



**UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**



Individual Development Plan

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research | Professional Development

**Third
Edition**

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Please Note: Graduate students admitted from September 2016 and onwards 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. For more information, contact the Professional Development Team: grad.pd@ualberta.ca

Professional Development Requirement

Individual Development Plan

After consultation with the Graduate Students' Association and FGSR Council, and considering 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). The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is designed to consider the experiences, knowledge, wholeness, and future of all graduate students, who represent a tremendously diverse graduate student community. Within these considerations the IDP is designed to align with an Indigenous world views to see the "whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual) as interconnected to the land and relationships to others (family, community, nation)¹" as part of the career journey. This perspective was describe as a "Holistic Lifelong Learning Mindset" by the Canadian Council on Learning (2009). The IDP is an opportunity to respect Indigenous knowledge, to present career development in a way that is relevant to Indigenous students and faculty, to take responsibility to foster inclusion, and to provide reciprocity for students and faculty to learn together. The approach to consider the "whole person" also will resonate with our broader graduate community who come from many faiths and cultures.

What is an Individual Development Plan?

An IDP is a professional development tool used to help an individual set attainable goals with consideration of their strengths or gifts and areas for growth. 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 complement the disciplinary knowledge you develop through your graduate program with experiences, skills, and competencies you identified to achieve your goals and fulfill you as a whole person.

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, competencies, and knowledges that will set you on a path to achieving your professional goals. Your goals may change during the course of your program. This exciting initiative will 1) help you recognize your talents, 2) motivate you to pursue your interests and learn professional skills, and 3) encourage you to make connections that will help you excel in your chosen field. For many graduate students this includes making beneficial contributions to their community and society at large.

Identifying professional development activities is part of the IDP process. The pursuit of professional

¹ Cull, I., Hancock, R.L.A., McKeown, S., Pidgeon, M. & Vedan, A. (2018). Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors. Victoria, BC: BCcampus. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/chapter/indigenous-ways-of-knowing-and-being/>

development is a lifelong activity that professionals in all stages of their careers pursue. Your professional development needs will be specific to you, and will likely vary from other students due to your background, discipline, and professional goals.

We also want you to see yourself as an innovator of the future. All graduate students develop aspects of the entrepreneurial mindset during their program. Entrepreneurship being more broadly defined as “the innate desire to be engaged in work that matters, to solve problems and to see our work lead to more meaning and prosperity in our lives².”



Lifelong Learning Framework⁴

This IDP workbook will help you clarify your career goals, reflect on your yourself and your interconnections with land and others, choose useful PD activities, and meet your academic requirements so you are well equipped to achieve your career and life goals. The lifelong learning framework is a useful tool to see connections and will be revisited in Step 1.

The PD Requirement with its two components (IDP and eight hours of professional development activities) are flexible and allow you to tailor the requirement to your individual needs. Please confirm with your department how this requirement is fulfilled in your program.

Professional development is the active acquisition of skills, knowledge, and mindset to realize one’s strength or gifts 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.

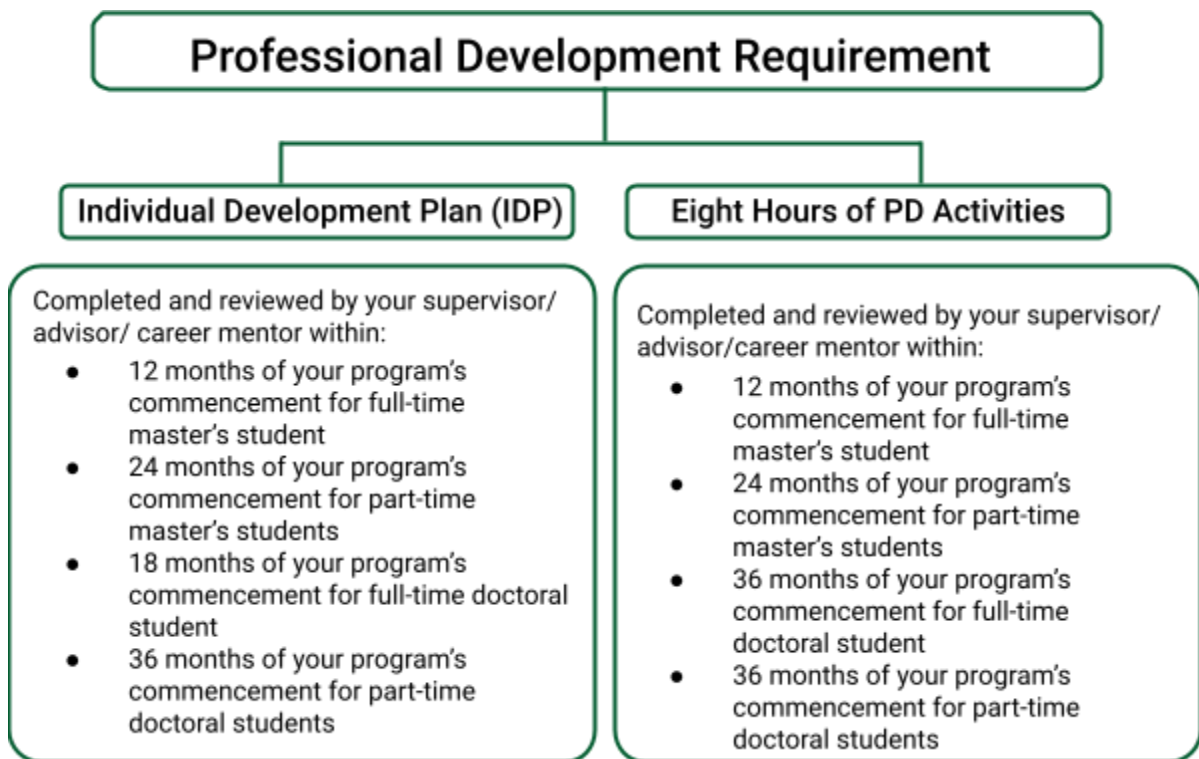
² Schoeniger, Gary. (2021). The Ice House Train-the-Trainer Entrepreneurship Course. The Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative. Mentor, Ohio

⁴ <https://www.cbe.ab.ca/about-us/policies-and-regulations/Documents/Indigenous-Education-Holistic-Lifelong-Learning-Framework.pdf>

The two-part IDP Series can guide the completion of your IDP and can help you prepare to review it with your supervisor, advisor and/or career mentor. 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 (human qualities) 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, advisor or career mentor by certain deadlines depending on your academic program. IDPs are the property of the student and not retained by the department or supervisor.



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 in response to new opportunities that emerge. Regularly considering factors that influence your career management such as shifting priorities and personal circumstances will also ensure that you are preparing well for your professional and life goals. If you are in a constant state of change, you may want to set more incremental goals or recognize that you may need to be more flexible with your timing. 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, competencies and knowledge 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 (e.g. self-assessment, reflection, quiz, write-pair-share, evidence of knowledge application, etc.) Learning activities under the tutelage of Indigenous elders fall under this consideration where students may provide a self-assessment, application of knowledge, reflection, or practice that aligns with Indigenous knowledge.
- Falls outside of research methods training, capstone project, thesis or equivalent, and required practicum. Practicums and internships that have assessment, reflection, and feedback components can be applied towards the PD requirement (e.g. GSIP).
- Supports the career goals and/or seven skills or competencies identified in the IDP.

Departmental Restrictions: Your department may have specific requirements to meet their PD activities. Contact your department if you have questions about the approved PD activities.

Before You Begin: Top Tips for Your IDP and Beyond

1. **Take adequate time:** It can take more than a day to fully explore your career options. Follow current trends about job markets. Keep an open mind about various career paths and position yourself for a transition into multiple career paths. Recognize your career directions may also change over time as new opportunities emerge, your interests shift, and your personal commitments change. Also, remember that a 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:** 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 and life management. This may include taking time to connect spiritually with yourself, others, and your surroundings. Reflect on how your journey is aligning with your values and what is important to you.
3. **Career exploration is continuous:** Keep an ongoing list of sessions and activities that are attractive to you and continue to test whether your goals are a good fit. This exploration 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:** A critical component of a wholistic approach to learning is to build 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 networks and skills. Having a community may be an essential part of your journey.
5. **Formal education is one piece of the academic journey:** Remember that your formal education is just one piece of what future employers seek. Employers hire people who have the right combination of knowledge, skills/competencies, related or lived experience and personal attributes. Invest in your future by taking time to build skills/competencies and experiences. Invest in understanding other worldviews and ways of knowing.
6. **Practice consistent communication:** Understand your supervisor/advisor'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/advisor/committee, you will demonstrate your progress.
7. **Manage Up:** Your supervisor may need your support in supporting you! Provide your supervisor/advisor with links to support materials for the IDP so that they are also well prepared for your IDP conversation. Let your supervisor/advisor know what would help you to be effective in your program. Keep notes of your meetings and share them with your supervisor/advisor so you both have a clear understanding of next steps and expectations. This is an opportunity to include your advisor/supervisor/career coach on your journey, allowing them to learn with you as you explore ideas and opportunities.
8. **Look at the idea of "career" broadly:** When developing your IDP, think about your "career" in broad terms. Career is the sum of ALL experiences, including paid and unpaid work, formal and informal learning, lived experiences, and leisure activities throughout life. Recall that your career journey will include how you, as a whole person, are connected to others and to your environment. Note also that you may be building skills beyond what you had first anticipated, such as an entrepreneurial mindset.

IDP Step 1: Ideas Generation

As a first step in creating your IDP, think about the things you do, areas that need further development, what is important to you in your life, and where you want to have impact. This will help you think about career paths that are a good fit (Step 2) and to evaluate opportunities that emerge. For each section below, review the set of questions and select one to reflect on. Use each category to explore what is meaningful to you as you build your career and life (note you are welcome to address more than one question if it helps you more fully capture each category).

Understanding your motivators or purpose³ (*Mind - to Know from Lifelong Learning Framework*)

1. Which activities make me feel alive and engaged?
2. What do I like to do in my spare time?
3. When have I been motivated or inspired?
4. What tasks do you want to avoid in your career or job?

Leveraging your knowledge, skills, attributes and competencies (*Body - to Do from Lifelong Learning Framework*)

1. What are my strengths or what are my gifts?
2. What are my areas of growth?
3. How do I want to be remembered/what do my actions say (attributes or experiences)?

³ You may want to consider *What is your purpose?* and reflect on how you got to where you did. <https://hbr.org/2012/10/how-to-let-your-purpose-find-y>

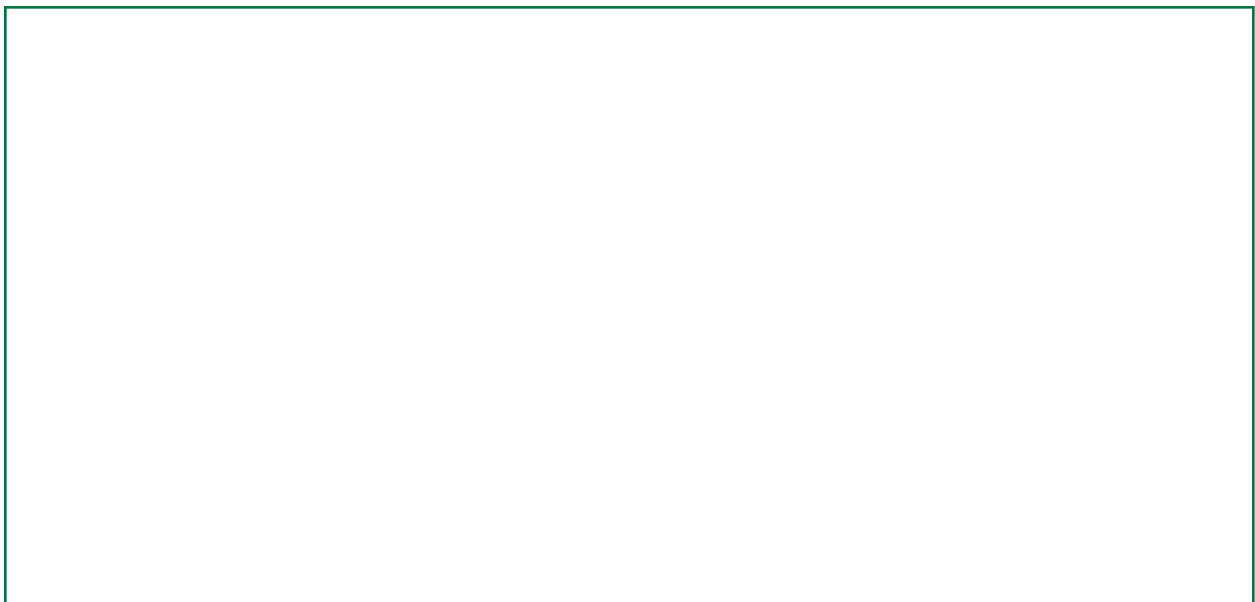
Your hope for future generations and your legacy (*Heart - to Belong from Lifelong Learning Framework*)

1. What do I hope to create? How am I uniquely positioned to serve or achieve this outcome?
2. Where do I want to have an impact?
3. Who do I hope to inspire?
4. What social issues do I feel passionate about and want to help support or change?



Grounding Yourself (*Spirit - to Be from Lifelong Learning Framework*)

1. Where or how will you find emotional support for your journey?
2. How will you nurture your spiritual self?
3. Where do you find sources of inspiration?
4. What spaces help foster a sense of belonging or purpose for you?
5. What communities help foster a place of belonging or sense of purpose for you?



IDP Step 2: Self-Assessment

There are seven skills and competencies 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. Employers are also interested in people who have values or personal characteristics that align with their organizations (and this will be explored in Step 3).

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 and learning you would like to build into your timeline to develop the skills and competencies needed to meet your goals.

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. Use the criteria below to rate your skills and competencies, and think about evidence of your rating. If you have given yourself a strong rating, what are examples of situations where you have demonstrated this competency? If you have identified an area of growth, what leads you to believe you need to develop this skill?

Rating	Descriptor
1	Yet to be Developed: You have no experience with this skill or competency.
2	Developing: You have started to develop your skill or competency, but your proficiency is limited or you have no applied experience. With coaching, you can demonstrate this skill in simple situations.
3	Proficient: You have a developed understanding of and experience with this skill or competency, and you can apply it in both predictable and new situations.
4	Highly Effective: You demonstrate a broad and deep understanding of this skill or competency and have substantial experience in the area. You are able to apply this skill or competency regularly and independently, and apply it in complex and varied situations. You are a role model for this skill or competency.

TIPS

1. *Use the self-assessment to identify 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. Many examples can be drawn from your experiences in your graduate program, as well as from other types of formal training and 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:* 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 and life goals will take you.

2A: Creativity



Creativity is closely tied to critical thinking, and it impacts the extent to which you 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, and draws upon all sources of knowledge and worldviews. This balance allows your ideas to be developed, reimagined and marketed, or which easily lends itself to entrepreneurial thinking and innovation. Look for evidence of this skill from your capstone project, thesis or internship. FGSR sessions that align with creativity include the Design Thinking series.

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
Problem solve using new solutions or approaches		
Verify workability of creative ideas		
Develop and implement creative ideas within an ethical framework		

Ability to :	Rating	Evidence for my rating
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		
Link ideas to new services, products, policies, processes, and best practices		
Link my skills, competencies, and interests to emerging opportunities		
Bring community together to explore solutions to social, environmental, and health challenges, among others		

2B: Communication



An ability to communicate in a variety of contexts, with different audiences, and across cultures is an essential skill in your professional life that allows people to learn from each other and fosters inclusivity. This means communicating clearly and assertively, while demonstrating emotional intelligence and good listening habits. Communicating your ideas is essential in any entrepreneurial endeavor. Professional networking skills and exhibiting professional etiquette are also essential to your career success. Many FGSR sessions contribute to building communication skills including participating in the Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) and Graduate Teaching and Learning Program.

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

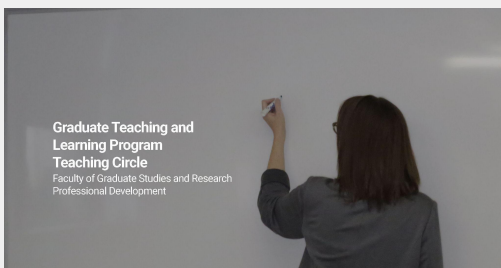
1) Yet to be developed | 2) Developing | 3) Proficient | 4) Highly effective

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/create a narrative of your scholarly work		
Give an oral presentation for a discipline specific audience		
Communicate your expertise to a general audience (Make complex ideas accessible)		
Communicate your expertise to a discipline specific audience		
Effectively use social media communication		
Demonstrate professional/workplace etiquette and ethics		
Ability to network		
Communicate with audiences who may not share your culture/ beliefs		
Provide feedback		
Communicate with emotional intelligence/lead difficult conversations		
Demonstrate active listening skills		
Pitch an idea to a general audience		
Build a teaching portfolio		
Communicate within your community		

TIPS



The [Three Minute Thesis](#) competition is a great way to develop your ability to share the importance of your research with a multidisciplinary audience. Visit uab.ca/gradpd for more information.



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 multitiered program that can assist you in developing your teaching skills and competencies.

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. Spiritual and emotional well-being play a critical role in building confidence and success. Sessions hosted during the Invest in Your Future and PD Week are intended to build your confidence and leadership capacity.

Rate your current Confidence 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 or failures		
Champion yourself and others		
Act as a role model for others		
Take on a leadership role		
Supervise or mentor others		
Take initiative to bring about positive change in academic, professional, and personal contexts		
Respond professionally and ethically to feedback		
Take service initiative in the community		
Demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges/setbacks/failure		
Link your skills, competencies, and interests to emerging opportunities		
Participate in competitive events or participate in public performances/exhibits		

2D: Scholarship



Whether it is from doing a course paper, capstone project, or thesis, scholarship brings together diverse skills that demonstrate your capacity to locate, interpret, and manage information. Scholarship is more than your ability to develop a deep knowledge and broad scope of your subject field, it is 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 policy, best practice, product or service, as demonstrated by entrepreneurial thinking. For others, this means tackling complex issues that impact their local, national or global community. Reflect on your academic activities and have discussions with your advisor/supervisor and colleagues on how you are developing these skills. The Innovation Bridge series can help you see the broader application of the skills you are building in your graduate program.

Rate your current Scholarship 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 academic writing skills		
Demonstrate discipline-specific research or performance skills		
Convey breadth and depth of your discipline to a lay audience		
Collect and manage information		
Project management		
Evaluate, analyze, and interpret information effectively		
Demonstrate an understanding of the publication submission/peer review process		
Generate, interpret and share new knowledge		
Write a research proposal or research statement		
Manage budgets and/or resources		
Apply for or write a grant application		
Do an “elevator” pitch		
Develop a business plan		
Build a professional network		

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 and worldviews, carrying out ethical research, separating your personal and professional lives, and demonstrating good use of

your time. As a graduate student you are a member of the larger research community that carries additional expectations. Ethical responsibility is about demonstrating civic and social responsibility by sharing your research with society and advocating for the needs of others. These considerations can be extended to an entrepreneurial mindset. The Ethics and Academic Citizenship requirement is one avenue to help you develop these skills.

Rate your current Ethical Responsibility 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		
Manage time effectively and prioritize workload		
Conduct yourself with personal accountability		
Conduct research ethically and 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, our lands, and needs of others		
Conduct yourself according to the informal/formal discipline-specific codes of behavior		
Understanding the cultural, psychological, and behavioral aspects of conflict		
Demonstrate workplace behaviors that highlight the value of equity,		

diversity and inclusion (EDI)		
Demonstrate workplace behaviors that support the work of Truth and Reconciliation		

2F: Critical Thinking



Critical thinking is a central skill in your professional life. Your mental agility and ability to examine, interpret, deconstruct, and critique information impacts your capacity to perceive/ troubleshoot problems, and to think strategically and creatively. Through your course work, capstone, thesis, and internship activities, you will have opportunities to demonstrate your process, interpret, and act on information. Likewise, your ability to examine personal and disciplinary assumptions impacts your ability to ask perceptive and clearly defined questions. This may require you to reflect on who you are as a whole person to generate greater self-awareness. These are skills that are shared with the entrepreneurial mindset and can be applied to re-imagining your ideas for a new audience, assessing market fit, and identifying the impact on our local and global community. Our online access to courses can help you build a variety of skills and these are offered through FGSR, Mitacs, and Lynda.com.

Rate your current Critical Thinking 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		
Offer solutions and identify impact		

2G: Collaboration



The ability to collaborate, assume different roles within the team environment, and build working relationships are crucial professional skills. Your ability to give and receive constructive feedback, have difficult conversations, and resolve conflicts are an essential part of collaboration. These conversations may draw upon a deeper understanding of different worldviews. You will build these skills through teaching, community engagement, courses, and research collaborations. Collaboration is critical to the entrepreneurial mindset, where you will find yourself working with others to resolve issues. Fostering and developing meaningful relationships within communities can result in deeply impactful outcomes. The Community Engagement course would be a great option if you are looking at how to create a more meaningful connection with the community.

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 in a multicultural environment		
Collaborate with people of different educational backgrounds		
Collaborate across disciplines		
Provide constructive feedback		

Receive and act upon constructive feedback		
Compromise and balance competing needs ethically		
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		
Ability to identify my role (positive and negative) on the outcomes of collaborative projects		
Leverage connections to the community to grow your own business, foundation, organization		

Additional notes:

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.

IDP Step 3: Career Exploration

Workplace Values and Preferences

In addition to thinking about your strengths, what you like doing, the impact you want to have throughout your career, and what keeps you whole, 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 in your job search, recognizing that you will need to make compromises.

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

TIPS

While the list⁴ 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 are "nice to have" in your career.
- Values are things that are very important to you in your career.
- Core values are vital to your career.

⁴ 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.

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				
Opportunities 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 hours work				

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 travel				
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 within my field with regular moderate increases				
Opportunity to earn top salary in my field and bonuses				
Employer paid health benefits				
Be responsible for paying my health related expenses				
Spiritual or religious practices kept private and separate from work environment				
Spiritual or religious practices valued and accepted in work environment				
Work in diverse work community				
Workplace has a focus on wellness				

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:

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 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 or area of research. Use the same skills to think about career choices. This can include talking to people and conducting online research of career sites, job boards, and other employment supports as new opportunities arise, and as your personal and professional priorities shift.

Job Searching

At this stage you need to identify possible career paths that are of interest to you. Look at possibilities in industry, government, nonprofit sectors, and academia. 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 what you have written in Step One and on workplace values and preferences. Remember, the ideas you generate here may change over time as opportunities emerge, your priorities change, and you explore new ideas and experiences.

1. What are my long and short-term life goals? (E.g. Helping people, work-life balance, contributing to social, cultural, economic innovation)?
2. What keywords would I use in a job search using job boards like Indeed/Monster/LinkedIn/Glassdoor/Windspeaker?

3. What career titles/positions presented themselves with your search?

My Three Career Options

Now that you have begun to envision your work-life, identify three possible career paths.

Career Option 1

Describe your career option:

Reasons why this career option interests me:

Skills, competencies, and experiences required in this career (e.g. What is listed in the job ads?):

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

Career Option 2

Describe your career option:

Reasons why this career option interests me:

Skills, competencies, and experiences required in this career (e.g. What is listed in the job ads?):

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

Career Option 3

Describe your career option:

Reasons why this career option interests me:

Skills, competencies, and experiences required in this career (e.g. What is listed in the job ads?):

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

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.

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.)

TIPS

There are many opportunities available to you: the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research 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 and checking campusBridge. There are many other opportunities available to you through your department, the Career Centre, the Academic Success Centre, and your workplace or professional associations. Be sure to check your inbox regularly for the Graduate Student Digest, GSA and department newsletters, and PD reminders so you do not miss out on any fantastic opportunities!

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 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), Ethics and Academic Citizenship 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 your program is thesis or course based, your program is a stepping-stone in your career journey. 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/advisor 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. It will also convey to your supervisor/advisor/career coach your various commitments, how you are taking care of your well-being (physical, emotional, and spiritual) and the communities that support you.

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, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-based**. This will increase the likelihood of meeting these milestones.

Not everything listed below will apply to you and your degree program. If you are not sure if something listed below applies to you, contact your department for more information. Note: Select the time scale (No. of Years) relevant to your graduate program.

Degree Completion Goals/Requirements	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	>6
Coursework completed							
Advisor /supervisor determined							
Committee formed (PhD)							
Language requirement (if required)completed							
Ethics Requirement (completed INTD 710 and INTD 720 for doctoral students)							
Individual Development Plan completed (note program deadlines)							
Set up an appointment with my supervisor/advisor/ career mentor to discuss my IDP (note program deadlines)							
Eight Hours of PD Activities completed							
Complete internship or work placement (Master's Course Based)							
Develop capstone project (Master's Course Based)							
Complete capstone project (Master's Course Based)							
Teaching Assistantship							
Research Assistantship							

Write and submit a publication for review							
Attend a conference							
Dissertation/thesis proposal completed							
Complete research for my thesis, dissertation, capstone							
Dissertation/Thesis oral defense preparation							
Scholarship applications (note application deadlines)							
Grant applications (note application deadlines)							

In addition to completing the various requirements of your program, set yourself strategic life and career development goals that will better support you to meet your goals within and beyond academia. There is room to add your own milestones that may better align with your goals you are using your degree to achieve.

Career Development Goals	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	>6
Develop my CV (if pursuing faculty positions)							
Develop my research statement (if pursuing faculty position)							
Develop my teaching (Graduate Teaching and Learning Program)							
Create my statement of teaching philosophy							
Compile my teaching dossier							
Develop a course							
Develop professional social media presence (Academia.edu, Research Gate, LinkedIn, Blog, etc)							
Present at a conference							

Share my research (through opportunities with Community Connect: 3MT, EPL Speaker Series)							
Review abstracts/papers for a conference/journal							
Submit journal article							
Mentor/supervise undergraduate students							
Join a professional association/society							
Create a resume or portfolio							
Gain workplace experience through an internship							
Conduct an informational interview							
Develop/update LinkedIn Profile							
Volunteer on a committee/board							
Develop workplace skills							
Book an appointment to get assistance with my LinkedIn Profile, CV, or resume (Career Centre)							
Make an appointment with a Career Coach (Career Centre)							
Find a career mentor (Job Shadow/Mentoring at Career Centre) or life mentor (Elder, Life Coach).							
Attend networking opportunities							
Attend a career fair/panel							
Build my professional contact list (internal and external to UofA)							
Build a community partnership							

Invest in entrepreneurial training							
Develop business plan for product, policy, best practice, or new process							
Launch your business plan							

Other Demands on My Time	
Quality time with spouse/partner, family and/or friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care for other family members (e.g. elderly parents)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other schedules that I support (e.g. academic supervisor, spouse/partner, children, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work outside my program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical wellbeing activities (e.g. regular exercise, sleep, eating well)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social wellbeing activities (e.g. friendships, hobbies, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional wellbeing activities (e.g. counseling, meditating, relaxation, mindfulness, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spiritual wellbeing activities (e.g. participating in regular faith-based activities, festivities, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Household maintenance activities (e.g. 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"/>
Competitive sports or high performance activities I participate in outside my program	<input type="checkbox"/>

IDP Step 5: Review

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

TIPS

1. *Share your path:* Having the opportunity to talk with your supervisor/advisor 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. This is an opportunity for both of you to learn. Make the most of this opportunity to speak with your supervisor/advisor/career mentor by preparing for the discussion.
2. *Seize the opportunity:* Reviewing your IDP with your supervisor, advisor or career mentor is a great opportunity to ask him or her about their career. What do they enjoy? What do they find challenging? What do they spend most of their time doing? This may provide you with unexpected insights into career management. Many supervisors, advisors and career mentors 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 goals or opportunities.
3. *Ask questions:* The meeting with your supervisor, advisor or career mentor allows you to get their perspective on future opportunities and how you can position yourself to transition into the workplace or to meet your goals. This is also a time to discuss how expectations of your academic program align with your goals and timeline. Make the most of this opportunity by taking the time to think about YOUR questions in advance of the meeting.
4. *Support your supervisor/advisor/career mentor:* Your supervisor, advisor, or career mentor may need support in order to support you. Support your supervisor/advisor/career mentor in the conversation by forwarding them copies of the ABCs of the Professional Development Requirement and IDP Review Guide for Faculty or provide them with a copy of your questions in advance of your meeting.
5. *I do not have a supervisor/advisor/career mentor:* If you do not have a supervisor or advisor, speak with your department/faculty Grad Chair/Grad Coordinator about the policy regarding who reviews IDPs for those students without a supervisor.
6. *Own YOUR IDP:* Remember it is your responsibility to set up a meeting to discuss your IDP with your supervisor/advisor/career mentor. Ensure you review your IDP with your supervisor/advisor/career mentor prior to the deadline specified for your program.

When you meet with your supervisor, advisor, or 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, life, and professional goals. Your supervisor, advisor or career mentor can provide you with guidance about the ways that you can maximize your graduate program and the skill development. Your supervisor, advisor, or mentor can also alert you to opportunities applicable to your interests as well as help assess whether you have created a realistic timeline and have allocated sufficient time for your professional development.

The following is a Review Guide that builds on the activities you have completed in sections 1-4 and prepares you for your conversation with your supervisor, advisor or career mentor. The information is drawn from the IDP Review Guide to direct the conversation and determine whether you have met the requirements of the IDP. Adding comments within the Review Guide is optional.

Review of Step 1: Ideas Generation	
Can I describe my motivators?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you leverage your skills, attributes and competencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the legacy you would like to leave behind?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Possible Discussion Points From Your Supervisor or Advisor

- 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, career or life 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, advisor, or career mentor)

Questions I have for my supervisor/advisor/career mentor

Review of Step 2: Self-Assessment	
Can I talk about my SKILLS and COMPETENCIES by giving concrete EXAMPLES from my past experiences (e.g. work life, leisure, learning, volunteer work, and graduate program experiences)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about the LEVEL of my skill or competencies relative to those required by 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 From Your Supervisor or Advisor

- What did the self-assessment reveal about your strengths?
- Can you give specific examples for the skills where you gave yourself a high or low rating?
- What did the self-assessment reveal to you about the kinds of activities/roles to which you are drawn?
- What are the skills and competencies you need to develop for your career options?
- Are there patterns in your strengths or skills gaps?
- What options have you explored in thinking about your eight hours of PD activities?

Notes about my self-assessment

Questions I have for my supervisor/advisor/career mentor

Review of Step 3: Choose Three Career Options	
Can I explain what appeals to me about the careers I selected?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I share how I view CAREER SUCCESS?	<input type="checkbox"/>
How will the career options I identified will help me realize CAREER SUCCESS and PERSONAL FULFILLMENT?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about how my graduate program sets me up for work in the career options I have identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Possible Discussion Points From Your Supervisor or Advisor

- What resources did you consult to research your three career options?
- Who did you talk to when researching your three career options?
- What resources/people did you find most helpful when choosing your three career options?
- Why do these career options appeal to you?
- How do the career options you have chosen connect to your personal values, the things you care about, the things you like to do, the things you are good at, the impact you want to have on the world around me and what keeps you grounded?
- 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/advisor/career mentor

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? Is this reflected in my timeline?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I explain how I have allotted time for PUBLICATIONS or OTHER measures of academic performance?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can I talk about WHEN and HOW much time I will devote to professional/career/ personal development?	<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? Which dates are set?	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 From Your Supervisor/Advisor

- Have you considered ALL the factors that impact your program completion, including professional and personal development?
- Is there INFORMATION you still need to gather/require/are waiting for to make your timeline more accurate?
- What "ADD-ONS" would make your thesis/capstone project truly outstanding in the field?
- What is the MINIMUM path to program completion?
- Is it REALISTIC to expect a clear path forward at this point? If not, what FACTORS could impact your plan?
- What are your alternate plans if one path does not work out?
- What are your NEXT STEPS in moving towards the goals laid out in my IDP? Do you have QUESTIONS or CONCERNS about your next steps?

Notes about my timeline

Questions I have for my supervisor/advisor/career mentor
