

# Career Development Timeline for Graduate Students and Postdocs

	Reflect	Plan	Learn	Explore	Engage	Experience	Apply	
EARLY	Articulate your <a href="#">motivation</a> for pursuing a doctorate.	Understand your <a href="#">program requirements</a>	<a href="#">Explore careers</a> , industries, causes, and organizations. Check out <a href="#">Sciencecareers</a> or <a href="#">VersatilePhD</a>	Discuss career options with your supervisor and other mentors	Join Student interest groups, professional and academic associations	Identify <a href="#">mentors</a> outside your field	Engage in a project outside of academia (i.e. service or consulting)	Update your CV annually: Decide what you would like to add to it
	<a href="#">Select your area of research</a> – consider the implications for your future career and funding	Develop a funding plan: See <a href="#">GPS</a> for options.	What are your career <a href="#">preferences</a> ? What fields are you interested in? What skills would you like to use and develop?	Collect <a href="#">job postings</a> for positions that look interesting to you. Explore job postings on <a href="#">myFuture</a>	Go to department talks, professional & academic conferences	Collaborate with academics outside of McGill	Collaborate with organizations outside of academia (i.e. <a href="#">Mitacs</a> )	<a href="#">Volunteer</a> for / <a href="#">Get involved</a> in activities that will help you test out your interests, and will develop new skills:
	Plan regular meetings with your <a href="#">supervisor</a> Establish <a href="#">research goals</a> & create a timeline	Get support: <a href="#">Student Services</a> , <a href="#">GPS</a> , <a href="#">PGSS</a> , Meet your <a href="#">liaison librarian</a> , + <a href="#">More!</a>	Understand the academic career path. See <a href="#">CaPS resources</a> or <a href="#">Vitae</a>	Talk to new faculty in your field / read application material and bios	Attend the <a href="#">Academic Career Series</a>	Participate in courses and workshops that will help you to develop skills (communication management)*	Gain experience <a href="#">teaching</a> and mentoring students	Committees (i.e. Job search Committees) Student groups Extracurricular activities Community organizations
MID	<a href="#">Explore</a> values, interests & skills. Ask: What career direction might be a good fit for me? Meet with a CaPS <a href="#">Career Counsellor</a> Participate in <a href="#">PACE</a>	<a href="#">Reflect on</a> and evaluate your experiences and goals twice a year: Revise your goals based on your experiences.	<a href="#">Learn</a> what will make you competitive : Identify the skills that you will need to develop for your target careers	Create a profile on <a href="#">LinkedIn</a> Join <a href="#">LinkedIn Groups</a> Review interesting LinkedIn profiles –take note of their career path	<a href="#">Talk to people</a> in diverse careers of interest. Ask for advice  Talk to employers: find out how to plan for your goals	Attend career panels & the <a href="#">Graduate Career Series</a>  Get relevant experience in a part time job or <a href="#">internship</a> / Consider job shadowing	Start writing your <a href="#">teaching portfolio</a> & <a href="#">research statement</a> for an academic career.  Note gaps and create an action plan to ensure that you will be competitive	Attend <a href="#">Career development workshops</a>
	Review your <a href="#">career goals</a> – update your action plan as needed	Narrow down to the careers most likely to match your goals	Attend <a href="#">career fairs</a> & company information sessions	Keep in touch with people you meet –maintain your connections	Investigate certificate options (i.e. teaching or technical)	Volunteer for editing/writing role for a journal	Prepare your job talk / Practice presentation skills	Create targeted <a href="#">CVs and Cover Letters</a>
LATE	<a href="#">Reflect on the skills</a> and expertise that you have <a href="#">acquired</a>	Identify <a href="#">organizations</a> and job roles that fit your goals	<a href="#">Network</a> with employers you would like to work for	Meet with those you plan to use as references and update them on your plans	<a href="#">International students</a> : find out about visa options from <a href="#">ISS</a>	Take on a <a href="#">leadership</a> role in one of your activities  Schedule weekly time for career planning Join the CaPS <a href="#">Job Finding Club</a>	<a href="#">Schedule</a> a mock interview with an advisor	Have your application <a href="#">reviewed by an advisor at CaPS</a>

To help you to remain motivated and ensure that you will be prepared for your future career path, the [McGill Career Planning Service \(CaPS\)](#) provides specialized services for graduate students and postdocs.

Using the suggestions provided in this guide, we encourage you to cycle through this process:



**Downtown Campus:**  
514-398-3304  
[careers.caps@mcgill.ca](mailto:careers.caps@mcgill.ca)

**Macdonald Campus:**  
514-398-7582  
[caps.macdonald@mcgill.ca](mailto:caps.macdonald@mcgill.ca)  
[www.mcgill.ca/caps](http://www.mcgill.ca/caps)



\*Further information about professional development activities is available through [SKILLSETS](#).