**What’s the Communication Development Plan (CDP)?**

**Why work on your CDP?**

What does communication mean to you? How do you want to communicate now and in the future? What are your strengths and weaknesses? This Communication Development Plan will help you reflect on your learning to answer these and related questions.

It’s an opportunity to consider and reflect on your existing communication training, knowledge and experience and plan for your future development – to help enhance your research and prepare you for life, wherever it takes you.

**What’s involved?**

Your CDP action plan is located at the end of this document. That’s where your goals and vision for your communication profile will come together. Before you get down to the endless possibilities of communication development, here are a few things you can do:

* **Learn about communicating** – Complete the ‘Unleash your communication’ online course to learn more about communication, it’s relevance to you and insights into communication frameworks.
* **Reflect and analyse** – Complete the CDP learning activities located in this document to help you think about communication opportunities, your strengths and weaknesses and to reflect on the content covered.
* **Unleash your communication** ­– Set yourself up for success. Put an action plan in place. What do you want to learn? How are you going to develop your communication skills further? Who can help? When will you achieve your goals?

Once you have completed your CDP activities and action plan you will need to provide it to your supervisor for review and sign-off. This will be uploaded to Moodle and you’ll receive credits towards your professional development hours.

**Your CDP Activities**

**Be the communicator**

| **Topic** | **Reflect** | **Activities** |
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| Your communication choices  (15 minutes) | Communication often involves choices – choices about what you communicate, via what channel and to whom.  Consider your research, career (or career aspirations) and answer the following questions. | 1. What communication activities have you recently undertaken (e.g. given a talk, prepared a confirmation report or presentation, interviewed people as part of your research, developed a conference poster)? 2. What future communication activities are most important to you (e.g. presenting at a conference, engaging different audiences, getting better at communicating the relevance of your work and the skills you have developed)? 3. What are your strengths as a communicator? 4. List the improvements you could make to your communication approach? 5. What communication channels aren’t you confident using? What can you do to improve on them? |
| The good communicator  (5 minutes) | Spend a few minutes reflecting on these questions. | Do you know people who are good communicators? (Perhaps someone in your family, at university, in a work-related context, from a not-for-profit or voluntary organisation, or someone famous or in the media)   1. What makes them good at communicating? (Are there specific things that they do, or is it more about your overall impression of them?) 2. What common attributes do you think good communicators share? (If your supervisor was taking on a new graduate student, and you’d heard they were good at communicating, what might this mean?) |
| What’s your research story?  (10 minutes) | When communicating your research, particularly to a non-academic audience it’s important to communicate with them, not to them.  Engaging the audience with stories and concrete language will help deal with ‘the curse of knowledge’ dilemma. | In the context of your research, consider the following:   1. What’s your research story? Why did you choose your research topic? Can you develop a clear and simple narrative for your audience to follow? 2. Do you know of any interesting case studies relevant to your research, that can provide real and relevant human interest stories or experiences? 3. Do you currently use jargon when communicating your research? Jot down the words you use and what you could replace them with to connect more to the audience. |

**Explore the principles and practices**

| **Topic** | **Reflect** | **Activities** |
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| Research that connects  (15 minutes) | Think about a presentation you’d like to deliver in the future.  Have you thought about your audience?  To help you determine a list of stakeholders consider the question: “Who cares?” | 1. Do you know who your audience is? What is the age of the people in the audience? Are there significant cultural differences within the audience? What is the educational level of the audience? How many males and females are there in the audience? 2. What methods can you use to find out more about your audience? 3. What does your audience know about, or think about, the issues relating to your research? What is likely to interest them? What are their beliefs and attitudes toward the topic? What are the relevant audience values and motives in regard to this topic? 4. What specific outcomes are you seeking to achieve? (e.g. raise awareness, impart knowledge, promote specific actions, seek feedback on something) 5. You’re delivering two talks about your research. The first to senior academics in your field, the second, to your local Rotary Club – comprised of professionals and business leaders. How might your two talks differ?   Academic talk – anticipated focus/interests?    Rotary talk – anticipated focus/interests? |

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| Your research S.P.I.N.  (15 mins) | Think about communicating your research using S.P.I.N. Make it easier by answering the questions posed in the table. | **Situation**  Taking a step back from your research:   1. What societal trends or issues might your research relate to? 2. What key facts and insights can you identify relating to the status quo? 3. Relating to these topics, what might be of interest to your audience?   **Problems**  Relating to these trends and the status quo (the situation):   1. What problems or challenges might exist? What are the limitations or current responses or gaps in knowledge? 2. Of these issues, are any particularly relevant (important or of interest) to your audience and research?   **Implications**   1. Why do these problems matter to the audience? 2. If nothing is done, what is likely to happen? What will we miss out on? 3. If the challenges are addressed, what tangible, specific benefits might arise? 4. Who, or what, will benefit from taking action, how does this relate to your audience?   **Need**  This is the bit when you explain how your research is helping.   1. What are you doing or proposing to do to help address this problem or opportunity? 2. Why is your particular research important or unique? 3. What credentials do you have to help resolve this issue? |

**Create your communication profile**

| **Topic** | **Reflect** | **Activities** |
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| Keeping it real  (10 mins) | Authentic people:   * are open with their audience * connect with the audience * are passionate about their topic * listen to their audience. | 1. Reflect on the stereotypical bad communicators discussed in the course (the robot, the pushover, the charity case and the use-car salesman). Have you come across anyone that communicated in one of these ways? What was the result, did they achieve that they wanted? 2. Think about the way you communicate. How will you show your passion for your research? How will you be original and create value? 3. What steps will you take to truly connect and be open with your audience? 4. What steps will you take to understand your audience and listen and respond to their needs? |
| The persuasive challenge  (10 mins) | Consider your research. You’d like to influence your audience’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. What’s your plan?  Start by answering the following questions. | 1. **Write a sentence/s that you use to establish credibility.** 2. **How will you set the scene for the communication? How will you grab the audience’s attention using something that will create interest fast? (Think about what is an unusual, interesting, dramatic or a humorous part of your research)** 3. **How will you ensure you use positive emotional framing to connect? Choose a statement or words you could use.** 4. **How will you end the communication on a positive note yet still to achieve your aim? (How will you leave your audience with a high degree of certainty and satisfaction?)** |

**Unleash your CDP action plan**

**Plan for the present. Prepare for the future.**

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| **What do I want to learn?** | **How will I go about it?** | **Who can help? What resources will I need?** | **How will I measure my success?** | **What’s my timeframe?** |
| E.g. Build my communication experience and confidence | Enter a Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition | Supervisor | Result of competition and feedback from my panel and supervisor | August |
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