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**Training Plan & Goals**

**Why Training Plans?**

Research is hard because, even if you are part of a team, you are expected to work independently to a degree that may be foreign and daunting. You will need perseverance, discipline, and a plan to succeed. A 2005 Sigma Xi survey found that US postdocs who created training plans were ~30% more likely to publish first-author papers. We’ll create your plan here, so let’s go.

**Goals**

To reach your goals, you must understand how competitive the jobs market really is (only ~ 15% of Ph.D.’s obtain a tenure-track faculty position). With that said, my basic advice is to:

1. Embody the demeanor and output of your seniors (dress, act, behave, and perform as if you were in the next stage of your career).
2. Inspiration comes from action – start working hard (and fake it; because we all do!), and you will find inspiration and creativity all around. It doesn’t work in reverse.
3. Identify specific goals. For example, before you leave our lab, you should also aim to:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Undergraduate Student** | **Graduate Student** | **Postdoc** |
| **Funding** | 3+ sources | 3+ sources | 1+ major sources |
| **Authorship** | 1+ papers | 1+ papers per year | 3+ papers per year |
| [**Conferences**](#_4d34og8) | 1+ national conference | 1 per year | 1 per year |
| **Teaching** | 1+ courses | 2+ courses | - |
| **Mentoring** | - | 1+ mentees | 2+ mentees |
| **Service** | 1+ committees | 2+ committees | 2+ committees |

**Part 1. Clarify Yo****ur Goals & Evaluate Your Progress Last Year**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | | |
| Year/Date |  | Update CV? |  |
| Mentor |  | | |
| Long-term career goal |  | | |
| Next step in your career |  | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Overview of your current research project |  |
| Major accomplishments in the past year (pubs, grants, service, teaching)? | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| Which goals did you miss, why, and how to improve? | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| New areas of research or technical expertise acquired in the past year | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| Mentor’s evaluation for the past year |  |

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# Part 2. Set Goals & Learning Objectives For Next Year

Considering your self- and mentor assessment, set goals for the coming year.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Goals** | **Description of specific metrics for goal** |
| **Research Project:** Objectives to address this year (order of priority) | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| **Knowledge/skills:**  What subjects/skills will you improve? | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| **Writing:** What will you write this year (papers, grants, fellowships)? | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| **Organization:** How will you improve management this year? | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| **Career & networking:** How will you advance toward your career goals? | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| **Program Hoops:** What curriculum hurdles will you complete this year? | 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

# Part 3. Implement Your Training Plan

Discuss and edit this plan with input from your mentor(s). In your calendar (Google/Apple calendar, Outlook, etc.) create a month-by-month timelinefor the next year for the goals you identified above. Now create a weekly schedule that will help you achieve your goals. It’s time to do the work. Maximum effort!

**Productivity Advice**

* Doing fewer things (max of 3 concurrent)
* Working at a natural pace (variable intensity from day to day)
* Obsess over quality
* Do your most important work first each day
* Focus on the process, not the outcome (writing vs the grant)
* Embrace what feels difficult & avoid task switching (defeat Resistance)
* Resist middling priorities (e.g., only check email morning and late afternoon)
* You will never really know what you are doing, so be bold now
* Accept who you are; no one cares what you're doing with your life
* Enjoy time off & whimsical activities