

Promising Practices: Steps Departments Can Take to Support the Professional and Career Development of Graduate Students

1. **Encourage graduate students** to take part in the wide array of campus professional and career development workshops offered by the [Graduate Division](#), the [Career Center](#), [Beyond Academia](#), [Science Leadership and Management](#), [D-Lab](#), and more. Upcoming events are listed on the [Graduate Division's Professional Development calendar](#). Information and links to all of the professional development units can be found on the Graduate Division website.
2. **Encourage faculty and graduate students** to take part in career exploration programs offered by professional associations and organizations such as the [MLA's Connected Academics](#), the U.C.-wide [Humanists@Work](#) program, the [N.E.H.'s Next Generation Ph.D. Implementation Grants program](#), and the [A.H.A.'s Career Diversity Pilot Programs](#).
3. **Support graduate students** by linking the [Graduate Professional Development](#) website to your department web page, and by encouraging faculty to familiarize themselves with the website so that they can best help graduate students. Encourage your department's GSAO to visit the website and to forward professional development-related emails to graduate students.
4. **Inform graduate students** about [the Versatile Ph.D.](#) website (the campus has a subscription), where they will find many resources to help them explore and prepare for a range of careers. Consider making funding available for graduate students to participate in professional development activities that occur away from campus.
5. **Emphasize the importance** of these resources to your department's placement officer and/or placement committee. If your department has a graduate student association, bring that organization into the discussion about professional development activities and resources.
6. **Gather contact information** from graduating Ph.D.'s before they leave campus for the purpose of creating a department-specific alumni network. Devote staff time to keeping this list current, and/or designate a graduate or undergraduate student as a point person for updating and maintaining the network.
7. **Invite alumni back to the department.** Arrange for a panel of former Ph.D.'s from your department now in a variety of careers (e.g., in non-profits, industry, government, educational administration) to come speak to your graduate students about their career paths. Send a set of questions to panelists in advance so that they can plan their remarks. Consider pairing this panel with departmentally customized workshops from Ph.D. counselors at the Career Center.
8. **Schedule a townhall** on professional development, and aim to make it a regular departmental event (perhaps once a semester or once a year). Consider inviting representatives from Graduate Division, the Career Center, and Beyond Academia to talk about professional development opportunities and resources.
9. **Consider offering a course** on professional development. Incorporate workshops in which students actively practice important skills like public speaking, writing and peer review, as well as panel discussions with speakers both inside and outside academia. See [sample syllabus from Psychology 293](#)