

Exploring Your Core Professional Skills Training Needs

This self-directed worksheet will lead you through a 3-step process to create your personalized professional development plan during your UCLA graduate training. You will first examine the core professional skills that UCLA has identified, consider your training needs based on your training time, existing skill level, and long-term career goals. Then, you will consider at what point in your training you should work on developing each skill. You will finish with a customized professional development plan that considers your academic and career goals and the duration of your program and also get a better idea of resources available at UCLA to facilitate in your professional development plan.

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UCLA's Core Professional Skills for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars

UCLA has determined the types of professional skills that are relevant to most graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, whether they plan to pursue careers inside or outside of academia after training. The skills have been divided into 6 categories.

Career Path Preparation Includes skills such as exploring potential career paths, finding positions, networking, applying, and interviewing	Communication Skills Includes skills such as public speaking, written communication, and communicating with diverse audiences	Wellness and Self Development Includes skills in goal-setting, balancing your needs, social relationships and self-advocacy
Leadership, Collaboration and Project Management Includes skills in managing projects, working in teams and resolving conflicts	Teaching and Mentoring Includes skills in teaching and mentoring others, assessing learning, and applying evidence-based teaching methods	Scholarly Expertise and Integrity Includes skills in understanding your field, performing reliable research, and acting with ethics and civility

Step 1: Identifying your professional development needs for this phase of your career

Continuing your professional development is critical at all phases of your career. Consider your level of proficiency in the following list of core professional skills and in which areas you need to develop during your training. Click the boxes according to whether you: **HAVE** a solid proficiency in this skill already, **EXPECT** to learn this skill from your mentor or program; or **NEED** more training or practice in this skill.

Career Path Preparation (GO TO TIMELINE)				Communication Skills (GO TO TIMELINE)			
Have	Included	Need		Have	Included	Need	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessing my values, and interests to identify potential career paths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scholarly and professional writing in one's field
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Developing an online professional presence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Managing complex writing projects
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Building professional relationships and networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Researching and locating appropriate jobs and internships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Making formal presentations in one's field
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparing job application documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employing effective visual communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Translating my academic skills to different careers and communicating them to potential employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicating with diverse audiences
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Understanding and navigating interview preparation and process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicating across multiple platforms
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning to negotiate a job offer				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transitioning from training to a professional career and understanding professional culture				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Understanding the visa and work requirements for my career path				

Wellness and Self Development ([GO TO TIMELINE](#))**Leadership, Collaboration and Project Management**[\(GO TO TIMELINE\)](#)**Have Included Need**

- | Have | Included | Need | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Time management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Setting realistic goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maintaining progress towards goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Understanding and navigating requirements and expectations of my program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Balancing academic and research responsibilities with other aspects of my life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Personal health and wellness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Managing personal finances and planning for the future |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing community and social relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Actively engaging with different identities and opinions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing healthy boundaries and self-advocacy skills |

Have Included Need

- | Have | Included | Need | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Managing projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Obtaining funding in a research or professional setting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Managing a budget in a research or professional setting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing entrepreneurial skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Leading the planning of an event or initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Leading a team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Working in a diverse team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Collaborating across different working styles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Resolving interpersonal conflict |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Managing mentor and mentee relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Identifying opportunities for service and community engagement. |

Teaching and Mentorship ([GO TO TIMELINE](#))**Scholarly Expertise and Integrity** ([GO TO TIMELINE](#))**Have** **Included** **Need**

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Creating an inclusive classroom for learners from diverse backgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Applying evidence-based pedagogical methods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Designing and developing a course and learning goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing effective assessments for learning outcomes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Training learners in research skills and techniques |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Advising, role modeling, and mentoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Using instructional technology effectively |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing a teaching philosophy |

Have **Included** **Need**

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Understanding how to access and assess literature and research in your discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing command of the existing knowledge in your discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing familiarity with relevant interdisciplinary knowledge and research approaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Designing research to address important questions in your field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mastering research methods in your field and relevant adjoining fields |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Collaborating effectively in research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Upholding ethical norms and practicing responsible conduct and dissemination of research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Practicing civility in scholarly exchange and the research environment |

Step 2: Identifying training needs specific to your goals

List any additional skills and training you think you may need to meet your professional and career goals not listed in Step 1. Hit “Tab” to move from one cell to the next and to insert new rows.

Professional and/or Career Goals	Skills or training I will need
Ex. Develop coding skills for my project	Take an R workshop or another coding class/seminar
Ex. Join a professional society of academics or practitioners	Networking with scholars or practitioners
Ex. Learn a specific research technique	Approach collaborator for training

Step 3: Creating my timeline

Now, place all of the items you identified as “**Need**” in Steps 1 and 2 into this timeline, dividing your predicted total training time in thirds. **Early Stage** is the right time to develop skills that will help you be a better graduate student. **Middle Stage** is a great time for career exploration and general professional skills development. **Late Stage** should focus on the skills needed to transition to your next career. **Ongoing** is for activities that you should do throughout, like networking.

	Career Path Preparation (GO TO CORE SKILLS)	Communication Skills (GO TO CORE SKILLS)
Early Stage		
Middle Stage		
Late Stage		
Ongoing		

	Wellness and Self Development (GO TO CORE SKILLS)	Leadership, Collaboration and Project Management (GO TO CORE SKILLS)
Early Stage		
Middle Stage		
Late Stage		
Ongoing		

	Teaching and Mentorship (GO TO CORE SKILLS)	Scholarly Expertise and Integrity (GO TO CORE SKILLS)
Early Stage		
Middle Stage		
Late Stage		
Ongoing		

Step 4: Identifying UCLA Resources to help

Go to [this webpage](#) to explore UCLA resources that can help you develop the skills you've identified. This site sorts the resources in the same categories used here to make it easier for you to find the skills training you need. Make sure you are included on the right mailing/announcement lists so you can sign up for workshops and professional development events that will help you with the training you've built into your plan.

How to use your Professional Development Plan:

1. Make sure that you've explored and signed up for training that you've added to the current stage of your timeline, depending on where you are at in your training career (Early/Middle/Late).
2. Use this exercise to help flesh out the professional development section of your Individual Development Plan.
3. Revisit this timeline periodically to update and remember which training you are targeting this year.