current trends about job markets. Keep an open mind about various career paths and position yourself for a transition into multiple career paths. Recognize your career directions may also change over time as new opportunities emerge, your interests shift, and your personal commitments change. Also, remember that career is about both paid and unpaid experience, formal and informal learning, and leisure activities. **All** of your activities positively affect your career.

2. **Take action, reflect, and rest.** Take action, reflect, and rest. It is important to be productive in your program and to make good use of your time. It is also important, though, to reflect on what you have learned and how it might impact your next steps. Taking time to rest is also important to ensure that you are attending to self-care. Developing the habits of taking time to reflect and rest will set you up for healthy career management.

3. **Career exploration is continuous.** Career exploration is a lifelong skill that builds over time. Use your IDP workbook to keep an ongoing list of options that are attractive to you and continue to task small, low risk actions to test whether those options are a good fit. These actions will build skills, experiences, and connections that you can leverage if and when needed. The PD Requirement offers this kind of opportunity both through career exploration and the eight-hours of PD activities.

4. **Build meaningful connections.** Career management is in part about the practice of building meaningful connections over time rather than attending one or two networking sessions. Take time to develop meaningful connections with people within and outside your research area. There are ways to be of service to the university and to the broader community while creating new connections and skills.

5. **Formal education is one piece of the academic journey.** Remember that your formal education is just one piece of what future employers are looking for. Employers hire people who have the right combination of education, skills/competencies, and related experience. Invest in your future by taking time to build skills/competencies and experiences.

6. **Practice consistent communication.** Understand your supervisor’s expectations and share your own. Provide a schedule of what you hope to accomplish in the short and long term and by meeting regularly with your supervisor/committee you will demonstrate your progress.

7. **Manage up:** Your supervisor may need your support in supporting you! Provide your supervisor with links to support materials for the IDP so that they are also well prepared for your IDP conversation. Let your supervisor know what would help you to be effective in your program. Keep notes of your meetings and share them with your supervisor so you both have a clear understanding of next steps and expectations.
IDP Step 1: Ideas Generation

As a first step in creating your IDP, think about the things you like do, the things you are already good at and what is important to you in your career. This will help you think about career paths that are a good fit (Step 2), and to evaluate opportunities that emerge. It is also good to know what you do not want in your next opportunity, job or position.

**TIP**
Avoid using job titles or labels and focus on activities that you want and behaviours you want to engage in. Suspend judgment about what is practical and feasible. Give yourself time to brainstorm!

What do I hope to create?

What do I hope to inspire?

What social issues do I feel passionate about and want to do something about?

What do I really like doing?

What am I already good at? (Tip: What kinds of complements do people give you?)
IDP Step 2: Self-Assessment

There are seven skills and attributes employers look for in potential employees and that alumni have identified as being helpful in their life after U of A: communication, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, confidence, scholarship and ethical responsibility. The self-assessment component of the IDP helps you articulate your graduate school experiences into skills and competencies required for your career paths and helps you identify the areas you can develop during your program.

In this section, you will gauge your skills. This activity is intended to help you monitor competencies you already possess, and identify areas that need further development. What skills do you possess and how can you best articulate them? What skills are emphasized in your careers of interest? As you complete your self-assessment, make note the activities/workshops and actions you can build into your timeline to develop your skills and competencies.

1. For each competency, you will be assessing how important the skills and competencies are in the career paths you have chosen. Think carefully about your previous experiences (work life, leisure, learning, volunteer work, and experiences as a graduate student) as you assess your skills.

2. Generate examples about where and how you have demonstrated these skills and competencies. This will be very useful as you begin to develop your resume and/or curriculum vitae. It could also be useful for an interview and networking opportunities.

Rating your skills and competencies

Throughout this section, you will reflect on your skills and competencies, particularly as they relate to your chosen career options and aspirations. You will use the criteria below. As you rate your skills and competencies, think about evidence of your rating. If you have given yourself a strong rating, what are examples of situations where you have demonstrated this skill or competency? If you have identified an area of growth, what leads you to believe that you need to develop this skill or competency?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yet to be Developed: You have no experience with this skill/competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Developing: You have started to develop your skill/competency in this area, but your proficiency is limited or you have no applied experience. With coaching, you're able to demonstrate this skill in simple situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Proficient: You have a developed understanding and experience with this skill/competency, and you are able to apply it in both predictable and new situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>High Effective: You demonstrate a broad and deep understanding of this skill/competency and have substantial experience in the area. You are able to apply this skill/competency regularly and independently, and display it in complex and varied situations. You're a role model for this skill/competency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2a: Creativity
Creativity is closely tied to critical thinking and it impacts the extent to which you to push disciplinary boundaries, solve problems effectively, and “think outside the box.” Creative thinking is also about your ability to balance logical thinking with creative energies. This balance allows your ideas to be developed, reimagined and marketed, or which easily lends itself to entrepreneurial thinking and innovation.

Rate your current creativity skills/competences on a scale of one to four:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Evidence for my rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solve using new solutions/approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verify workability of creative ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement creative ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovate by questioning, experimenting and networking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate creatively within a team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make connections among diverse ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance logical and creative thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Think on your feet”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Think outside of the box”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pose new research questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push disciplinary boundaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering questions at a conference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link ideas to new services and products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2b – Communication
An ability to communicate in a variety of contexts, with different audiences, and across cultures is essential skills in your professional life. This means communicating clearly and assertively, while also demonstrating emotional intelligence and good listening habits. Communicating your ideas is essential in any entrepreneurial endeavour. Professional networking skills and exhibiting professional etiquette are also essential to your career success.

Rate your current communication skills/competences on a scale of one to four:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Evidence for my rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write for a general audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write for a discipline specific audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give an oral presentation for a general audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give an oral presentation for a discipline specific audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate your expertise to a general audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate your expertise to a discipline specific audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer questions in a variety of contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express complex ideas in an accessible form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively use multimedia communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of workplace/professional etiquette</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network in academic circles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network in non-academic circles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate cross-culturally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate assertively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with emotional intelligence (empathy, respect, self-awareness)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate active listening skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch an idea to a general audience</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2c – Confidence

Self-confidence drives all other competencies and has a direct impact on your career success. Your willingness to self-reflect, take risks and decisive action, and be self-directed are all indicators of your confidence. Perseverance and resilience are critical components in the development of confidence.

Rate your current confidence skills/competences on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be Developed  2—Developing  3—Proficient  4—Highly Effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Evidence for my rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify personal strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not take professional feedback personally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue a project to completion with minimal supervision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work independently, self-manage and be self-aware</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think and act decisively, and initiate a course of action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate perseverance and resilience following challenges/failures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion yourself and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act as a role model for others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take on a leadership role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead from where you are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take on an entrepreneurial role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify personal strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take initiative to bring about positive change in academic, professional, and personal contexts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Take service initiative in the community</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2d – Scholarship

Whether it is in a course paper, presentation, capstone project, or thesis, scholarship brings together diverse skills that demonstrate your capacity to locate, interpret, and manage information. Scholarship is about not only your ability to develop a deep knowledge and broad scope of your subject field, but also your ability to generate and share knowledge with the academic community and public. For some, this can be applied to researching the market needs of a product or services, as required in entrepreneurship.

Rate your current scholarship skills/competences on a scale of one to four:

| 1—Yet to be Developed | 2—Developing | 3—Proficient | 4—Highly Effective |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Evidence for my rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate general research skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate discipline specific research skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey breadth and depth of your discipline to a lay audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate, evaluate, and use information effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the publication submission/peer review process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate new knowledge to be shared</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the scope and depth of knowledge to pitch your ideas (proposal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage budgets and/or resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write grant proposals for difference audiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate academic writing skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a business plan</td>
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</table>

2e – Ethical Responsibility
Your ability to conduct yourself with ethical responsibility is inextricably linked to all the skills you bring to your professional life. To act ethically means conducting yourself in a principled way, not only by observing specific codes of behavior, but also by acknowledging others’ work, carrying out ethical research, separating your personal and professional life, and demonstrating good use of your time. Ethical responsibility is about demonstrating civic and social responsibility by sharing your research with society and advocating for the needs of others, a consideration also required in entrepreneurship.

Rate your current ethical responsibility skills/competences on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be Developed  
2—Developing  
3—Proficient  
4—Highly Effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Evidence for my rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify conflicts of interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give due credit to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain confidentiality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate your personal and professional life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage time effectively and prioritize workload</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct yourself with personal accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct research ethically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain integrity in research data representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey the importance of your research relative to social/environmental awareness and global citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate civic and social responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for your research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for people and needs of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate assertively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct yourself according to the informal/formal discipline specific codes of behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the cultural, psychological, and behavioural aspects of conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate workplace behaviours that highlight the value of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2f – Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a central skill in your professional life. Your mental agility and ability to examine, interpret, deconstruct, and critique information impacts your capacity to perceive/troubleshoot problems, and to think strategically and creatively.
Likewise, your ability to examine personal and disciplinary assumptions impacts your ability to ask perceptive and clearly define questions. For those interested in entrepreneurship, skills such as market assessment, suitability of products and services, and re-imagining your ideas play a key role.

Rate your current critical thinking skills/competences on a scale of one to four:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate general research skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate discipline specific research skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey breadth and depth of your discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate, evaluate, and use information effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the publication submission/peer review process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate knowledge to be shared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the scope and depth of knowledge to pitch your ideas (proposal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage budgets and/or resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write grant proposals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate academic writing skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a business plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1—Yet to be Developed  2—Developing  3—Proficient  4—Highly Effective
2g – Collaboration

The ability to collaborate, assume different roles within the team environment, and build working relationships is crucial professional skills. Your ability to give and receive constructive feedback, have difficult conversations, and resolve conflicts are an essential part of collaboration. Entrepreneurship relies heavily on interacting with others, from networking to resolving technical issues.

Rate your current collaboration skills/competences on a scale of one to four:

- 1—Yet to be Developed
- 2—Developing
- 3—Proficient
- 4—Highly Effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Evidence for my rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate across disciplines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with people of different educational backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate in a multicultural environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide constructive feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive and act upon constructive feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise and balance competing needs</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Build and maintain meaningful relationships</td>
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<td>Establish definitions and agreement on the role of partners in collaborative work or a team environment</td>
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<td>Facilitate discussion in a collaborative or team setting</td>
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<td>Take on different roles in a team setting</td>
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<td>Participate in, or lead, team building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognize and respect the contribution of collaborators</td>
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<td>Have difficult conversations</td>
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<td>Share necessary information with collaborators/team to carry out tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify obstacles and address problems when working collaboratively or in a team setting</td>
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IDP Step 3: Career Exploration

Step 3 asks you to identify possible career paths that are of interest to you. Look at possibilities in business, industry, government, nonprofit sectors, and academia. Identify **three possible** careers options you think are a good fit for you. Leave yourself open to careers that you otherwise might not have thought to pursue. Remember that this is just the beginning of your career exploration. Your thinking may change as you move forward in your program.

Before you identify your top career options, take a moment to reflect on the strengths you already have, those you would like to develop, as well as your long and short-term goals. Finally, begin to envision your work.

What do I really like doing? (E.g. organizing, working on a team, writing, etc.)

What new things would I like to try?

What are my long and short-term life goals? (E.g. Helping people, work-life balance, contributing to social, cultural, economic innovation)
Next, think about what you want your work to look like by considering activities and behaviours you do and do not want in your work life.

Now that you have begun to envision your work-life identify three possible career paths. Remember, the ideas you generate here may change over time as opportunities emerge, your priorities change, and you explore new ideas and experiences.

**TIP** Not sure where to start? Think about how you explored your chosen graduate program/area of research. Use the same skills to think about career choices, which means talking to people and online searches of career sites, job boards, and other employment supports, as new opportunities arise, and as your personal and professional priorities shift.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What career options will I explore?</th>
<th>Reasons why these career options interest me</th>
<th>Skills, competencies, experiences required [TIP: use the Seven IDP Skills and Competencies to help you generate this list]</th>
<th>Who can I reach out to so I can learn more?</th>
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Mapping Your Eight Hours of PD Activities

As was noted earlier, employers are looking for people who have the right combination of education, skills, competencies, and experiences. Now that you have completed the self-assessment and considered possible career options, take a moment to think about obvious gaps in your skills and competencies you would like to develop to position yourself to move into those fields. As you identify these, make note of workshops/training that would assist you in developing the necessary skills and competencies. Your eight hours of PD Activities is also an opportunity to engage in experiences that will enhance what you offer potential employers.

TIP

Remember that FGSR offers many opportunities for professional development, many of which can be counted towards your eight-hours of PD Activities. You can learn about the events and workshops offered by FGSR by visiting the PD Website. There are many other opportunities available to you through your department, the Career Centre, and Academic Success Centre. Do not forget that your department must approve your eight-hours of PD Activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and competencies I want to develop</th>
<th>Possible workshops/training</th>
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Other experiences I’d like to explore (e.g. mentorship, committee work, community service, etc.)
IDP Step 4: Timeline

In this section, develop a timeline needed for completing your academic program, including milestones for your academic program, professional development activities, and personal commitments. Include plans for how you can tailor your program/fellowship to develop your skills and competencies. How much time will you allocate to professional development? An example for a PhD student enrolled in a science program is below. Timelines will vary depending on your graduate program.

**TIPS**

1. **Understand your academic requirements.** To complete your program successfully, you need a plan. This includes planning for scholarship/grant applications, candidacy exams, ethics and IPD/PD requirements. Find out early what your requirements are and be aware of any deadlines associated with them.

2. **Double the time.** Unexpected challenges can and do arise. Most people underestimate the time needed for experiments, the acquisition of data, and securing primary/secondary resources. Build in contingency plans. Securing travel visas, funding, and permissions to gain access to library materials can take time. What will you do if these things fall through?

3. **Get it done.** Whether our program is thesis or course based, your program is a stepping-stone in your career path. Recognize that you will not be able to explore all the complexities of the questions you’re exploring in your research or studies. Complete your program. Do it well, and move on.

4. **Consider other schedules.** Your program will require you to work with other people and perhaps booking access to other facilities. You will need to consider the availability of your supervisor and/or committee members as you plan your research and meeting major academic milestones.

5. **Use a calendar to map out your commitments and prioritize your time.** In addition to planning out a timeline on the long term, it is useful to chart out all your short-term obligations. Map out the items that are negotiable (course schedules, teaching/research assistantships, childcare, conferences, etc.). Once you completed this, start mapping how and when you will meet your other goals. It may be helpful to set completion deadlines for projects, academic milestones, etc. mapping backwards the time required to verify that your deadline(s) can be met.

**Factors to Consider:**

- Course work
- Ethics and PD Training
- Working outside program
- Teaching Assistantships
- Research Assistantships
- Scholarship/grant preparation
- Committee meetings
- Research Seminars
- Conferences
- Research Proposal
- Candidacy Preparation (Doctoral)
- Thesis/capstone project
- Defense Preparation (Doctoral)
- Publications
- Children
- Spouse/Partner
- Personal Goals

**TIP:** For a more complete explanation of the factors you should consider when creating your timeline, see Appendix A.
Masters Template
Using this timeline template as a starting point, map out your graduate program taking into consideration the many factors that impact your time and program. For examples of basic timelines, see Appendix B.
PhD Template
Using this timeline template as a starting point, map out your graduate program taking into consideration the many factors that impact your time and program. For examples of basic timelines, see Appendix B.
IDP Step 5: Review

Once you have completed your Individual Development Plan (IDP) set up a meeting with your supervisor/career mentor to discuss it. When you meet with your supervisor/career mentor you should be prepared to discuss the contents of your IDP and your plan for completing the eight-hours of Professional Development (PD) activities that will support building the skills and competencies needed to be competitive in your chosen career paths.

This conversation will help you clarify your academic program goals, and professional aspirations. Your supervisor/career mentor can provide you with guidance about the ways that you can maximize your graduate program and the skills you want to develop. Your supervisor/mentor can also alert you to professional development opportunities applicable to your interests and help assess whether you have created a realistic timeline and if you have allocated sufficient time for professional development.

TIPS

1. Make the most of this opportunity to speak with your supervisor/career mentor by preparing well for the discussion.
2. Consider questions you may have for your supervisor about his or her career.
3. Support your supervisor/career mentor in the conversation by forwarding him/her copies of the ABCs of the Professional Development Requirement and IDP Review Guide for Faculty.
4. If you do not have a supervisor, speak with your department/faculty about the policy regarding who reviews IDPs for those students without a supervisor.
5. Remember: it is your responsibility to set up a meeting to discuss your IDP with your supervisor/career mentor.

IDP Review Guide

Below is a Review Guide, which you may choose to use to prepare for your conversation with your supervisor/career mentor. Completion of the Review Guide is optional. The information below is drawn from the IDP Review Guide for your supervisor/career mentor to guide the conversation and to determine whether you’ve met the requirements of the IDP can use Faculty/Career Mentors.

Review of Step 1: Ideas Generation

☐ Have I thought carefully about what I like to do and why?
☐ Have I considered new skills, competencies, and experiences I’d like to explore?
☐ Can I describe experiences that illustrate why I like to do particular things?
☐ Using examples, can I talk about what I’m good at?
☐ Can I articulate what activities and behaviours are critical for me?

TIP

Reviewing your IDP with your supervisor is a great opportunity to ask him or her about things they enjoying doing in their career as well as those things they dislike or find challenging and how he or she navigates these things. This may provide you with unexpected insight into career management.

Notes about my ideas generation:
Questions I have for my supervisor/career mentor?

Review of Step 2: Self-Assessment
- Have I carefully reflected on my past experiences (work life, leisure, learning, and volunteer work, experiences as a graduate student)?
- Have I considered the level of my skill/competencies relative to those required my three possible career options?
- Can I describe concrete examples of where and how I demonstrated my skills and competencies?
- Do the eight hours of PD activities I’ve identified align to my career options and the skills and competencies I’d would like to develop?
- If it is not obvious how I the identified eight hours of PD activities align with my desired skills and competencies development, can I articulate why I’ve chosen these activities?

Possible Discussion Points
- What did the self-assessment reveal about my strengths?
- Can I give specific examples for the skills where I gave myself a high rating? Can I explain why I gave myself a low rating?
- What did the self-assessment reveal to me about the kinds of activities/roles to which I’m drawn?
- What are the skills and competencies I need to develop for my career options?
- Do I see patterns in my strengths or skills gaps?
- What options have I explored in thinking about my eight hours of PD activities?

Notes about my self-assessment:

Questions I have for my supervisor/career mentor:

Review of Step 3: Choose Three Career Options
- Have I given careful consideration to the career options outlined in my IDP?
  - Can I explain why I’ve chosen the three career options?
    - E.g., how do the proposed career options align with career goals and personal ideas of career success?
    - E.g., how do my proposed career paths align with my work and personal values?
    - E.g., how does my chosen discipline and/or degree set me up for work in these fields?
Possible Discussion Points
- What did I do to research my three career paths?
- What resources did I find most helpful/least helpful when choosing my three career options? Why?
- Why do these career options appeal to me?
- Were there challenges/surprises I encountered when researching my career paths? If so, what were they?

TIP
Reviewing your IDP with your supervisor/career mentor is a great opportunity to ask him or her questions about their own career trajectory. Many supervisors have connections beyond the university that could be helpful to you as you think about your next steps. Talk to them about people they may know that would help you think more deeply about your career options or opportunities that may assist you in career exploration and skills development.

Notes about choosing my career options:

Questions I have for my supervisor/career mentor:

Review of Step 4 Timeline
- Have I fully considered the various demands on my time (academic, work, personal, etc.) that impact my timeline?
- Do I have a strong sense of the scope of my thesis/capstone project and is this appropriately considered in my timeline? If I do not have a sense of the scope of my thesis/capstone project, what will I do get a better sense of this and when is my personal deadline for determining this?
- Have I allotted in time for publications or other measures of academic performance (e.g. exhibitions/performances)?
- Have I considered when and how much time I will devote to professional development?
- Have I considered alternate paths should the timeline not unfold as anticipated?
- Is my timeline realistic?
- What factors have I not considered because more information is needed? When will I obtain this information and how could it potentially impact my timeline?

Possible Discussion Points:
- What factors did I consider when creating my timeline?
- How did I ensure I considered all the factors that impact my program completion and professional development?
- Did I use the IDP Timeline Tip sheet when developing your timeline (Appendix A)?
● Is there information I still need to gather/require so to make my timeline more accurate (e.g. funding, issues related to research, factors related to my personal life)?
● What “add-ons” would make my thesis/capstone project truly outstanding in the field?
● What is the minimum path to thesis and or program completion?
● Is it realistic to expect a clear path forward at this point? If not, what factors could impact my plan?
● What are your alternate plans if one path does not work out?
● What are my next steps in moving towards the goals laid out in my IDP?
● When will my IDP be revisited to measure progress and to reassess?
● Do I have questions or concerns about my next steps?

Notes about my timeline:

Questions I have for my supervisor/career mentor:

Individual Development Plan: Next Steps

Once you’ve completed the IDP, you will keep it for your personal records and are encouraged to revisit it on an annual or semi-annual basis with your supervisor/career mentor. In some cases the department asks student for a copy of the IDP for your student file. Please consult your department if you are unsure about the practices in your department.

Once you’ve completed the IDP and the eight-hours, you will fill out the Individual Development Plan and Professional Development Form (also Appendix E) and have your supervisor/career mentor sign it. This form then goes to the graduate coordinator/administrator. He/she will then sign it and file it in your student department record. This form should not be submitted to FGSR.

TIP

Remember that your IDP and eight hours of PD activities have different deadlines. Ask your department how you should let them know that your IDP has been completed and reviewed by your supervisor/career mentor.
IDP Step 6: Re-evaluate [Recommended]

Revise and modify the plan as necessary as your circumstances and goals change. The challenge of implementation is to remain flexible and open to change. Meet frequently with your mentor(s) to assess progress, expectations, and changing goals. Take time to evaluate if you are on track with your academic and career goals. What is working well and what needs to change? What skills do you still need or want to pursue? As you answer these questions, determine any adjustments required, and confer with your mentor(s) as needed.

Examine closely how you have fared with both your IDP and the professional development activities you have completed and events in which you have participated.

- Commit to a date on your calendar that you will revisit your IDP
- Identify whether you are on track, and whether your goals have changed, and make note of any needed changes and the timeline to complete them.
- Append any changes to your IDP
Appendix A | Factors to Consider for Your Timeline

The demands on your time are not limited to your research and course work. As you build your timeline, reflect on your academic, personal and work commitments and decide how you will balance these competing demands and the implications for scheduling your time. The list below provides you with many ideas about the possible demand on your time. You may have additional things to consider as well. As you build your timeline, also consider your contingency plan if things take longer than expected or do not work out as planned.

1. **Course work**: What are the course requirements of my program? Are there required courses that are not offered on a yearly basis? How will I schedule my courses and when do I plan to have them completed?

2. **Supervision**: What are my supervisor's expectations around how I spend my time (e.g. being in the lab, research and writing activities, professional development activities, teaching)?

3. **Scholarship/grant applications**: What grant/scholarship applications will I submit and how much time is I need to compile them? Are there activities I need to pursue to make my application competitive (e.g. leadership/research/volunteer/publication activities)? If I do not secure funding, how will this affect my timeline?

4. **Assistantships**: Will I work as a research assistant during my program, and, if so, how many hours per week? Will I’ve teaching responsibilities during my program either as a TA or a principal instructor? How much time will I need to allot for course development, developing lectures and assessments, grading, and meeting with students?

5. **Ethics Training Requirement**: When and how will I fulfill the 8-hour ethics requirement for the completion of my program? Does my department have specific guidelines around how my ethics requirement is met?

6. **Individual Development Plan Requirement (IDP)**: How much time will I set aside to revisit my IDP on an annual basis to ensure that I am on track and to re-evaluate my goals and skills?

7. **Professional Development (PD)**: Does my department have specific guidelines around how I fulfill my PD requirement? Based on my IDP, how will I spend my 8-hours of PD activities to develop the skills I need to achieve my career goals? When and how will I continue to build meaningful relationships that I can leverage in my career management?

8. **Candidacy preparation and exam (doctoral)**: What are the department requirements for candidacy exams and how long will I take prepare? How long does the exam process take? When will I take my candidacy exam?

9. **Research Proposal**: What are the department requirements for my research proposal? How long will it take me to complete the proposal before it can go to my committee for defense?

10. **Research Preparation**: What do I need in place to move my research forward (human/animal ethics approval, travel visas, animal, biohazard, or language courses, funding for field travel)?

11. **Research**: How much time do I need for literature review, experiments, data collection, and analysis? Does my research depend on data/literature from other researchers/libraries/institutions, permissions, or travel visas?

12. **Thesis**: How long will it take to draft my thesis? How much time do committee members want to review each chapter? How long will chapter edits take? When does the thesis need to be submitted to my committee and/or external examiner (doctoral) for approval to move to the final defense?

13. **Publications**: How will I schedule time in my daily routine to ensure I’ve time to write for publications? How many publications do I want to have published/submitted for review by the end of my program?

14. **Defense**: What is the department process for exam defense? How much time will I allow for edits following the defense?

15. **Children**: Do I have children of plan to have children during my program? How much time will I take away from my studies for maternity/paternity leave? Do I have support systems to help me (daycare, family, and friends)? What kind of support can I expect from my supervisor/department/spouse/partner?

16. **Parents**: Am I responsible for the care of elderly parents? Do I have support systems? What kind of support can I expect from my supervisor/department/spouse/partner?

17. **Spouse/partner**: Am I in a personal relationship that needs to be nurtured with my time and attention?

18. **Personal Goals**: What are my personal goals outside of my academic responsibilities (e.g. participate in a community project, travel, hobbies)?

19. **Work life**: What are the demands of my work life and how will I balance these with my academic and personal commitments? What support can I expect from my supervisor?

20. **Exercise, Healthfulness, and Rest**: How will I allot time to exercise and take of my body in my daily routine? How much time will I set aside to rest my mind and body? What strategies will you employ to ensure you’ve good work-life balance?
Appendix B | Timeline Templates
Example 1: PhD Student in the Sciences

Enrolled in Graduate Program

Year 1

- **Academic Requirements:**
  - Course Work
  - Ethics
  - Research Proposal

- **Professional Development:**
  - Create LinkedIn Profile
  - Take PD Sessions

Year 2

- **Academic Requirements:**
  - Candidacy Requirements
  - Publish First Paper

- **Professional Development:**
  - Take PD Sessions
  - Identify Career Goals

Year 3-5

- **Academic Requirements:**
  - Publish 2-4 More Papers
  - Annual Committee Meeting

- **Professional Development:**
  - Network IDP
Example 2: Masters (Thesis based) Student in the Sciences

Enrol in Graduate Program

Year 1
Academic Requirements
Fall
Course Work
Ethics
Winter
Course Work
[Ethics]
Identify Supervisor
Choose Thesis
/Capping Project
Annual Progress Review

Professional Development
Fall
Create LinkedIn Profile
Take PD Seminars
IDP
Take IDP Workshop
Parts 1 and 2
[Recommended]

Year 2
Academic Requirements
Fall
[Course Work]
Thesis/Capping Project
Winter
Thesis/Capping Project

Professional Development
Winter
Take PD Seminars
Network
Take IDP Workshop
Part 3
[Recommended]
Review IDP with Supervisor
[Recommended]

Year 3
Academic Requirements
Fall
[Thesis]
Poster Presentation
Students in a Thesis program may need to enter a 3rd year to complete project.

Professional Development
Fall
Take PD Seminars
Network
Review IDP
[Recommended]
Winter
Take PD Seminars
Network
Review IDP
[Recommended]