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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 like someone in the next career stage).
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 – if you wait for inspiration before working, it will never come.
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 paper | 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 | 1+ committees |

**PhD Goals by Semester**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1st Semester | Enroll in the two credit Graduate Seminar for all incoming students |
|  | Construct your Graduate Committee  Identify major research (thesis) goals  Start on 1st-year project |
| 2nd Semester | Submit a Program of Study form to the Department of Earth Sciences |
|  | Submit a Thesis Proposal (NSF formatted) with approval from me |
|  | Slay the **Qualifying Exam** |
|  | Hold a committee meeting (once each semester after 2nd) |
| 3rd year | Slay the **Comprehensive Exam** |
|  | Give 1+ research talks at the ESCI seminar series |
| Last Year | Enroll in 3+ credits the final term during which you intend to graduate |
|  | Apply for Advanced Degree, Graduate School (before 3rd week, last semester) |
|  | Provide a final thesis draft to committee members (give them 1 month to read) |
|  | Acquire approval for defense at least 14 days before defense date |
|  | Defend thesis and make appropriate revisions |
|  | Submit Electronic Thesis Form & thesis at least 14 days before end of term |

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | | |
| Year/Date |  | Update CV? |  |
| Mentor |  | | |
| Long-term career goal |  | | |
| One-year goal |  | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Status 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.

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| --- | --- |
| **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 time 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**

* Do your most important work first each day
* Resist middling priorities (e.g., only check email morning and late afternoon)
* Avoid task switching for deeper focus
* Manage focus, not time
* Obsess over quality
* Work at a natural pace (variable intensity from day to day)
* Embrace what feels difficult
* 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