### Professional Development Timeline

**A Resource for Doctoral Students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework Phase</th>
<th>Qualifying and Preliminary Exams</th>
<th>Dissertation Research and Writing</th>
<th>Dissertation Completion</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Graduate Degree Completion** | - Plan your course of study with your academic adviser.  
- Participate in department orientations/TA training.  
- Investigate possible research interests and topics.  
- Requirements vary widely between programs. Be certain you understand the requirements within your department.  
- Prepare a personal timeline for degree completion, being realistic about goals. | - Study, study, study!  
- Learn about the expectations, rules, and requirements for dissertation preparation and completion. | - Learn about the requirements for graduation and incorporate these into your deadlines.  
- Be mindful of deadlines pertaining to defense, graduation, deposit, and commencement.  
- Defend your dissertation and deposit it in the Thesis Office. |
| **Graduate Degree Completion** | - Gain teaching experience for a range of courses.  
- Work with the Center for Teaching Excellence to improve teaching.  
- Gain academic service experience.  
- Join professional organizations and attend meetings.  
- Apply for fellowships/grants.  
- Attend job talks and colloquia.  
- Consider non-academic opportunities, as well. Only about 50 percent of PhDs acquire tenure-track faculty positions. | - Begin reading the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for a better understanding of academic job market.  
- Prepare your CV  
- Read books and articles on the academic job search.  
- Attend and present at professional meetings.  
- Pursue dissertation fellowship opportunities. | - Ask your adviser for advice about pursuing an academic career.  
- Ask references to serve on your behalf. You may want to create a placement file.  
- Attend workshops on academic jobs and CV’s.  
- Try to get teaching experience as a primary instructor.  
- Explore postdoc options.  
- Explore job openings.  
- Network! |
| **Professional Development for Academic Careers** | - Spend time thinking about your professional goals:  
- Perform self-assessment exercises and inventories.  
- Explore career options.  
- Attend Graduate College workshops on academic and non-academic opportunities.  
- Meet with a career services counselor and/or your adviser to discuss career options.  
- Take responsibility for planning your career. | - Assess career goals and explore alternatives.  
- Complete self-assessment exercises if haven’t yet done so.  
- Network! | - Apply for jobs. If possible, have your adviser or committee members help you make contacts.  
- Prepare for interviews.  
- Work with your department or the Graduate College to arrange mock job talks and interviews.  
- Explore publication opportunities. |
| **Professional Development for Non-Academic Careers** | - Gain pertinent work experience, such as volunteer work, internships, and summer jobs.  
- Conduct some informational interviews. | - Read books on career options and discovering transferable skills.  
- Gain experience to expand your marketability and skills. Consider courses that might support your career goals.  
- Attend Graduate College workshops on non-academic careers. | - Determine the career path you want to pursue.  
- Attend Graduate College workshops related to non-academic careers.  
- Refine your resume.  
- Develop a job search strategy.  
- Obtain non-academic work experience.  
- Network! |
| **Professional Development for Non-Academic Careers** | - Conduct some informational interviews. | - Prepare a resume to market your skills.  
- Attend job fairs.  
- Apply for jobs.  
- Participate in mock interviews.  
- Talk it up – the most successful means of landing a satisfying job is by working through your network! | - Prepare for interviews.  
- Work with your department or the Graduate College to arrange mock job talks and interviews.  
- Explore publication opportunities. |
### Professional Development Timeline

**A Resource for Master’s Students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Graduate Degree Completion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Coursework Phase</strong></th>
<th><strong>Thesis Research and Writing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Thesis Completion</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Plan your course of study with your academic adviser.</td>
<td>- Create a “project plan” for thesis completion. Share this with your adviser.</td>
<td>- Learn about the requirements for graduation and incorporate these into your deadlines.</td>
<td>- If you are pursuing a nonacademic career:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Participate in department orientations as available.</td>
<td>- Attend a Dissertation Writing Workshop.</td>
<td>- Be mindful of deadlines pertaining to defense, graduation, deposit, and commencement.</td>
<td>- Begin to distribute your resume to potential employers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Investigate possible research interests and topics.</td>
<td>- Inform yourself about the thesis deposit process.</td>
<td>- Defend your thesis and deposit it in the Thesis Office.</td>
<td>- Attend job fairs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Requirements vary widely between programs. Be certain you understand the requirements within your department.</td>
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<td>- Apply for jobs.</td>
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<td>- Prepare a personal timeline for degree completion, being realistic about goals.</td>
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<td>- Participate in mock interviews.</td>
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<td>Spend time thinking about your professional goals and deciding whether you plan to pursue a nonacademic career or continue your education:</td>
<td>- Determine the career path you wish to pursue.</td>
<td>If you are continuing your education:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Perform self-assessment exercises and inventories.</td>
<td>If you plan to pursue a nonacademic career:</td>
<td>- What you need to know about graduate school, including online programs.</td>
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<td>- Start to think about whether you wish to continue your education after your master’s degree. Investigate programs and the career options available with a more advanced degree. Talk to your adviser and other doctoral students in your department about degree options.</td>
<td>- Attend Graduate College workshops related to non-academic careers.</td>
<td>- Make your decision and reject your other graduate school offers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Explore nonacademic career options by conducting informational interviews.</td>
<td>- Refine your resume with help from the Graduate College Career Services Office and your adviser.</td>
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<td>- Attend Graduate College workshops about job opportunities.</td>
<td>- Develop a job search strategy.</td>
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<td>- Meet with a Graduate College counselor and/or your adviser to discuss career options.</td>
<td>- Obtain non-academic work experience.</td>
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<td>- Take responsibility for planning your career.</td>
<td>- Continue to network!</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Network! Meet people who are in careers that you want to pursue.</td>
<td>If you plan to continue your education:</td>
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<td>- Gain pertinent work experience, such as volunteer work, internships, leadership experience, and summer jobs.</td>
<td>- Investigate potential doctoral programs</td>
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<td>- Begin the application processes.</td>
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<td>- Continue to learn more about job opportunities available to doctoral recipients in your field.</td>
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