Step to Success in Graduate Studies

Graduate school is about training you to ask and address new questions and discover your passion. Having honest and open discussions with your advisor is an important part of your training. As a grad student, you own your education. That means not only being responsible for your thesis project, but also actively getting the training you need and seeking guidance from your mentors (your PI, supervisory committee, and others) who will support you as partners in your training.

1) Complete an individual development plan (IDP)

1. How to complete an individual development plan https://youtu.be/OoZKnm2er_U
2. Step back and self-assess! This will take about 30 min. http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/
3. Talk with others (peers, mentors, advisors) about your various types of SMART goals.

2) Create a trainee-driven action plan for yourself

Graduate Program Requirements & Milestones Still to be Completed:

Grad Program Requirements still to be completed?	When is this offered?	Proof or deadline of registration (date)

Financial Analysis and Plan (think current & ✓✓ if your funding will last until your Time To Completion (TTC):

CURRENT CHECK-IN: Fellowships/scholarships, travel awards to apply for?	Application deadlines?	Timeline for filling out application (dates)

How much time of guaranteed funding do you have left? _____.

Steps that will be taken to help ensure TTC or funding beyond the guaranteed funding period:

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How might you complete your degree in this time and maintain healthy work-life integration (wellness and other responsibilities)?

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Reflection & Request for Support:

What barriers exist that could impact your academic growth?	How can your advisor or academic mentor help?	Timeline for following up with advisor (dates)

3) List at least two goals discuss with your advisor during your IDP Meeting

What are your top priority goals?	What activity, workshop, course, networking event, can help you achieve this?	Date of activity in your calendar
Academic/Project Goals		
Technical Skills Goals		
Professional Skills Goals		
Wellness Goals (optional)		

*Wellness goals are best discussed with various people including your peers, mentors, supervisors.

*Would you like to discuss anything else?*_____

_____

_____

_____

YOUR NEXT IDP follow up meeting with your supervisor? Next date: _____

Student Initials: **Supervisor Initials:**   **Date:**

Building effective communication and mentorship skills

1) Establish expectations with advisor

1. **Medium**: Establish the most effective method of communication (email, other technology, in-person, phone)
2. **Frequency**: Agree on how often to have discussions on research updates such as weekly or monthly and schedule it in both calendars. Schedule it
3. **IDP Review**: Agree and schedule on the frequency of reviewing your IDP. Perhaps yearly one month before your committee meeting.

2) Plan an effective meeting with your advisor

1. Lead the agenda.
2. Provide your advisor with a meeting agenda (24hrs+) before the meeting with succinct, numbered points, including questions.
3. Take notes during the meeting on each point
4. Write an action item for each point.
5. Summarize the keys points and next action items for the next meeting for both you and your supervisor succinctly at end of meeting. Receive verbal confirmation.
6. Within 24 hours after your meeting, summarize or highlight your meeting notes & advisor suggestions in an email. Suggested Subject: Action items from (Date) Meeting_(Your name)
7. Build on action items for your next meeting.

3) Read the helpful U of T grad studies resources

Do you know what's expected of you and your graduate supervisor?
Do you understand your graduate student responsibilities?

Ask your supervisor if you have questions.

1. Supervision guidelines & Supervision Tips pg. 30 in link https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/253/2019/07/EssentialGuideforGrads.pdf
2. Research Methods & Project Execution course
3. ILead Options 1 day program