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

**Why work on your CDP?**

Plans, in general, help you stay focused. This is the same for your Career Development Plan – it’s intended to keep you focused on your career goals. A Career Development Plan, and its implementation, can mean the difference between getting the job you want when you finish your PhD, versus spending additional time developing skills or experiences that you could’ve picked up along the way, but chose not to.

Furthermore, UK research suggests that a large proportion of PhD students (50% of students in 3rd year) are unsure of what they want from their career. Putting a Career Development Plan in place will help you clarify your career goals, and more importantly, it will help you achieve them.

**What’s involved?**

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

* **Start your career** – Complete the ‘Unleash your career’ online course to learn more about career planning and what you can do now, as part of your PhD, to better transition from student to employee.
* **Reflect and analyse** – Complete the CDP learning activities in this document to help you think about your career, opportunities for advancement, further development of essential skills and to reflect on the course content.
* **Unleash your career** ­– Set yourself up for success. Put an action plan in place – record your plans for the next 12 months (in 3 month increments). What skills do you have? What skills do you need for your future role? How are you going to achieve your goals? Who will or can help? When will it all happen?

Once you have completed your CDP activities and action plan you will need to give 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.

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**Your CDP Activities**

**Be the career planner**

| **Topic** | **Reflect** | **Activities** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Your PhD plan  (10 minutes) | Consider your life to date, how have decisions you made in high-school impacted university?  What about the decisions you made at university – have they impacted your PhD?  How has your social or study life impacted or influenced your casual or part-time work?  Discuss your thoughts with your peers – do they share the same view as you? | 1. Review your PhD plan. Write down how your PhD plan might impact your future career options. 2. What’s your topic of interest? Can you describe it clearly? Does it align with your areas of strength – does it give you a competitive advantage? 3. Is the method you’re using one you can see yourself performing in the years after your PhD? Can it transfer across topics, fields of research or sectors? Will it make you more (or less) employable in research? What about outside research? 4. What infrastructure should you use to help you in your career development? 5. Who will you collaborate with? Can they offer career advice? Have they got access to different or unique opportunities that you’d like to know more about? |
| Career profiles  (10 minutes) | How did you get to your current position (as a PhD student)?  Why did you choose to do your PhD?  Why/how did you choose your PhD topic?  What other careers do you see for yourself (including but not limited to being a researcher)?  You might review the following sites:  [http://www.med.monash.edu.au](http://www.med.monash.edu.au/anatomy/careers.html)  <https://www.findaphd.com/advice/doing/phd-non-academic-careers.aspx>  <http://cheekyscientist.com/top-10-list-of-alternative-careers-for-phd-science-graduates/> | 1. Document three different career trajectories (career profiles) of people with PhDs. You could do this via interviews, web-search, or a combination of the two. The important part is to select people with three different careers. These could be, but are not limited to the following:  * Researcher (at a university or research institute). * Administrator/Professional staff (perhaps also at a university or research institute). * Self-employed. * Industry (in R & D). * Industry (not in R & D).   This activity will be easiest if you make use of your personal network of contacts (e.g. friends, family, PhD colleagues, LinkedIn connections, Facebook friends, Twitter or Instagram followers).  Discuss what you find with your peers. |
| Your publication plan  (5 minutes) | Consider what types of publications you would like to be involved in – are they all/only academic?  Do they involve multi-media (e.g. video and sound as well as text or pictures)? | 1. Review your publication plan and write down how it might impact your career. 2. Discuss your publication aspirations with your peers – what are their intentions? How could you support each other? Could you develop collaborative (non-academic) publications such as a blog or website? |
| Skills analysis  (5 minutes) | Reflect on your own career to date – what different roles have you had? | 1. Review the career profiles you created earlier, write down what technical and/or soft-skills you think are important to success. 2. Discuss this with your parents (or people in a generation older than you). What do they think? Ask them about their career – what roles have they had in their lifetime? How did they transition from one role to the next? |

**Explore the principles and practices**

| **Topic** | **Reflect** | **Activities** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Grow your network  (10 minutes) | Visit the blog: <http://blog.addgene.org/how-to-make-friends-and-meet-people-at-a-scientific-conference>  Think about the conferences or presentations you attend.  Do you make an attempt to meet new people? If so, is it strategic (i.e. for a defined purpose) or ad hoc (i.e. whoever I happen to chat to). | 1. In preparation for the next conference or presentation you attend, prepare a short introduction about yourself (no more than three sentences), followed by some connecting sentences that might encourage someone to talk about themselves.   For example, (at the very least, make sure you fill in the blanks):  Hi, my name is … and I am a PhD student working on …. I’m really interested in … Your talk on … was fascinating, tell me more about …   1. Share this with a student in your PhD group and commit to using the introduction at the next conference or presentation. Following the next conference or presentation note down and share your networking experiences with your PhD group. |
| Mentor goals  (10 minutes) | Read the post:  <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/value-mentoring-marguerite-evans-galea?trk=prof-post>  Who have been or are the mentors in your life?  Have you had any sponsors? For example, if you’re looking to change organisation, they’ll be in the new organisation. If you’re looking to get an internal promotion they’ll be in your current organisation.  What made those people (good) mentors or sponsors to you? | 1. Write down the qualities of an ideal mentor. 2. Write down the names of people (or roles if you don’t know anyone at this stage) with those qualities. 3. Talk to at least one (ideally all) of the people on your list about mentoring and becoming your mentor. Write down a quick summary of the conversations here, including details of any mentoring relationships that start as a result. |
| Your goals  (5 minutes) | Have you used goals (to achieve anything) in the past?  What has been the outcome?  Have you referred back to the goals?  Have they helped, hindered or made no difference to your progress?  Why/Why not? | Review your PhD goals.   1. Are they SMART? If not, update them. Do they relate to what you want from your career? If not, update them. |
| My behaviours  (5 minutes) | How do you currently treat your PhD? The same as you did your degree? Or do you treat it like work? | 1. Pick two things that you could do to behave more like an employee and less like a student. Note down what the old (student) behaviours are and how you will change to the new (employee) behaviours. |

**Create your career profile**

| **Topic** | **Reflect** | **Activities** |
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| Plan your career  (10 mins) | Review the three different planning approaches – what do you like/dislike about each?  Chat with your colleagues about their approach to planning their career. | 1. Select (at least) one career development approach and complete it. |
| Your opportunities  (5 mins) | What opportunities exist in your PhD to develop your career? What appeals to you? What is less appealing?  Consider the following options:   * Monash online professional development courses. * Short courses centre at Monash. * Monash University societies listing. * Volunteers Australia website. | 1. Select one (or more) activity in your career plan and include an opportunity that might help develop it further. 2. Chat with your colleagues about how they have taken various opportunities in their PhDs to develop their careers. |
| Career conversations  (5 mins) | Career conversations can help you develop and implement a successful career plan.  Who are the key people that can assist you with your career plan? | 1. **Talk with your peers about how they’re going to make sure their career plans are useful. Note down some of their ideas here and indicate why you think they might be useful to you.** 2. **Talk to your supervisor or mentor about how they can assist you with your career plan or career development. Note down some of their ideas here and indicate why you think they might be useful to you.** |
| Implement your plan  (5 minutes) | How can you make sure you implement/follow your career plan? | 1. Schedule a meeting with yourself every 3 months for the next 12 months to review your career plan. Include the dates and times of these meetings below. 2. Schedule two meetings with a key person, to discuss your career plan (now) and progress (12 months from now). Include the details below. 3. Schedule a celebration for the day after each of the dates you have booked (as part of the above). |

**Unleash your CDP action plan**

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

Use the career plan you developed earlier to complete the CDP action plan below. Some goals might have more than one activity, others may not.

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| **What do I want to do? What’s my career-related goal?** | **How will I go about it? How will I achieve it?** | **Who can help? What resources will I need?** | **How will I measure my success?** | **What’s my timeframe?** |
| E.g. Develop writing skills | Practise (writing 500 words per day, 2,500 per week) and sharing my writing with others | Setting a schedule of reading, writing and sharing  Make a list of people I can share my writing with | I’ll have written 20,000 words (on any topic)  Peers will comment on my writing | April – June |
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