



# Professional Development

## Values and Directions

### What Is Professional Development and Why Is It Important?

Graduate education prepares you to work in careers at high levels of excellence, engagement, and ethical responsibility in the work you do. You are a leader in working with others and applying your knowledge and skills in your field.

Professional development encompasses your professional identity and leadership development and includes understanding and engaging with the larger world of your discipline and chosen career.

Strong professional development helps you make connections and demonstrate your expertise in ways that will validate your expertise. Course work alone is not sufficient in graduate school. You must venture beyond course work to engage with other scholars and professionals in your field to position yourself and understand the larger conversations, issues, and developing knowledge in your discipline. As part of your professional development, you will find and engage in activities to develop strong interpersonal and communication skills.

### Directions for Thinking About Professional Development

1. What do you know about the key issues, emerging ideas, and important conversations or trends in your discipline? Who can you speak with to explore and develop a clear sense of the landscape of your discipline?
  - a. What questions can you ask your advisor or subject specialist librarians?
  - b. What websites and reading material will help you get a bird's eye view of your field?
2. How can the Alumni Engagement Office help you with professional development? Speak with alumni who are working in the kind of career you aspire to. What kinds of questions would you ask? Who can help you come up with useful questions to ask these alumni?
3. Make a list of areas for professional development that you feel are important for you. Get multiple perspectives to build up a comprehensive list. Talk to the following people and offices:
  - a. Your faculty or staff advisors and other professors
  - b. Your peers
  - c. The Career Development Office team. Explore its career road maps, timelines, and other professional development tools on their website: [cgu.edu/careers](http://cgu.edu/careers)
  - d. The Preparing Future Faculty team
  - e. The Office of Alumni Engagement
  - f. The Student Life, Diversity & Leadership team
  - g. The Graduate Student Council
4. What does professional development mean in different context—for scholars, teachers, non-academic careers? Drill down into the kind of career you wish to pursue and ask what facets of professional development are important. Speak with the Career Development team.
5. Find out about and attend special lectures, events, art openings, performances, and workshops provided by your department, other departments and schools, as well as across the Claremont Consortium.



# Professional Development

## Navigator

There are many resources on campus that can help you ensure that you are making use of all opportunities for effective professional development to launch you into your career after graduate school. Many things take time to develop, so begin early.

Use these lists as a way to discover gaps and items you should discuss with your advisor, other professors, senior students, the Career Development Office, Preparing Future Faculty, the Alumni Engagement Office, the Student Life, Diversity & Leadership Office, and the librarians at the Honnold Mudd Library.

### Explore Your Professional Community

- I have spoken with my advisor to learn about the important professional associations I should join.
- I have checked out the website for the professional associations that are appropriate for my scholarly and professional development.
- I have joined at least one professional association.
- I have found sections or groups within my professional association in which I can take an active role, for example, graduate student groups, special interest groups by disciplinary topics.
- I have explored my options to attend a professional association conference or meeting.
- I have spoken to my advisor and peers about how to prepare to get the most from attending a conference or meeting.
- I know the important journals and websites/blogs where disciplinary experts publish and engage with each other.
- I know the key issues and trends in my discipline, especially in relation to my specific research or interest areas.
- I have worked with the Alumni Engagement Office to attend professional development and networking events that are relevant to my development.
- I have connected with and done informational interviews with alumni who are working in the career areas I aspire to.

## Professional Web Presence

- I use social media professionally, for example LinkedIn, Twitter, professional Facebook pages
- I use blogging tools like WordPress, Squarespace, etc.
- I am aware of and have explored academic social networks such as ResearchGate and Academic.edu, and have taken note of professors from CGU and other institutions who have a web presence in these networks.
- I have spoken with the Honnold librarians about scholarly and professional web presence best practices and challenges, and have explored their LibGuide about online presence: [cgu.edu/socialmediatools](http://cgu.edu/socialmediatools).
- I have met and discussed scholarly web presence with a librarian.
- I selectively find and follow key researchers and leaders in my field on social media channels.
- I separate my personal and professional social media channels.
- I am actively building a professional network through my social media.
- I regularly update my information and respond to social media connections.
- I have spoken with the Career Development Office to understand how to set up and use LinkedIn and Twitter for professional development.
- I subscribe to and engage with relevant and high-quality professional blogs in my discipline.
- I have spoken with the Preparing Future Faculty team about setting up an electronic academic or professional portfolio.

## Professional Social Networking Sites

Here is a list of social media and web presence tools and platforms to explore. Which do you use? Which should you use?

1. LinkedIn
2. Twitter
3. Facebook (for professional use)
4. Academia.edu
5. Research Gate
6. Google Scholar

What other platforms do you know about?

## Questions to Consider

1. In what other ways are you present on the internet? Are your personal pages and sites secure?
2. How many profiles or different platforms/sites are manageable?
3. How do you connect them all so that you have a single, coherent web presence?

## Professional Communication

### Email

- I use an email client or app to manage all my different email accounts.
- I know how to write well-constructed, professional emails that are clear and concise.
- My emails have informative and brief subject lines, professional terms of address, and signature.
- I have asked and found out my professors' and colleagues' preferred terms of address.
- I respond to emails within a reasonable time frame (within a 24-hour time frame).
- I have worked with the Career Development Office to improve my email communication.

### Oral Communication

- I have worked with the Center for Writing & Rhetoric to develop clear and professional oral communication skills for both formal and informal presentations.
- I have worked with the Digital Learning Lab and the Center for Writing & Rhetoric to develop my skills in designing and presenting effective and engaging slides and presentations.
- I have made an appointment with a Center for Writing & Rhetoric consultant to practice an oral presentation.

### Written Communication

- I have worked with the Digital Learning Lab to learn about document formatting to present written work that is reader-friendly and professionally formatted.
- I have worked with the Center for Writing & Rhetoric to develop a formal academic style of writing that is clear and direct.
- I have explored disciplinary journals and/or field-specific documents and know how to write in the required structure and style.
- I am aware of my structural, grammatical, and stylistic challenges and have worked with the Center for Writing & Rhetoric to address them.

