

Starting Off Right: How to Make the Most out of Graduate School



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Grad School is VERY challenging, are you ready?

What is your reason for going to grad school?

Essential Skills of Graduate Students

Initiative

Tenacity

Flexibility

Interpersonal Skills

Organizational Skills

Communication Skills

Initiative

“People who end up with the good jobs are the proactive ones who are solutions to problems, not problems themselves, who seize the initiative to do whatever is necessary to get the job done.” – [Stephen R. Covey](#)

Initiative

- This is your project: it's your job to ensure that it's successful
 - Be a valuable member of a team: bring new ideas and insights
 - Be the driver of your project
 - This will mean different things for different students
 - But also *seek* and *follow* guidance
- Same idea goes for your time in graduate school
 - It's YOUR responsibility to make the most of it

Tenacity

- You don't need to be a genius to earn a Ms or PhD
- You do need to have tenacity
- It's common to have a slump period
 - Often ~ 3rd year



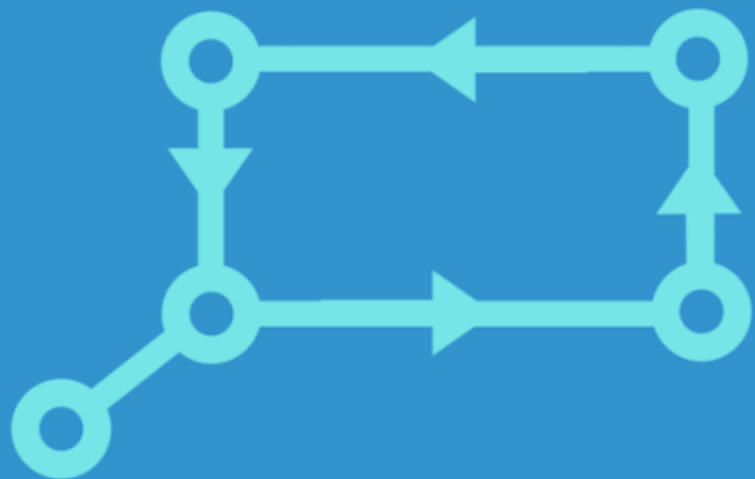
Common Challenges

- Impostor Syndrome
- Difficulty in learning specific skills/comprehending papers
- Project is not working
- Staying motivated in a low-structure environment
- Unclear faculty expectations
- Doubts about the value of the experience/degree
- Did you hear about a pandemic?

Flexibility (+ Resourcefulness)

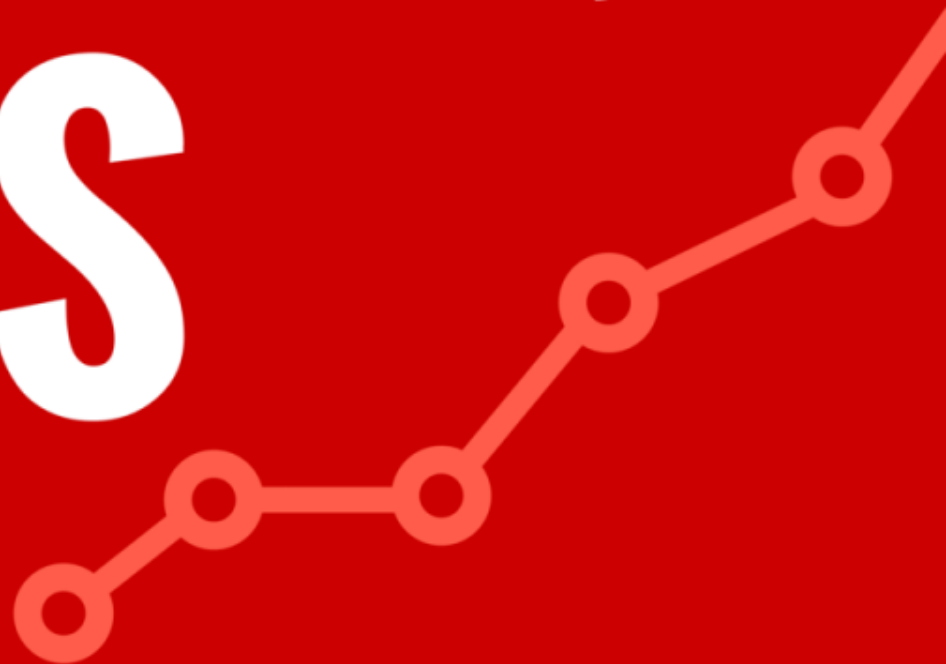
- Plan on encountering roadblocks
 - What if the equipment/material you need is difficult to access? What if it breaks?
 - What if you realize you picked the wrong lab/advisor?
- How can you maximize your efforts?
 - Going to a different lab/country to do part of your work?

Persistence



IMPLEMENT- CHECK - REPEAT

Tenacity



IMPLEMENT - ANALYSE- ADJUST

Interpersonal Skills

“I thought I was here because of my thinking skills!”

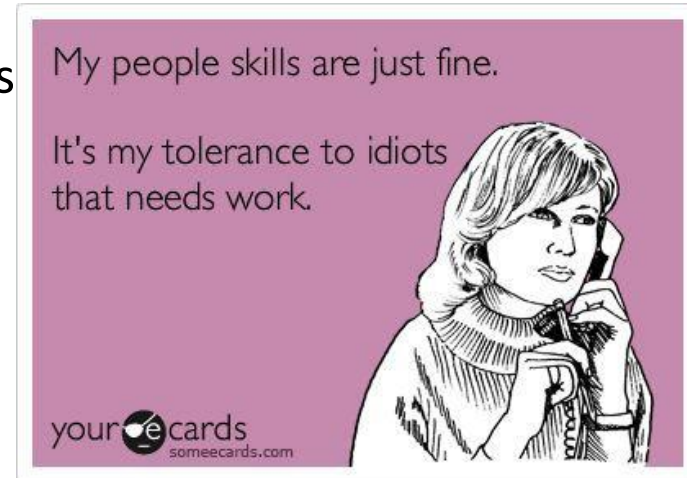


**“Yes, I think I have good people skills.
What kind of idiot question is that?”**

Interpersonal Skills

- Embrace the “politics” and cultivate a positive attitude
 - This is the best way to get things done effectively
 - You will likely end up in a leadership role and will need to be effective
- Simple rules:
 - Respect people’s expertise, advice, and time
 - Understand and adjust to different work styles
 - Always give credit where credit is due
 - Apologize if at fault
 - Avoid making assumptions

*How to Win Friends and Influence People, by Dale Carnegie



Organizational Skills

What one thing could you do (that you are not doing now) that, if done on a regular basis, would make a positive difference in your life?

Setting priorities

URGENT

NOT URGENT

“Failing to plan
is planning to
fail”

IMPORTANT

NOT

IMPORTANT

The 7 Habits of
Highly Effective
People, by
Stephen Covey

**NOT
IMPORTANT**

IMPORTANT

URGENT

NOT URGENT

Quadrant 1

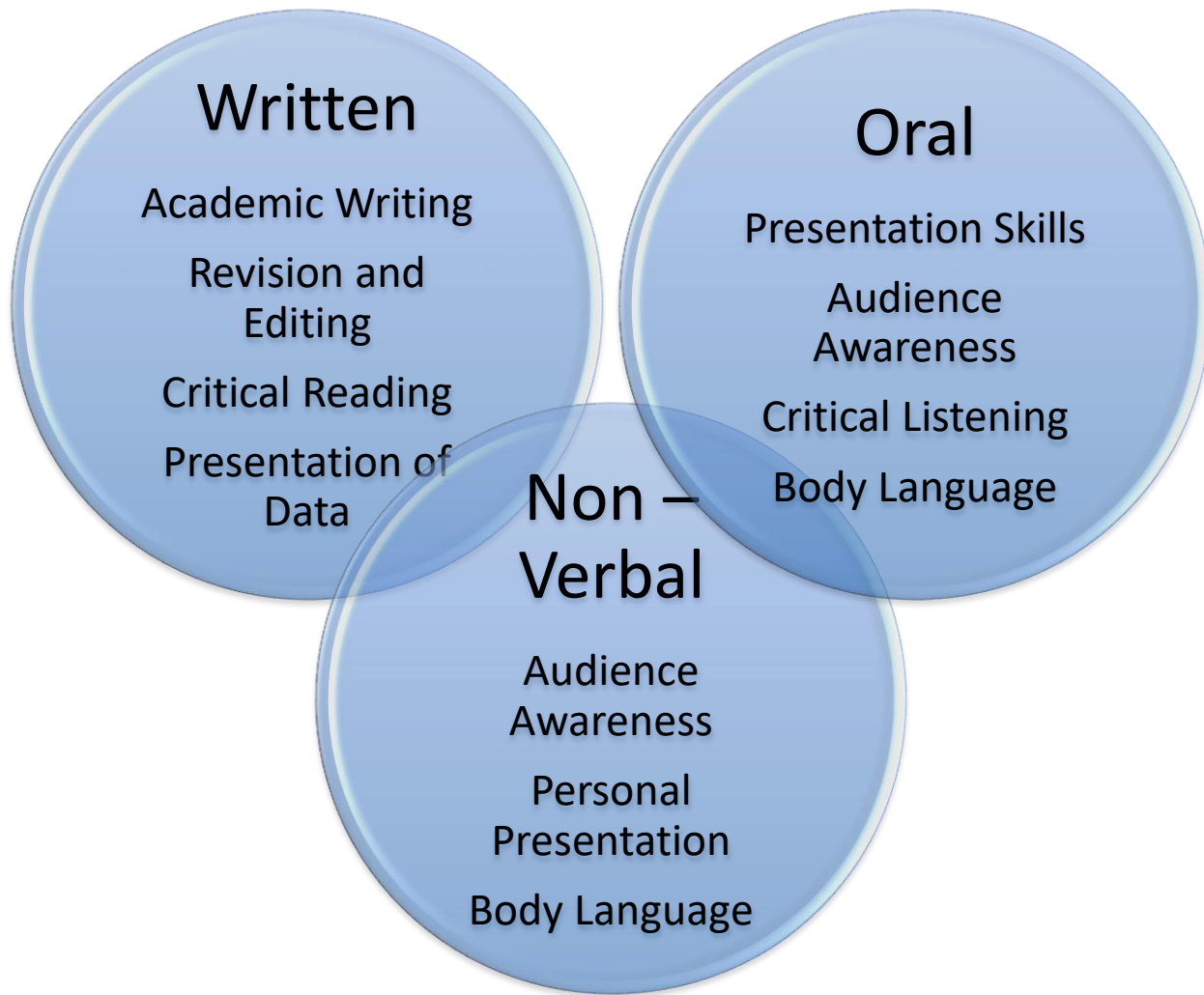
Quadrant 2

Quadrant 3

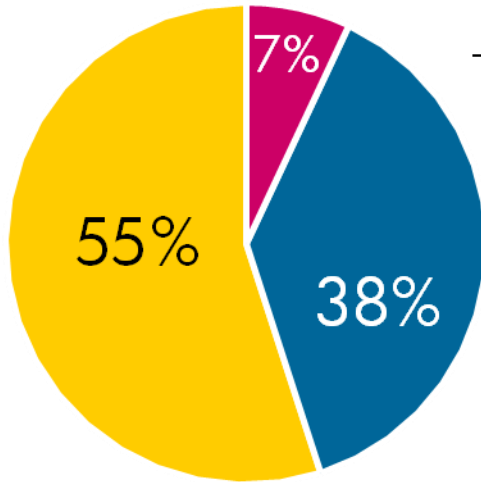
Quadrant 4

Communication Skills

- Consistently ranks as one of the top skills desired in job candidates
 - Is that really so hard to have?
 - What are “communication skills”?



Non-Verbal Communication



Dr. Albert Mehrabian's 7-38-55% Rule

Elements of Personal Communication

- 7% spoken words
- 38% voice, tone
- 55% body language

Refining skills in graduate school...

Succeeding in Graduate School

A successful graduate experience will equip you with the *skills* and *credentials* to get a job in your career of interest.

Your graduate program will provide you with the necessary *technical* and *theoretical* skills.

But you still need to learn how to best leverage your skills to be a successful professional.

Skills to develop in graduate school

Career Advancement

Interviewing skills
Career exploration

Professionalism

Punctuality
Reliability

Management and Leadership

Conflict management
Mentoring Up



Research Skills and Knowledge

Research design
Responsible conduct of research

Effectiveness and Purpose

Time management
Self care

Communication

Grant proposal writing
Public speaking

The Individual Development Plan

Structured Planning Tool

Set **short-term**
goals

Productive and
intentional training

Set **long-term**
goals

Build professional
skills, meet interests
& values

Mentoring tool

Establish
mentor/mentee
expectations, have
difficult
conversations

Living document

Revisit yearly to
assess progress and
revise goals

EARLY STAGE

Doctor of Philosophy: 1-2 years

MIDDLE STAGE

Doctor of Philosophy: 2-4 years

FINAL STAGE

Doctor of Philosophy: 4-6 years

Research Skills and Knowledge

- ☐ Develop broad-based knowledge of field
- ☐ Determine broader topic for your thesis
- ☐ Identify and develop tools and skills needed for research
- ☐ Complete safety and other required training
- ☐ Learn about Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)
- ☐ Learn how to use citation manager software
- ☐ Identify dissertation supervisory committee members
- ☐ Learn about rigor and reproducibility in research

- ☐ Start writing articles for publication
- ☐ Develop dissertation proposal or project proposal/prospectus
- ☐ Learn proper data management
- ☐ Continue to develop expertise and skills
- ☐ Complete comprehensive and/or qualifying exams
- ☐ Engage in heavy data gathering
- ☐ Complete proposal writing training
- ☐ Complete data visualization training

- ☐ Practice presenting dissertation to peers and faculty
- ☐ Ensure appropriate storage and access of data and protocols
- ☐ Write dissertation
- ☐ Publish research
- ☐ Develop independent research plan

Management and Leadership

- ☐ Join professional society in field
- ☐ Volunteer for organizations and conferences in field
- ☐ Develop funding plan and apply for fellowships and grants
- ☐ Help organize events

- ☐ Mentor undergraduate students
- ☐ Serve in leadership role in professional society
- ☐ Seek out and lead collaborative efforts
- ☐ Attend leadership and management development training
- ☐ Join university committees
- ☐ Apply for dissertation fellowships and grants

- ☐ Mentor early-stage graduate students
- ☐ Engage in peer mentoring
- ☐ Apply for postdoctoral fellowships and grants
- ☐ Develop entrepreneurial skills

Effectiveness and Purpose

- ☐ Become familiar with Gainesville
- ☐ Learn expectations of department and campus culture
- ☐ Create Individual Development Plan (IDP) degree timeline
- ☐ Become familiar with campus resources
- ☐ Devise time management strategies
- ☐ Devise wellness strategies
- ☐ Identify purpose and goals of graduate education

- ☐ Identify values and compatible career options
- ☐ Enhance emotional intelligence
- ☐ Evaluate skills and areas for improvement
- ☐ Revisit and revise time management strategies
- ☐ Practice self-care

- ☐ Devise a dissertation writing schedule
- ☐ Narrow down career options
- ☐ Practice self-care

Professionalism

- ☐ Identify and build relationships with mentors
- ☐ Establish mutual expectations with advisor
- ☐ Learn proper conference attendance etiquette
- ☐ Participate in conferences, seminars, and department events
- ☐ Identify and address different leadership and work styles
- ☐ Identify international opportunities
- ☐ Practice cultural awareness and inclusion
- ☐ Identify and adhere to norms or professional conduct in field

- ☐ Strengthen and expand network
- ☐ Find out about local and international funding
- ☐ Serve on university committees
- ☐ Engage in student organizations and community outreach
- ☐ Present at conferences
- ☐ Expand pool of mentors and peers
- ☐ Gain international experience
- ☐ Develop social media presence

- ☐ Present at conferences
- ☐ Network for diverse career options
- ☐ Be a positive representative of school and field
- ☐ Promote accomplishments on social media
- ☐ Create ePortfolio

Communication

- ☐ Attend teaching assistant workshops
- ☐ Visit the Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication
- ☐ Take a proposal writing course
- ☐ Learn your field's publications, submission standards, and writing styles
- ☐ Visit Writing Studio

- ☐ Serve as a teaching assistant or teach course
- ☐ Present at Graduate Student Research Day
- ☐ Attend communication workshops
- ☐ Present at conferences specific to your field
- ☐ Present to "general public" audiences and engage in outreach
- ☐ Develop "elevator pitch"

- ☐ Develop and teach course
- ☐ Compete at Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) contest
- ☐ Form or join writing group and engage in peer editing
- ☐ Attend Dissertation Bootcamp
- ☐ Write early career proposal/fellowship application

Career Advancement

- ☐ Create Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- ☐ Research career options inside and outside of academia
- ☐ Meet with career services
- ☐ Set up LinkedIn profile
- ☐ Research internships

- ☐ Revisit and revise Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- ☐ Attend networking events and workshops
- ☐ Update curriculum vitae/resume
- ☐ Explore career options
- ☐ Contact potential collaborators and employers
- ☐ Do internship or externship
- ☐ Start to build intentional network

- ☐ Revisit and revise Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- ☐ Review curriculum vitae or resume with mentors and colleagues
- ☐ Attend career fairs and interview/negotiation workshops
- ☐ Conduct informational interviews
- ☐ Refine LinkedIn profile
- ☐ Prepare job application materials and practice "job talk"
- ☐ Apply for any necessary visas

Campus Resources

Office of Graduate Professional Development



Office of Graduate Professional Development

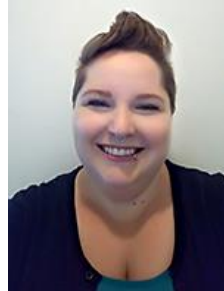
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Office of Graduate Professional Development

- Weekly professional development workshops
 - Finding a thesis/dissertation topic
 - Giving effective oral presentations
 - Finding scholarly information
 - Academic writing
 - My world is not my doctoral program

Office of Graduate Professional Development

- One-on-one professional development advising
- One-on-one career advising (with C3)
- Roadmap for Success
- Fall Series: Successful Job Search
- Spring: Preparing Future Faculty
- Writing program

Campus Resources

Counseling and
Wellness Center

Libraries

Thrive@UF

Career Connections
Center

GatorWell

Office of Teaching
Excellence

Dial Center for Written
and Oral Communication

Writing
Studio

CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Career Connections Center

1300 J Wayne Reitz Union (655 Museum Road)
352 392 1601
career.ufl.edu

Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere

200 Walker Hall (14898 Union Road)
352 392 0796
humanities.ufl.edu

Center for Teaching Excellence

200 Bryant Hall (1772 Stadium Road)
352 294 0811
teach.ufl.edu

Counseling & Wellness Center

3190 Radio Road
352 392 1575
counseling.ufl.edu

Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication

402 Rolfs Hall (341 Buckman Drive)
352 392 5421
cwoc.ufl.edu

GatorWell Health Promotion Services

1100 J Wayne Reitz Union (655 Museum Road)
352 273 4450
gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu

International Center

170 The Hub (1765 Stadium Road)
352 392 5323
internationalcenter.ufl.edu

Office of Biomedical Research Career Development

CG72 Communicore Ground Floor
352 294 8335
graddev.ufhealth.org

Office of Graduate Diversity Initiatives

123 Grinter Hall (1523 Union Road)
352 2392 6444
graduateschool.ufl.edu/ogdi

Office of Graduate Professional Development

129 Grinter Hall (1523 Union Road)
352 294 0488
graduateschool.ufl.edu/ogpd

Office of the Ombuds

31 Tigert Hall (300 SW 13th Street)
352 392 1308
www.ombuds.ufl.edu

Research Integrity at UF Office of Research

460 Grinter Hall (1523 Union Road)
352 392 9174 or (toll-free) 1 877 556 5356
research.ufl.edu/compliance/research-integrity.html

UF Innovate

747 SW 2nd Avenue
352 294 0885
innovate.research.ufl.edu

UF Libraries

352 273 2525
Multiple locations across campus
Online map: www.uflib.ufl.edu/liblocations.html

UF Training and Organizational Development

1603 UF East Campus (2140 NE Waldo Road)
352 392 4626
learn-and-grow.hr.ufl.edu

Writing Studio

339 Turlington Hall (330 Newell Drive)
352 3846 1138
writing.ufl.edu

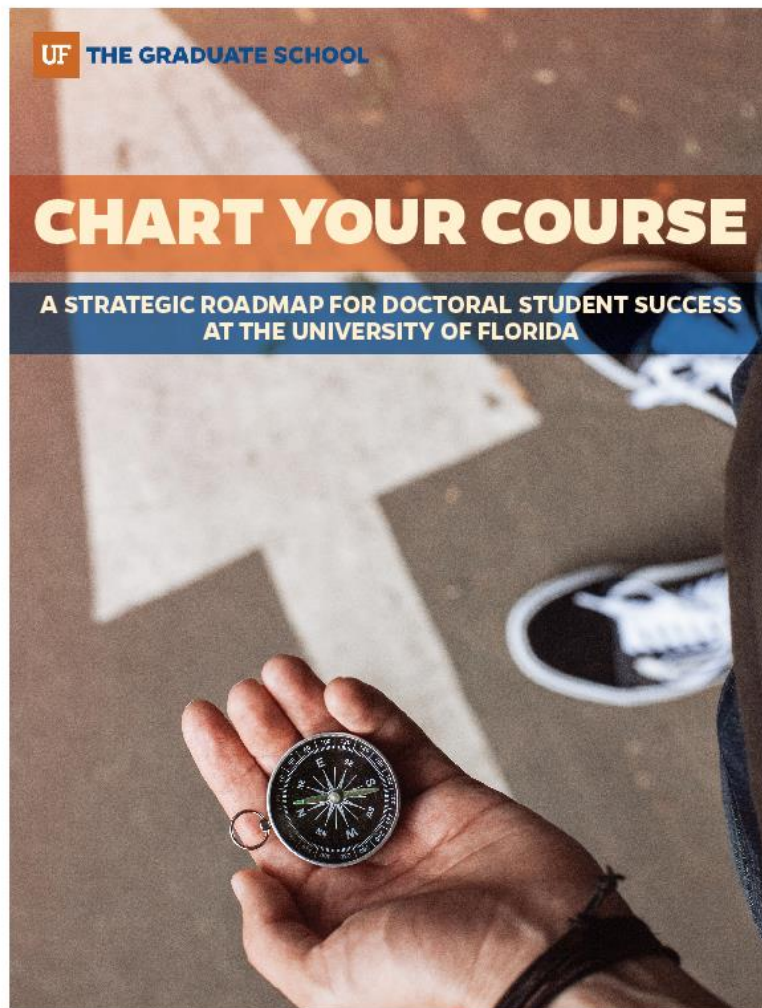


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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

CHART YOUR COURSE

A STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR DOCTORAL STUDENT SUCCESS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



Off-Campus Resources

Counseling and
Wellness Center

Libraries

Thrive@UF

Career Connections
Center

GatorWell

Office of Teaching
Excellence

Dial Center for Written
and Oral Communication

Writing
Studio

National Center for
Faculty
Development and
Diversity

LinkedIn Learning

Employee
Assistance
Program

CIRTL

NCFDD

1

SKILL #1: Every Semester Needs a Plan

[Watch Now](#)

2

SKILL #2: How to Align Your Time with Your Priorities

[Watch Now](#)

3

SKILL #3: How to Develop a Daily Writing Practice

[Watch Now](#)

4

SKILL #4: Mastering Academic Time Management

[Watch Now](#)

5

SKILL #5: Moving from Resistance to Writing

[Watch Now](#)

6

SKILL #6: The Art of Saying No

[Watch Now](#)

7

SKILL #7: Cultivating Your Network of Mentors, Sponsors, & Collaborators

[Watch Now](#)

8

Skill #8: Overcoming Academic Perfectionism

[Watch Now](#)

LinkedIn Learning



Technical Writing: Reports



Side Hustle Strategies for Designers



Enhancing Resilience



The New Rules of Work

Top liked on LinkedIn Learning

< Prev



Negotiating Your Job Offer



Managing High Potentials



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Working with Difficult People

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CONTACT US... ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Your UF Employee Assistance Program offers someone to talk to and resources to consult whenever and wherever you need them. All UF faculty, staff, graduate assistants, non-student OPS employees, house staff/residents, and postdoc associates as well as their household members are eligible to receive services.

Call: 833.306.0103

TTY: 800.697.0353

Your toll-free number gives you direct, 24/7 access to a licensed counselor, who will answer your questions and, if needed, refer you to a counselor or other resources.

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID: UFEAP

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CIRTL

Fall 2020 content:

- Course:
 - Equity in STEM for all genders
- MOOC:
 - An introduction to evidence-based STEM teaching
- Workshops:
 - Bring an inclusive mindset to your teaching
 - Reducing math anxiety among students
- Events:
 - Engaging students through high-impact practices



Other Resources

ABOUT ASSESSMENTS RESOURCES - MY PLAN CONTACT SPONSORS FAQs Q | PROFILE & RESULTS SIGN OUT

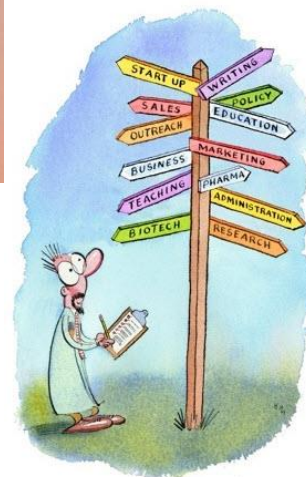
IMAGINE PHD

a career exploration and planning tool for the humanities and social sciences.

YOUR PROFILE SIGN OUT

Social Science and Humanities

STEM



You have put a lot of time and effort into pursuing your PhD degree. Now it's time to explore your career. An individual development plan (IDP) helps you explore career possibilities.

myIDP provides:

- Exercises to help you examine your skills, interests, and values
- A list of 20 scientific career paths with a prediction of which ones best fit you
- A tool for setting strategic goals for the coming year, with optional reminders
- Articles and resources to guide you through the process

There is no charge to use this site and we encourage you to return as often as you like to our myIDP series.

Click below to get started.

First Time Here?

Returning User

Authored by:

Cynthia N. Fuhrmann, Ph.D. (UCSF)
Bill Lindstaedt, M.S. (UCSF)

Jennifer A. Hobin, Ph.D. (FASEB)
Philip S. Clifford, Ph.D. (MCW)

Staying informed



A RESOURCE AND OPPORTUNITY NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA GRADUATE SCHOOL OFFICE OF GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

[OGPD Website](#)

[OGPD Calendar](#)

[Submit Your Event to OGPD](#)

Balance is Important



- Don't focus on your project to the exclusion of everything else
- Earning a graduate degree is like running a marathon: you can't run like a sprinter and expect to reach the finish line
- You need to cultivate your mental and physical wellness to be a high performer
 - Treat these activities as investments: they increase the quality of your work

What next?

- Attend professional development opportunities on campus!
- Explore the wealth of resources UF has to offer
- Specific advice with clear directions:
<http://faculty.washington.edu/wpratt/survive.htm>

Take Away

- Grad school can be an amazing time
- Do the best you can – that's why you're going to graduate school
- Don't neglect "soft skills"
- Set goals - but be flexible
- Explore other interests – it'll make you happier and might just land you a job
- Build relationships





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Questions??

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