



**Graduate Student Research Professional Development Guide**

**PURPOSE:** This document is intended to provide graduate students with guidance on their graduate student activities and to ensure that the students have a well-developed professional development plan. This plan supports development of skills needed for their chosen career path. The guide will help identify areas of action and concern that can be addressed over the course of their graduate studies.

This document complements the graduate courses of ENGG 601 Professional Development 1 and ENGG 603 Professional Development II, as well as the **Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Students and Supervisors - Best Practices for Graduate Students** and **Best Practices for Supervisors** documents available from FGS.

The student and the supervisor are expected to review and discuss the information in this document in a face-to-face meeting. This document should prompt and help guide discussions. Completion of this document may take several meetings, but it is expected that it will be completed within the first two months after a graduate student has started their program and should then be reviewed annually.

The form below was inspired by the CIHR ‘*Developing Leaders of Tomorrow: Individual Development Plan (IDP) Form*’ V.2.0, December 2018. Other resources are provided in section 6.

**1. Career Identification**

A first step is identifying potential careers paths that you are interested in and determining what skills and attributes they require. The identification is a very important first step. There is also information available on the career services website that can provide additional ideas on how to develop these ideas (Career Services: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/careers>).

<b>Career</b> (Employer or specific Job Title)	<b>What are the key requirements?</b> (Qualifications, skills, duties) Why are you interested in these careers?
#1	
#2	
#3	



**2. Self-Assessment**

Conduct self-assessment of your skills, values, and professional development activities to understand your academic and professional strengths and weaknesses as well as your personal motivations, passions. The assessment is an integral step to be able to plan your future career.

In the following sections, where appropriate, use a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being low and 5 being high), to rate your current attribute.

In the third column, indicate which attributes you would like to develop over the next year and assign a priority level to that activity in the second column (scale of 1 – 5, where appropriate) to indicate how important that attribute is in relation to your priorities and interest. Examples could be attending a workshop to learn more about a specific topic, reading a textbook or attending a teaching training course.

**2.1 Skills**

<b>Skills Description</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>How to develop and prioritize</b>
Technical skills/knowledge		
Data analysis skills		
Writing skills (scholarships, journal papers, reports, grants)		
Presentation skills (online, in-person, posters, mixed media, conferences etc.)		
Teaching skills		
Communications skills (Peers, supervisor, program, collaborators)		
Leadership/Engagement (professional student societies like IEEE, elected role in student societies etc.)		
Resiliency - dealing with setbacks/changing priorities		
Team management (assigning roles and responsibilities, team dynamics, conflict issues etc.)		
Goal setting (short, medium, and long term, how to track)		
CV and social media presence (LinkedIn, Research Gate, Google Scholar, Academia, Scopus etc.)		
Interview skills/ job searching		
Other identified skill		
Other identified skill		
Other identified skill		



**2.2 Values**

<b>Value Description</b>	<b>How to develop and align with skills</b>
What activities make me happy/ motivated?	
What do I want to achieve from my career that will make me happy and satisfied?	
What absolutely does not align with my values? (e.g. animal experimentation, field work)	
What have I always wanted to do?	
What might I regret not doing in life?	
Other identified value	

**2.3 Professional Development Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Aligned with my career goals? If not, why?</b>
What training modules, seminars, conferences or symposia have I attended?	
What training modules, seminars, conferences or symposia do I want to attend?	
Which networking opportunities (formal or informal) did I participate in?	
Which networking opportunities (formal or informal) do I want to participate in next?	
What groups or associations am I a member of?	
What groups or associations could help my career?	
Am I interested in Internships? What are my supervisors expectations concerning internships?	

**3. Development Plan**

Review sections 1 and 2 and determine the top 3 goals that will help you develop the required skills to attain your desired career path. Ensure that goals are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).

<b>Goal</b>	<b>What action is needed to accomplish the goal? What is the timeframe? How will you determine you have accomplished the goal?</b>
#1	
#2	
#3	



#### **4. Supervisor Discussion**

After completing sections 1-3, schedule a meeting with your supervisor to discuss. Request feedback, suggestions, and advice. If you are not comfortable sharing sections 1- 2 with your supervisor, discuss only section 3.

Some example questions to ask your supervisor:

- Do the goals align with the graduate program/supervisors plans for this research?
- Are the goals realistic?
- What milestones will help accomplish the goals?
- How can the supervisor support help you attain your goals in the short, medium and long terms (they can suggest conferences, workshops, provide introductions to potential research partners, future employers, internship program info, etc.)?

#### **5. Review**

Integrate what you have learned from the supervisor meeting into your plans as a second draft and use this to guide the next year of your career development.

If required, schedule further meetings if necessary to discuss milestone events with your supervisor.

Arrange to meet in a year (or sooner if preferred) to review progress and reassess your goals.

#### **6. Resources**

- Career Services: Information on career events, job searches, CVs, cover letter, job interviews, workplace culture etc. : <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/careers>
- Graduate Studies: <https://grad.ucalgary.ca/my-gradskills>
- Student Success Center (there is a graduate writing community) <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>
- Wellness Services: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services>
- The University of Alberta has an online course/guide that helps students look into their strengths and weaknesses -- <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/professional-development-requirement/index.html>
- Material in this guide is also developed during ENGG 601 and ENGG 603.