

Postdoctoral Competitive Edge Program Professional Development Plan for Postdoctoral Scholars

Name (last name, first name)	Email Address
Department/Faculty	Supervisor (last name, first name)
Start Date of Appointment	End Date of Appointment

The **Professional Development Plan (PDP)** for Postdoctoral Scholars at Western University is a professional tool which formalizes long-term and short-term expectations that you and your postdoctoral mentor(s)/supervisor(s) have identified as goals in your successful professional development at Western. A comprehensive review of your career goals and objectives at the beginning of your postdoctoral experience as well as ongoing constructive feedback from your postdoctoral mentor/supervisor will increase the probability of achieving your individual goals by defining the time and resources required.

Mentorship

SGPS asks each new postdoctoral scholar to identify two individuals outside of your supervisor who will actively participate in your mentorship while you attend Western as a Postdoctoral Scholar. Your mentors can be a faculty member, industry partner, or community leader whose role is to provide support and guidance to the postdoctoral scholars in achieving their career goals successfully. Most importantly your mentors should commit to advancing your career as a Postdoctoral Scholar. This involves regular and thoughtful discussions of the strengths and limitations of ongoing research as well as attention to the development of skills and experiences that will advance your career.

Mentor

Name (last name, first name)	Position
Contact Information (phone/email)	Place of Work

Mentor

Name (last name, first name)	Position
Contact Information (phone/email)	Place of Work

If you are unable to secure a mentor please contact Mihaela Harnos (mharnos@uwo.ca).

Please complete this form and return it to Mihaela Harnos, Postdoctoral Services Coordinator, International and Graduate Affairs Building, Room 1N07

Professional Development

Please indicate one or more of your individual career goals (please specify where applicable):

Academic

Public Sector/Government

Private Sector/Industry

Other

The following fields represent the core competencies of a successful postdoctoral appointment as adapted from the [National Postdoctoral Association](#):

1. Development of Research Skills
2. Transferable Professional Development (communication, leadership, etc.)
3. Career-specific Professional Development (customized to your future career goals)
4. Customized Competency

Each field is expandable to meet your individual situation and stage of training. Short-term goals, such as learning objectives and skill acquisition, may be established annually, whereas long-term goals might be established initially and revisited as needed in future PDPs.

For each goal you outline please provide:

1. a brief **description**
2. the **steps/training** you require to achieve the goal
3. the **outcomes** on your professional skill set
4. a **timeline** to completing the goal

If you have any questions concerning the Professional Development Plan please contact Mihaela Harnos at mharnos@uwo.ca.

Field 1 – Development of Research Skills

Postdoctoral scholars are expected to be able to design sound research methods, perform the techniques necessary to conduct and analyze this research, and navigate the grant application and publishing processes.

Delineation of Specific Skills

- Research methods and theories
- Publication and research communication
- Experimental design
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Effective search strategies and critical evaluation of the literature
- Digital literacy
- Research ethics
- Grant application and scientific publishing processes

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Field 2 - Transferable Professional Development (communication, leadership, etc.)

In any professional environment, the ability to communicate one's thoughts in a way that people readily understand is critical. Although postdoctoral scholars learn many communication skills throughout their educational lifespan, these skills take time to master. Communication is more than preparing and sending a message; it is making every effort to be sure that the message is heard and understood by the appropriate audience.

Postdoctoral scholars are expected to demonstrate interpersonal and other communication skills that enable them to communicate effectively with colleagues at all levels. They must also be prepared to communicate with students, media, and society at large. They need to develop writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Postdoctoral scholars should also have the skills and techniques needed to facilitate effective team work, manage day to day operations within their workplace, and pursue leadership opportunities at the local, institutional, regional, and national levels. These skills will also help the person to mentor others more successfully.

Delineation of Skills

- Writing
- Speaking
- Teaching and Mentoring
- Interpersonal Communication Skills

Field 3 – Career-specific Professional Development (customized to your future career goals)

Postdoctoral scholars are expected to adhere to accepted professional standards and practices within their immediate workplace (e.g., laboratory, office), institution, and discipline. They are also expected to reflect and advance the values of their profession in the community at large.

One's professionalism is relevant in different contexts that govern and define the potential interactions the scholar engages with his/her environment. A proper discussion of professionalism should integrate concepts of:

- Workplace professionalism, connecting with the immediate working team
- Institutional professionalism, connecting with the research infrastructure
- Collegial professionalism, connecting with the discipline of expertise
- Universal professionalism:, connecting with society in representing an expertise.

Delineation of Specific Skills

- Assess and uphold workplace etiquette, performance standards, and project goals
- Comply with rules, regulations, and institutional norms
- Respect, evaluate, and enhance the intellectual contributions of others
- Advance and promote the discipline by participating in public and professional service activities, such as professional societies, editorial and advisory boards, peer review panels, and institutional committees.
- Advance and promote the discipline by participating in partnerships with government agencies, foundations, and/or nonprofit organizations, such as funding agency grant panels or other advocacy/advisory boards to contribute to the advancement and promotion of the discipline.
- Identify and manage apparent and actual conflicts of interest, ethical violations, and violations of expected professional behavior

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Field 4 – Customized Competency

Each postdoctoral appointment is unique: therefore a fourth field (Customized Competency) has been provided to customize your experience and meet any additional goals you may have. If there is a focus beyond the already provided elements reported above we ask that you define it below and determine your goals surrounding this competency.

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Acknowledgement of Professional Development Plan

Please circulate this plan with your supervisor and mentorship team for acknowledgement. Your team is free to sign either a hard copy or provide a digital signature prior to submitting the plan to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Postdoctoral Scholar

Date

Supervisor

Date

Co-Supervisor (if applicable)

Date

Team Mentor

Date

Team Mentor

Date