

Individual Development Plan

Second Edition

Invest in Your Future



PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE
STUDIES & RESEARCH



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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

Why a PD Requirement?

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 are well equipped to achieve your career goals.

Professional development is the active acquisition of skills, knowledge, and mindset to realize one's strength and potential in all environments. It sets up individuals for success in achieving their goals while giving them the ability to meet, exceed and adapt to personal, career and societal responsibilities within the context of a changing world.

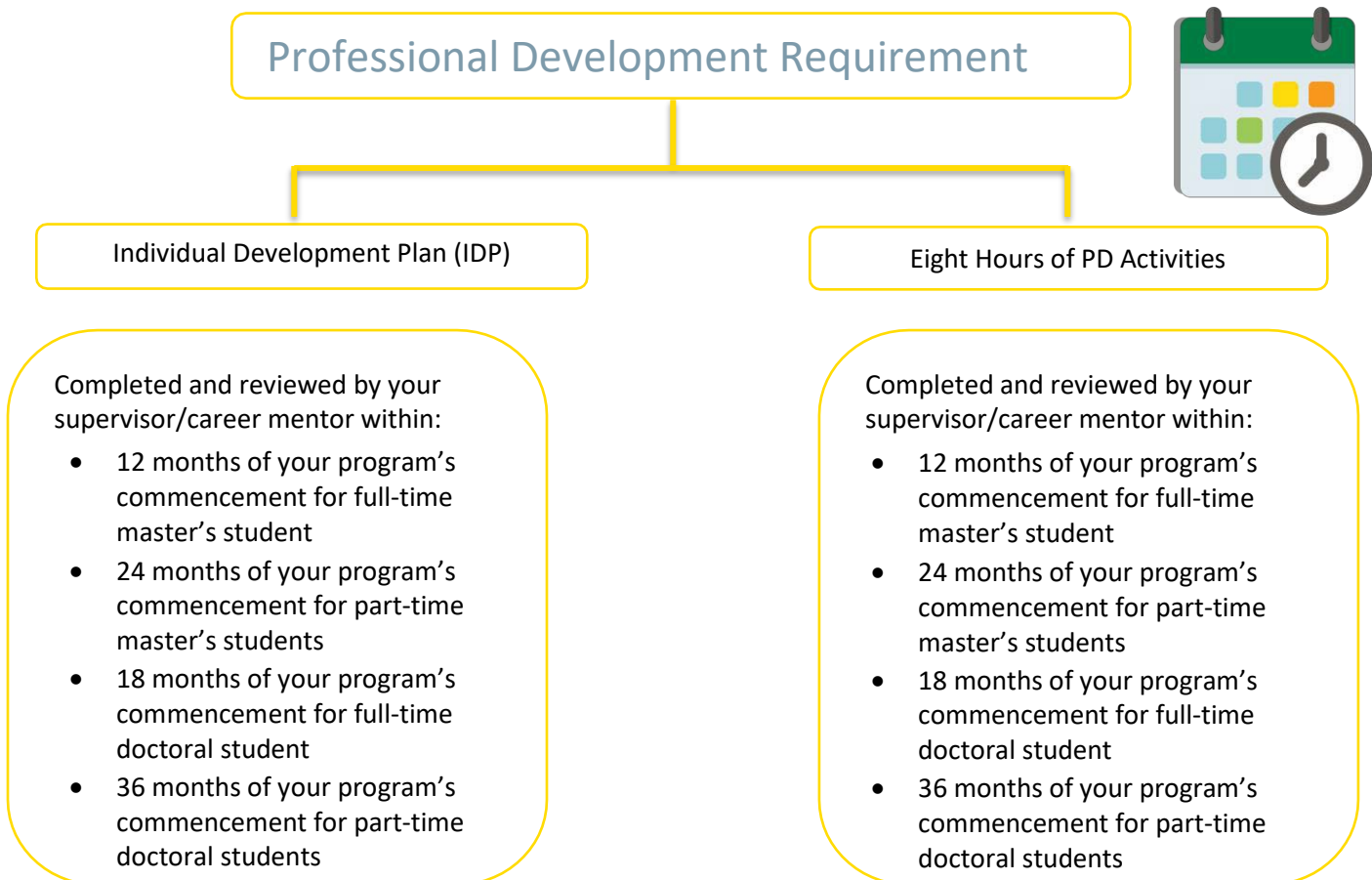
Overview of the PD Requirement

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.



What is an Individual Development Plan?

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a professional development tool used to help an individual identify strengths and areas for growth, and set attainable goals. IDPs are a standard practice in the workplace and have long been used as a career-planning tool in industry, government and education.

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. Creating an IDP will help you prepare for work in academic and non-academic careers.

Your IDP offers you an opportunity to think about how you will complement the disciplinary knowledge you develop through your program with skills, competencies, and experiences academic and non-academic employers are looking for. Your IDP is an opportunity to set you on a path to achieving your professional goals.

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 are preparing well for your professional goals.

The IDP has four main components and a recommended annual review. Each step is explained in 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 fulfills 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.

Before You Begin: Top Tips for Your IDP and Beyond

1. **Take adequate time.** It can take more than a day to explore fully 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 through both 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.

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

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 is 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.



TIPS

1. *Stay Open and Take Time:* Avoid using job titles or labels and focus on activities that you want and behaviours you want to engage in. Suspend judgment about what it practical and feasible. Give yourself time to brainstorm!
2. *Look at the idea of "career" broadly:* Your career is NOT just activities that include paid work. When developing your IDP, think about the "career" in broad terms. Career is the sum of ALL experiences, including paid and unpaid work, formal and informal learning, and leisure activities throughout life.

What do I hope to create?

What or who do I hope to inspire?

What social issues do I feel passionate about and want to help support or change?

What are my hobbies and interests?

What are my strengths?

What are areas for growth?

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 uses these seven skills and competencies to help you articulate your graduate school experiences into skills and competencies required in the career options you will identify later in your IDP. This will help you identify areas for growth during your graduate program.

Taking the time to think carefully about how your experiences have supported the development of skills and competencies is an important part of career management. In this section, you will evaluate your skills and competencies across seven IDP areas. As part of your self-assessment you will think of specific examples where you have demonstrated workplace skills/competencies.

As you complete your self-assessment, make note of the activities/workshops and actions you can build into your timeline to develop your skills and competencies.

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?

Rating	Descriptor
1	Yet to be Developed: You have no experience with this skill/competency.
2	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 are able to demonstrate this skill in simple situations.
3	Proficient: You have a developed understanding of and experience with this skill/competency, and you are able to apply it in both predictable and new situations.
4	Highly 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 are a role model for this skill/competency.

Types of Skills and Competencies

Technical Skills: Technical skills are developed through education, professional training and work experience. Examples include using computer software, specialized equipment, programming.

Personal Skills: Interpersonal skills and tactics used to interact with others. Examples include diplomacy, independence and motivation.

Transferable Skills: Transferable skills may be learned in one context, but can be applied in multiple contexts. Examples of transferable skills include teamwork, leadership, communication, decision making, and critical thinking.

TIPS

1. *Use the self-assessment to identify about areas for growth:* For each competency, you will assess important skills and competencies used in academic and non-academic workplaces. Your self-assessment will help you identify your strengths as well as areas you would like to develop further with your eight hours of PD Activities. This information will also be very important as you determine potential career options in Step 3.
2. *Use evidence to gauge your skills and competencies:* Generate examples about where, how, and at what level 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. Examples can be drawn from your experiences in your graduate program and other types of formal training as well as your volunteer, leisure and previous work experiences.
3. *The importance of any given skill or competency can vary depending on where your career takes you:* Remember that while all the skills and competencies explored in the IDP are important in academic and non-academic workplaces, aspects of these skills and competencies have different degrees of importance depending on where your career will take you.

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/competencies on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be developed

2—Developing

3—Proficient

4—Highly effective

Ability to:	Rating	Evidence
Problem solve using new solutions or approaches		
Verify workability of creative ideas		
Develop and implement creative ideas		
Innovate by questioning, experimenting and networking		

Collaborate creatively within a team		
Make connections among diverse ideas		
Balance logical and creative thinking		
“Think on your feet”		
“Think outside of the box”		
Pose new research questions		
Push disciplinary boundaries		
Answering questions at conferences		
Link ideas to new services and products		
Link my skills, competencies, and interests to emerging opportunities		

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 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 creativity skills/competencies on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be developed

2—Developing

3—Proficient

4—Highly effective

Ability to:	Rating	Evidence for my rating
Write for a general audience		
Write for a discipline specific audience		
Give an oral presentation for a general audience		
Give an oral presentation for a discipline specific audience		
Communicate your expertise to a general audience		
Communicate your expertise to a discipline specific audience		
Answer questions in a variety of contexts		
Express complex ideas in an accessible form		

Effectively use multimedia communication		
Demonstrate knowledge of workplace/professional etiquette		
Network in academic circles		
Network in non-academic circles		
Communicate cross-culturally		
Communicate assertively		
Communicate with emotional intelligence (empathy, respect, self-awareness)		
Demonstrate active listening skills		
Pitch an idea to a general audience		
Communicating your personal brand		

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 creativity skills/competencies on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be developed

2—Developing

3—Proficient

4—Highly effective

Ability to:	Rating	Evidence for my rating
Pursue a project to completion with minimal supervision		
Work independently, self-manage and be self-aware		
Take initiative		
Think and act decisively, and initiate a course of action		
Demonstrate perseverance and resilience following challenges/failures		
Champion yourself and others		
Act as a role model for others		
Take on a leadership role		
Lead from where you are		
Take on an entrepreneurial role		
Identify personal strengths and weaknesses		
Take initiative to bring about positive change in academic,		

professional, and personal contexts.		
Take service initiative in the community		
Demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges/setbacks/failure		
Link your skills, competencies, and interests to emerging opportunities		
To take professional feedback objectively		

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 creativity skills/competencies on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be developed

2—Developing

3—Proficient

4—Highly effective

Ability to:	Rating	Evidence for my rating
Demonstrate general research skills		
Demonstrate discipline specific research skills		
Convey breadth and depth of your discipline to a lay audience		
Manage information		

Locate, evaluate, and use information effectively		
Demonstrate an understanding of the publication submission/peer review process		
Generate and share new knowledge		
Demonstrate the scope and depth of knowledge to pitch your ideas (proposal)		
Manage budgets and/or resources		
Write grant proposals for difference audiences		
Demonstrate academic writing skills		
Develop a business plan		

TIP

The Three-Minute Thesis competition is a great way to develop your ability to share the importance of your research with a non-disciplinary audience. Visit uab.ca/gradpd for more information.



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 lives, 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 required in entrepreneurship.



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

1—Yet to be developed

2—Developing

3—Proficient

4—Highly effective

Ability to:	Rating	Evidence for my rating
Identify conflicts of interest		
Give due credit to others		
Maintain confidentiality		
Separate your personal and professional lives		
Manage time effectively and prioritize workload		
Conduct yourself with personal accountability		
Conduct research ethically		

Maintain integrity in research data representation		
Convey the importance of your research relative to social/environmental awareness and global citizenship		
Demonstrate civic and social responsibility		
Advocate for your research		
Advocate for people and needs of others		
Communicate assertively		
Conduct yourself according to the informal/formal discipline-specific codes of behavior		
Understanding the cultural, psychological, and behavioural aspects of conflict		
Demonstrate workplace behaviours that highlight the value of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)		
Demonstrate workplace behaviours that support the work of Truth and Reconciliation		

2f: Critical Thinking

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 creativity skills/competencies on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be developed

2—Developing

3—Proficient

4—Highly effective

Ability to:	Rating	Evidence for my rating
Be flexible in your thinking and explore alternate views		
Recognize and define a problem		
Think strategically and anticipate opportunities and challenges		
Identify and challenge personal/ discipline assumptions, biases, and prejudices		
Ask clearly defined questions		
Interpret information from a variety of approaches		
Deconstruct idea and identify the relationships among the components		
Critique arguments and show strengths and weaknesses		
Recommend the next steps for a project		

Reframe complex knowledge to be suitable for social media and other communication formats		
See how new ideas can create opportunities		
Write reviews		
Find applications for your research		



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 creativity skills/competencies on a scale of one to four:

1—Yet to be developed

2—Developing

3—Proficient

4—Highly effective

Ability to:	Rating	Evidence for my rating
Collaborate across disciplines		
Collaborate with people of different educational backgrounds		
Collaborate in a multicultural environment		
Provide constructive feedback		
Receive and act upon constructive feedback		
Compromise and balance competing needs		
Build and maintain meaningful relationships		
Establish definitions and agreement on the role of partners in collaborative work or a team environment		
Facilitate discussion in a collaborative or team setting		
Take on different roles in a team setting		

Participate in, or lead, team building		
Recognize and respect the contribution of collaborators		
Have difficult conversations		
Share necessary information with collaborators/team to carry out tasks		
Identify obstacles and address problems when working collaboratively or in a team setting		
Take responsibility for mistakes/errors		
Ability to identify my role (positive and negative) on the outcomes of collaborative projects		

Notes to myself:

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)

What does career success mean to me? (e.g. impact, recognition, professional and personal growth, flexibility, work-life balance)

Workplace Values and Preferences

In addition to thinking about your values, strengths and what you like doing, as well as the impact you want to have throughout your career, it is important to think about your preferences and values around your day-to-day work life. While your work preferences may influence your decision making process, remember to stay open and flexible, recognizing that you will need to make compromises.



TIP

While the list below seems to present two sides of a continuum (e.g. work alone vs. work on a team), you may choose to select both options. For example, you may want to work independently in some aspects of your work, but you may also want to have the opportunity to work with a team. Remember, most careers naturally have this kind of variety.

Preferences and values are linked. While preferences may be considered "nice to haves," values are a degree further in level of importance. Core values are vital to someone. No preferences, values or core values is not right or wrong. Your ideas about preferences and values will shift over time.

Preferences are "nice to haves" in your career.

Values are things that are very more important you in your career.

Core values are vital to your career.

Preference/Value	No Preference	Preference	Value	Core Value
Work alone				
Work on a team				
Work for an employer				
Be self-employed				
Job duties well defined by employer				
Opportunity to define my job duties				
Direct my own work				
Work directed by someone else				
Low level of responsibility				
High level of responsibility				
No critical decisions				
Supervise others				
No supervisory responsibilities				
Regular work hours				

Preference/Value	No Preference	Preference	Value	Core Value
Daily and weekly hours vary				
Hours of work set by employer				
Determine my own hours of work				
Frequent travel				
Little or no travels				
Results of work are visible				
Results of work are not visible				
Opportunity to retire early (e.g. at 55)				
Opportunity to work after age 65				
Average pay increases within my field with regular moderate increases				
Opportunity to earn top salary in my field and for bonuses				
Employer paid health benefits				
Be responsible for paying my health related expenses				

Acknowledgements: Adapted from Fellman, W. R. (2000) Finding a Career that Works for You. Plantation, FL Specialty Press, Inc. and Justin Pritchard, MDes, Career Coach, University of Alberta Career Centre

Reasons why these preferences are important to me:

Reasons why these values are important to me:

Reasons why the CORE values are important to me:

Areas where I am willing to make compromises:

Choosing Three Career Options



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.

TIPS

1. *Career management is a dynamic process:* Identifying three career options in your IDP is just the FIRST step in your life long career management. Career management is a DYNAMIC process. The educational, experiential, and other opportunities you encounter will influence your career preferences and will open possibilities that may be difficult to imagine right now.
2. *Not everything is in your control:* Factors outside your will control will influence the opportunities available to you, including the state of the economy, political factors, environmental and societal changes. Rapid changes in technology will likewise have an impact on your career as new jobs emerge and the nature of work evolves. Continue to revisit your ideas about the career options you will pursue. Not only is the world of work continuously changing, but also so are you.
3. *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 conducting online searches of career sites, job boards, and other employment supports, as new opportunities arise, and as your personal and professional priorities shift.

My Three Career Options

Career Option 1

Describe your career option:

Reasons this career option interests me:

Skills, competencies, and experiences required in this career

Who could I reach out to so I can learn more about this career option?

Career Option 2

Describe your career option:

Reasons this career option interests me:

Skills, competencies, and experiences required in this career

Who could I reach out to so I can learn more about this career option?

Career Option 3

Describe your career option:

Reasons this career option interests me:

Skills, competencies, and experiences required in this career

Who could I reach out to so I can learn more about this career option?

TIP

If you have identified a career in academia as one possible career option, the Faculty of Graduate Studies Graduate Teaching and Learning Program is a multitier program that can assist you in developing your teaching skills and competencies.



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 possible areas of growth. What are the skills and competencies you would like to develop or further refine? As you identify these, make note of the types 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 employers.



TIPS

1. *There are many opportunities available to you:* Remember that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) offers a suite of nationally recognized professional development opportunities, many of which can be counted towards your eight hours of PD Activities. You can learn about the programs, 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, the Academic Success Centre, and your workplace or professional association.
2. *Eight Hours of PD Activities Guideline:* Do not forget that activities used towards the eight hours of PD Activities must meet the guidelines. This means the activity contributes to the acquisition of skills, knowledge or mindset and includes all of these three components: 1) comprises of formal training or active learning with an assessment component (self-assessment, reflection, quiz, write-pair-share, other evidence of knowledge application); 2) falls outside of your research methods training, capstone project, thesis or equivalent, and required practicum; and, 3) supports your career goals and/or seven skills and competencies identified in your IDP.
3. *Your Department Approves PD Activities:* Do not forget that your department must approve your eight hours of PD Activities. Contact your department if you have questions about the approved PD activities.

Skills and competencies I want to develop	Possible workshops/training

Other experiences I would like to explore (e.g. mentorship, committee work, community service, etc.)

TIP

Do not miss GradNews in your inbox every Wednesday! You will learn all about FGSR's nationally recognized signature programming and much more.



Notes to myself:

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? 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 (PhD), Academic Integrity and Ethics Training and Professional Development Requirements. Early in your program, ensure you know about ALL the requirements of your program and plan for the deadlines associated with them.
2. *Double the time:* Unexpected challenges can and do arise. Most people underestimate the time needed for things like experiments, the acquisition of data, and securing primary/secondary resources. Securing travel visas, funding, and permissions to gain access to library materials can take time. Build contingency plans into your timeline. How will you proceed if these things fall through or are delayed?
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 are exploring in your research or studies. Complete your program. Do it well, and move on.
4. *Consider others' schedules:* Your program will require you to work with other people and perhaps book access to other facilities. You will need to consider the availability of your supervisor and/or committee members as you plan your research and determine how you will meet major academic milestones.
5. *Map your time:* Use a calendar to map out your commitments and prioritize your time. In addition to planning a timeline in 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 complete 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.

As you build your timeline, consider long and short-term goals within your graduate program, in your career, and in your personal life. Below are common goals and/or requirements for graduate students at the University of Alberta to guide you. In some cases, you may wish to set some goals at multiple points in your degree program.

The timeline you will develop here is set up on an annual basis. As you develop a better sense of the various demands on your time, take the time to develop more detailed timelines, including 3 month and 6-month plans. Taking the time to map out timelines that are more detailed will help you stay on track with your program by setting regular milestones. Create google calendar entries for your various milestones as reminders of where you want to be at various points in your program. The milestones you create should be **SMART--Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-based**. This will increase the likelihood of meeting these milestones.

Not everything listed below will apply to all students depending on your degree program. If you are not sure if something listed below applies to you, contact your department for more information.

Note: Years 3-5 are intended for students in the PhD program.

Degree Completion Goals/Requirements						
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	NA
Coursework completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advisor /supervisor determined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committee formed (PhD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language requirement completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academic Integrity and Ethics Training Requirement completed (note program deadlines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual Development Plan completed (note program deadlines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up an appointment with my supervisor/career mentor to discuss my IDP (note program deadlines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eight Hours of PD Activities completed (note program deadlines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop capstone project (Masters--Course Based)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complete capstone project (Masters Course Based)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching Assistantship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Assistantship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write and submit a publication for review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend a conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidacy Exams (PhD) completed (note program deadlines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissertation/Thesis Proposal completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissertation Proposal defense (PhD) completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/experiments for my thesis/dissertation completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan for Dissertation/Thesis completion developed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissertation/Thesis oral defense preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scholarship applications (note application deadlines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grant applications (note application deadlines)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other degree completion goals/requirements not noted above:

In addition to completing the various requirements of your program, set yourself strategic career development goals that will better support you for careers inside and outside academia

Career Development Goals						
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	NA
Develop my CV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop my research statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop my teaching through the Graduate Teaching and Learning Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create my statement of teaching philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create my teaching dossier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop professional social media presence (Academia.edu, Research Gate, Blog, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Present at a conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share my research through opportunities with Community Connect (3MT, Telus World of Science, EPL Speaker Series)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review abstracts/papers for a conference/journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Edit a journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentor/supervisor undergraduate students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Join a professional association/society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create my resume	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gain workplace experience through an internship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conduct an information interview as part of my career exploration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	NA
Develop a LinkedIn Profile	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer on a committee/board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explore career management through Invest in Your Future Career Symposium (November)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop workplace skills and explore career management through Professional Development Days (May)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book an appointment at the Career Centre to get assistance with my LinkedIn Profile, CV, or resume	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up an appointment with a career coach at the Career Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply for Job Shadow week with the Career Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend networking opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Find a career mentor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Find a career coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attend a career fair/panel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Build my professional contact list (internal and external to post-secondary)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep in touch with contacts from my previous degree programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other career development goals not noted above:

Other Demands on My Time	
Quality time with spouse/partner, family and/or friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child care commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care for other family members (e.g. elderly parents)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Events/activities for my spouse/partner/children I support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others' schedules (academic supervisor, spouse/partner, children, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work outside my program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical wellbeing activities (regular exercise, sleep, eating well)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social wellbeing activities (e.g. friendships, hobbies, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Household maintenance activities (buying groceries, paying bills, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post-doctoral fellowship applications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applying for work outside my program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applying for a study/work permit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serious/competitive sports or other activities I participate in outside my program	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other demands on my time not noted above:

IDP Step 5: Review

Congratulations! You have created your IDP. To finalize the completion of your IDP, you are required to discuss it with your supervisor or career mentor. It is your responsibility to initiate this conversation with your supervisor or career mentor by setting up a time to review and discuss your IDP.

The IDP is a program requirement and your supervisor will want to know that you have spent sufficient time and thought creating your IDP. This section helps you to prepare for that meeting and offers you the opportunity to self-assess whether you are ready to meet with your supervisor/career mentor to discuss your IDP.

TIPS

1. *Seize the opportunity:* Having the opportunity to talk with your supervisor about your career is an invaluable opportunity to learn more about yourself, to discuss your ideas about where you want your graduate degree to take you, and to receive guidance. Make the most of this opportunity to speak with your supervisor/career mentor by preparing well for the discussion.
2. *Ask questions:* The meeting with your supervisor/career mentor to discuss your IDP is an opportunity to ask him or her questions about their career journey. It is also an opportunity to get their perspective on future opportunities and how you can position yourself well for transitioning into the workplace. Make the most of this opportunity by taking the time to think about YOUR questions in advance of the meeting.
3. *Support your supervisor/career mentor:* Uof A's Professional Development Requirement is relatively new and your supervisor or career mentor may need support in order to support you. Support your supervisor/career mentor in the conversation by forwarding him or her copies of the ABCs of the Professional Development Requirement and IDP Review Guide for Faculty.
4. *I do not have a supervisor/career mentor:* 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. *Own YOUR IDP:* Remember: it is your responsibility to set up a meeting to discuss your IDP with your supervisor/career mentor. Ensure you review your IDP with your supervisor/career mentor prior to the deadline specified for your program.

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 options.

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 your interests, help assess whether you have created a realistic timeline, and if you have allocated sufficient time for professional development.

This section will help you prepare for your conversation with your supervisor or career mentor. The following 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 have met the requirements of the IDP.

TIP

Reviewing your IDP with your supervisor is a great opportunity to ask him or her about their career. What do they enjoy? What do they dislike or find challenging? What do they spend most of their time doing? This may provide you with unexpected insight into career management.

Review of Step 1: Ideas Generation	
Can I talk about what I hope to create and WHY?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about WHAT and WHO I hope to inspire?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about the social issues I care about and support or change?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about what I really like doing and WHY?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk the strengths I already have and give EXAMPLES of where I demonstrate these strengths?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Possible Discussion Points

- What did the ideation process tell you about yourself?
- Were there themes that emerged in the ideation process you want to explore further?
- How do the ideas that emerged in the ideation process link to your research and career goals?
- What are the past experiences that influence what you hope to create, who you hope to inspire, what you care about, and what you are good at?
- How did the ideation process clarify your thinking around what is important to you? How does this inform your career exploration (e.g. the sector(s) that are the best fit for you, the types of career options to which you may be best suited)?
- What ideas do you want to explore further? How will you do this?

Notes about my ideas generation (i.e. topics I want to discuss further with my supervisor/career mentor)

Questions I have for my supervisor/career mentor

Review of Step 2: Self-Assessment	
Can I talk about my SKILLS and COMPETENCIES by giving concrete EXAMPLES about my past experiences (work life, leisure, learning, and volunteer work, experiences as a graduate student)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about the LEVEL of my skill/competencies relative to those required my three possible career options?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I identify GAPS in my skills and competencies relative to the career options I have identified for myself?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I describe how the PD Activities I have identified will develop the skills and competencies I need in the career options I have identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 am 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	
Can I explain why I have chosen THESE three career options (e.g. what appeals to me about the career options, why I think they are a good fit for me)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about HOW the three career options I have chosen connect to my PERSONAL and WORKPLACE VALUES?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I explain how I view CAREER SUCCESS?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I discuss how the career options I have identified will help me realize CAREER SUCCESS and PERSONAL FULFILMENT?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about how my CHOSEN discipline and/or degree sets me up for work in the career options I have identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Possible Discussion Points

- What resources did I consult to research my three career options?
- Who did I talk to when researching my three career options?
- What resources/people did I find most helpful/least helpful when choosing my three career options? Why?
- Why do these career options appeal to me?
- How do the career options I have chosen connect to my personal and work values, the things I care about, the things I like to do, the things I am good at, and the impact I want to have on the world around me?
- Were there challenges/surprises I encountered when researching my career paths? If so, what were they?

Notes about my three career options

Questions I have for my supervisor/career mentor

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.

Review of Step 4: Timeline	
Can I discuss how I have considered the various demands on my time in the DEVELOPMENT of my timeline?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I give specific examples of how I have adjusted my timeline based on the UNIQUE demands on my time?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do I have a strong sense of the SCOPE of my thesis/capstone project and is this appropriately considered in my timeline?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I explain how I have allotted time for PUBLICATIONS or OTHER measures of academic performance (e.g. exhibitions/performances) in my timeline?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about WHEN and HOW much time I will devote to professional /career/personal development activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I explain my CONTINGENCY plan(s) should I discover that my timeline is not unfolding as expected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I defend my timeline as a REALISTIC plan with specific and measurable milestones? Have I set dates for my milestones?	
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Possible Discussion Points

- What are the PERSONAL, ACADEMIC, and EXTERNAL factors I considered when creating my timeline?
- What did I take to ensure that I considered ALL the factors that impact my program completion, and professional and personal development?
- 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 my 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 self-assessment

Questions I have for my supervisor/career mentor





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