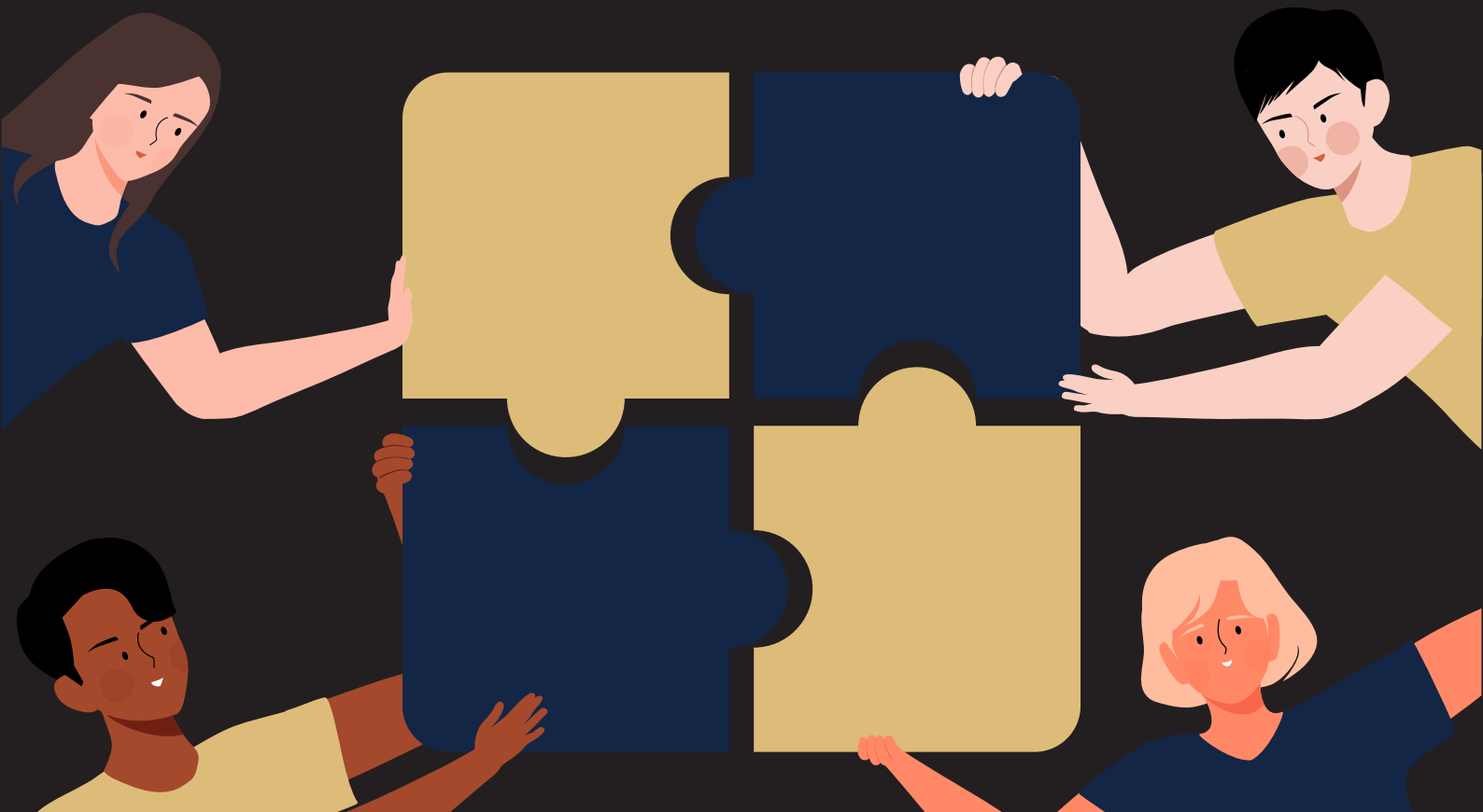


DESIGNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

A Guidebook



NASPA 2024 Session

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook includes seven worksheets and a 1-page roadmap that can assist you in designing a professional development program for graduate students.

You may use it step by step or choose to work on the sheets that resonate with you and require clarification.

Additionally, we are providing further information on the Graduate Staff Academy and links that you can explore to learn more about this program at George Mason University.





GRADUATE STAFF ACADEMY FOR GROWTH LEARNING AND COMMUNITY



The Graduate Staff Academy is a year-long professional development cohort developed for the graduate staff employed at University Life.

These graduate staff includes Professional Assistants (GPAs) and graduate student staff like interns, externs, practicum participants, and coordinators.

The Graduate Staff Academy meets monthly in 2-hour sessions, concentrating on relevant topics for personal and professional development while building connections with University Life professionals.

Topics for the sessions are led by Student Affairs Professionals within University Life and cover areas such as career readiness, mentoring, professional relationships, diversity, equity, inclusion, well-being, and financial literacy, offering a comprehensive experience for graduate students.

Essentially, the Graduate Staff Academy reflects University Life's commitment to supporting holistic development and professional growth among graduate staff members.



GRADUATE STAFF ACADEMY TIMELINE

FALL 2019

- UL GPA Programs launched
- UL GPA Advisory Team convened
- Scheduled sessions for Spring 2020

2020 - 2021

COVID-19

- Paused UL GPA initiatives
- Formalized cohort design for Graduate Professional Development
- Launched GSA Housing Residence Life with 8 GPAs in Aug 2020

2021 - 2022

- Implemented the first cohort in University Life
- Opt-in participant experience
- Fully online

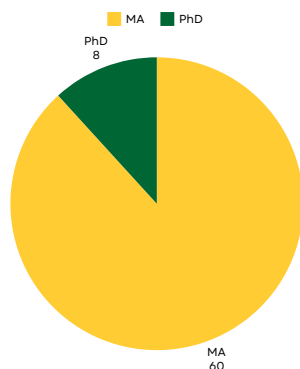
2022 - 2023

- Second cohort (Hybrid)
 - Introduced in-person sessions & end of cohort celebrations
 - Virtual working hours

2023 - 2024

- 2-hour mandatory professional development commitment written into GPA contract
- fixed day and time every month
- implemented mid-year check-in with supervisors
- increased feedback loops (1:1)

GSA SNAPSHOT FOR 2023 - 2024



DOMESTIC 60
INTERNATIONAL 8

PROGRAMS



COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES
19



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
18



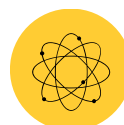
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
10



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING &
COMPUTING
6



3 SCHAR SCHOOL OF
POLICY & GOVERNMENT



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
2



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
2



COLLEGE OF VISUAL &
PERFORMING ARTS
2



SCHOOL FOR PEACE &
CONFLICT RESOLUTION
1

UL WELL-BEING **1** LEARNING SERVICES **2**

FIRST-GEN+ CENTER **3** MASON RECREATION **4**

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT **7** HOUSING & RESIDENCE LIFE **3**

GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE **4** STUDENT SUCCESS COACHING **5**

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES **4** LGBTQ+ RESOURCES CENTER **2**

UNIVERSITY LIFE MASON SQUARE **1** UL TECHNOLOGY SERVICES **1**

STUDENT SUPPORT & ADVOCACY CENTER **3** CONTEMPORARY STUDENT SERVICES **1**

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT **2** NEW STUDENT & FAMILY PROGRAMS **1**

CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WELL-BEING **2** UL MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS **3**

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM & SERVICES **3** CENTER FOR CULTURE, EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT **4**

UL PROJECT & PROCESS MANAGEMENT **2** UL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & STAFF EXPERIENCE **1**

**UNIVERSITY LIFE UNITS
AND
GPAS HIRED**

RESOURCE

GRADUATE STAFF ACADEMY

Click on the icons below to access links attached.

Handbook

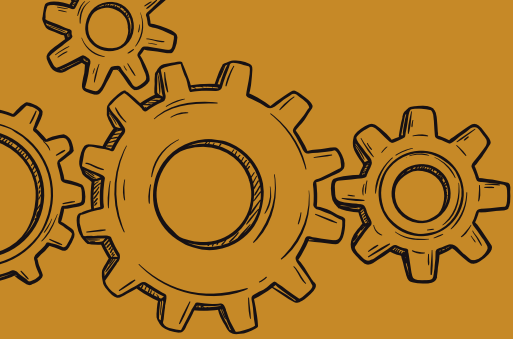


Graduate Staff
Academy Overview
(5 mins)



Participants
Feedback
(7 mins)





DESIGNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DESIGN?

Professional Development Design (PDD) provides structure and guidance on holistically creating learning and development opportunities. A Professional Development Design should reflect the needs of the organization and the needs of the individual. Often, professional development design plans that are tailored to the individual address individual performance competencies defined by the organization. When planning for a team or organizations, designers often focus on competencies defined by the functional area association to guide the work. The Professional Development Design can take many forms depending on the structure, size, resources and needs of the organization.

WHERE CAN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DESIGN BE IMPLEMENTED?

Professional Development Design can be implemented in many organizations and departments.

The content in this design focuses on creating departmental buy-in, planning and organization, and identifying purposeful programming for the employees within the organization.

CAN THIS BE USED FOR INDIVIDUALS, SMALL TEAMS OR DEPARTMENTS?

Professional Development Design can be used for all groups and individuals. This framework is fluid and outcomes will change based on what the creator is seeking. While this framework was originally created for a department, this framework can be used for departments, units, or individual teams.

ACTIVITY: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INDIVIDUAL

**How do you define
professional development?**

DEPARTMENT

**How does your department
define professional
development?**

**What opportunities do you
engage in for your
professional
development?**

**What resources (socially,
economically, and etc.) does
your department have for
professional development?**



IDENTIFYING THE WHY

OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Why are you creating a professional development program for your graduate students?

What existing challenges will this professional development design address for your graduate staff?

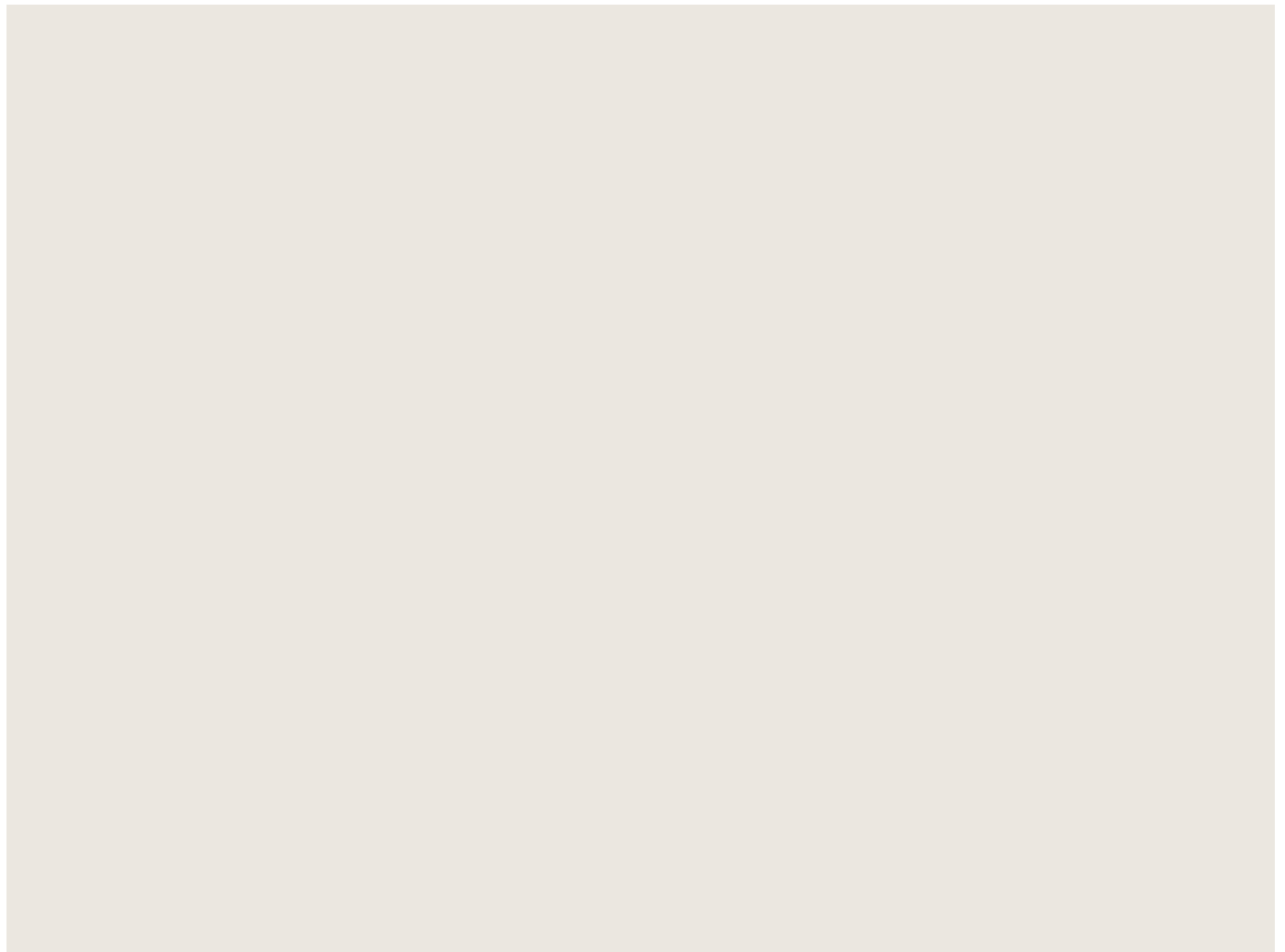
How will this professional development design accommodate the diverse learning and working needs of your graduate staff? (Think accessibility)



DEVELOPING THE HOW

OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

What research, theoretical frameworks, professional competencies, and best practices will guide the program?



Some Recommendations:

ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

CAS Resources for Graduate Students

Vitae Researcher Developer Framework



UNDERSTAND THE WHAT

OF THE CURRENT EXPERIENCE OF GRADUATE STAFF

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ASSESS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

APPROACH	DESCRIPTION	PROS/CONS
Interviews (Qualitative)	Interviews can be described as 1:1 in depth conversations to understand an experience through an individual's standpoint	PROs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• depth of information• can ask follow up questions CONs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• time consuming
Focus Groups (Qualitative)	Focus Groups can be described as group conversations to understand an experience through a group's standpoint	PROs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• obtain multiple perspectives at the same time• can ask follow up questions CONs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• not everyone is represented equally• time consuming
Surveys (Quantitative)	Surveys can be described as a form that is completed to understand an experience through a large number of responses.	PROs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• can obtain high number of responses• can be done in a short time CONs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• no opportunity to ask follow up for clarity

ACTIVITY: ASSESSING THE EXPERIENCE

**Select your approach
(Interviews, Focus
Group, Surveys, or etc)**

**Who would be your
participants?
How are you recruiting
your participants?**

**What professional
development needs do
you seek to understand?**

**Is there additional
support needed? (i.e. a
transcriber, facilitator,
and etc.)**



IDENTIFYING THE WHEN

BUILDING THE TIMELINE

What are the key milestones or stages of the professional development program?

What is the desired timeframe for each milestone or stage?

What resources, including personnel, funding, and materials, are necessary for each milestone?

What are the potential risks or obstacles that could impact the timeline, and how can they be mitigated?

APPLYING FEEDBACK & INPUT (WHO)

THE "WHO" FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

Professional development is meant for the individuals in the workplace. The "who" focuses on who should give feedback, input, and or suggestions. The answer is simple -- all those who could be a part of your Professional Development Design should provide feedback and input. This means the employees you are creating this for, their supervisors, and the department/unit head. By creating spaces for feedback, you are welcoming different thoughts and possibly addressing any blind spots that were missed.

WHY DOES FEEDBACK MATTER?

Feedback matters as it shows a level of commitment. Requesting feedback at various points in the program development indicates a dedication to the inclusion of multiple voices in various positions in the team. While it is possible not all feedback will be applied, creating this space is equally important for the employee. When requesting feedback from the employee, it demonstrates a commitment to their voice being heard in the program development process in order to create an experience that speaks to their needs, as well as the organization's and designer's planning structure.

WHAT ARE FEEDBACK LOOPS?

Feedback Loops are when the designer invites participants to share feedback in various forms and will review and potentially apply the feedback given. Feedback Loops are intentional and specific. Feedback Loops can occur in 1-on-1 meetings, group discussion, assessment, email requests, team meetings, etc. Once again, feedback demonstrate inclusion and commitment to the program design (content, modality, format, timing, etc.) meeting the needs of the employee as well as the team; Feedback Loops are the vehicle by which this occurs.



ARTICULATING THE WHO

INPUT & FEEDBACK

Who are the key stakeholders within your organization that should be involved in providing feedback and input for your professional development programs? How might their perspectives contribute to the effectiveness of the program?

How will you seek their feedback?

What are the potential barriers or challenges that could prevent you from getting their honest feedback?



GARNERING THE BUY-IN

WHO'S GOING TO BE ON YOUR TEAM?

Identify individuals within your professional development design in relation to buy-in

Who are your stakeholders?

- Who are your stakeholders (individuals impacted by your PDD)?
- What role do they play in the program design and/or implementation?
- How are you accountable to them?
- How are they accountable to you?

Identify your champions

- Who are your champions (individuals who will advocate for your PDD)?
- What role do they play in supporting your program design?
- How do you engage them and or how do they support you?

Identify your arbitrators

- Who are your arbitrators (individuals who would be naysayers to your PDD)?
- What role do they play in your environment?
- How do you approach and manage arbitrators?

ACTIVITY: GARNERING THE BUY-IN

Identify individuals within your professional development design in relation to buy-in

**Who are your
stakeholders?**

Identify your champions

Identify your arbitrators

ROADMAP

Step 1

Identify the why

Step 2

Develop the how

Step 3

Understand the
what

Step 4

Deciding the when

Step 5

Articulating the
who and getting
their input

Step 6

Garnering the
buy-in

Step 7

Write your formalized proposal (Executive Summary) to share out
with stakeholders

RESOURCES

Allworth, J., D'Souza, L., Henning, G., & Morrison, J. (2021). *Design thinking in student affairs: a primer* (First edition). Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Shepard, V. A., & Perry, A. L. (2022). *A Practitioner's Guide to Supporting Graduate and Professional Students* (1st ed.). Routledge.

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George Mason University



University Life