THE COMPETITIVE EDGE PROGRAM: MENTORING COMMITTEES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

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OUTLINE

- Breakout groups
- Postdoctoral scholars at a glance
- Importance of mentoring
- Competitive edge program
- Questions, feedback, and advice
1. Do you have a mentoring/professional development program at your institution/faculty/department? If yes, what does this look like? (5min)

2. If you were to implement a mentoring/professional development program what would that look like? (5min)

3. What obstacles do you think you would encounter implementing such a program? (5min)
Current Postdoctoral Situation

- Changing career landscape
- Shortage of academic positions
  – Only 1/10 PhDs will attain a faculty position (Conference Board of Canada, 2016)
- Limited opportunities for mentorship

Proposed Solution

- Mentors are important to 95% of mentees (Sambunjak et al., 2003)
- Increased career satisfaction (Sambunjak et al., 2003)
- Increased productivity (research and publication) (Cohen et al., 2012)
- Resolve issues with supervisor (Scaffidi et al., 2011)
- Most postdocs want a secondary mentor (Scaffidi et al., 2011)
Professional Development Plan for Postdoctoral Scholars

Field 1 - Development of Research Skills

Field 2 - Transferable Professional Development (networking, communication, leadership, etc.)

The Professional Development Plan (PDP) for Postdoctoral Scholars at Western University is a professional tool which outlines long-term and short-term objectives that you and your postdoctoral mentor(s)/supervisor(s) have identified as important steps in your professional development at Western. A comprehensive review of your career goals and objectives at the beginning of your postdoctoral experience as well as ongoing constructive feedback from your postdoctoral mentor/supervisor will increase the probability of achieving your individual goals.

Please indicate one or more of your individual career goals (please specify where applicable):

☐ Academic
☐ Public Sector/Government
☐ Private Sector/Industry
☐ Other

The following fields represent the core competencies of a successful postdoctoral appointment as adapted from the National Postdoctoral Association:

1. Development of Research Skills
2. Transferable Professional Development (networking, communication, leadership, etc.)
3. Career-specific Professional Development (customized to your future career goals)

Each field is expandable to meet your individual situation and stage of training. Short-term goals, such as learning objectives and skill acquisition, may be established annually, whereas long-term goals might be established initially and revisited as needed in future PDPs. Each postdoctoral appointment is unique: therefore a fourth field (Customized Competency) has been provided to customize your experience and meet any additional goals you may have.

For each goal you outline please provide:

1. a brief description
2. the steps/training you require to achieve the goal
3. the outcomes on your professional skill set
4. a timeline to completing the goal

If you have any questions concerning the Professional Development Plan please contact Mihaela Harmos at mnharmos@uwo.ca

Please complete this form and return it to: URL to be provided
Field 3 – Career-specific Professional Development (customized to your future career goals)

EXAMPLE:
Goal description: gain teaching experience
Steps:
- TSC workshops
- conferences
- teaching
Outcomes:
Timeline: on-going

Acknowledgement of Professional Development Plan

Postdoctoral Scholar  Date

Supervisor  Date

Co-Supervisor (if applicable)  Date

Team Mentor  Date

Team Mentor (if applicable)  Date
COMPETITIVE EDGE

Competitive Edge

Professional Development Plans

Postdoc

Supervisor

Mentors

SGPS

Mentoring Committees

Postdoc

Supervisor

Mentors

Faculty

Scientist/Clinician

Alumni

Public/Private Sector Partner
MENTORING COMMITTEES

YEAR 1
- Assemble Mentor Committee
- Review PDP

YEAR 2
- Annual Mentor Committee Meeting

YEAR 3
- Annual Mentor Committee Meeting
- Consultation with Committee
- Strategy for Transition

Exit interview
Assessment

Current Postdoc Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Area</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Current</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University research faculty</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry/private sector research</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-research teaching faculty</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO research</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional practice</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars (2013)
DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

Assessment
Current Postdoc Situation

- Unfavourable job market: 32.9%
- Lost interest/interests changed: 12.6%
- Generally discouraged: 9.0%
- Non-academic more promising: 7.8%
- Low pay/funding difficulties: 7.6%
- Want to stay in research: 5.5%
- Keeping options open: 3.3%
- Prefer different lifestyle: 3.3%
- Other: 11.6%
- Prefer not to say: 6.4%

Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars (2013)
Need
Formal Training being Received?

Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars (2013)
DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

Need
Focus groups
NPA meeting
Collaboration between SGPS and PAW
DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

Action

Develop Documents and Process

Identify Stakeholders
(Formation of PAC)

Buy-in
Post-docs (PAW)
Faculty Chairs
Departments

Pilot
(N=20)

Implementation
OBSTACLES

When to implement
   Within first year vs. beyond first year

Document Language

Faculty dependent differences

Resources and Budget

Impact and outcomes
   Currently developing a research strategy
Questions, Feedback, and Advice