

Summary document of policies and programming developed by the OPD in collaboration with the BSGC

Last updated 12/29/2021

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Quick Links

Program-specific tracking sheets - access is restricted on a need to know basis

[BMBB](#) | [GPN](#) | [IBP](#) | [MCDB&G](#) | [MICA](#) | [PHCL MS & PhD](#) | [Rehab Sci](#) | [Stem Cell](#)

A Note about the OPD

The Office of Professional Development (OPD) provides support, resources and skill-building opportunities to UMN Medical School trainees (biomedical MS and PhD students and postdocs) as they develop into skilled scientists and navigate careers in the biomedical workforce with confidence. The purpose of the OPD is to educate, inform, and prepare graduate students and postdocs for careers in the biomedical workforce. As a division of BGREAT, the OPD works with

the Associate Dean of Graduate Education and the Directors of Graduate Studies of BGREAT programs to support trainees in career progress as well as align graduate and postdoctoral training with best practices in scientific training.

OPD Policies - Required Activities for BGREAT students

Justification (for students): Professional development complements your research training and is critical for your success during and after graduate school. Whether you decide to pursue a role in academia, industry, policy, law, education, or in one or more of the many other fields that hire biomedical PhD and MS graduates, knowledge of careers and non-technical skills are required. The required seminar series and meetings provided by the OPD are opportunities for you to initiate and carry out plans to explore careers and develop your non-technical skills during your time in graduate school. In addition, The NIH encourages students to utilize Individual Development Plans (IDPs), required of all NIH-funded trainees*, to facilitate research productivity, skill development, career exploration, and professional progress. Leaders in the field of career and professional development find that IDPs for career and professional growth are most effective when they are paired with meetings with career and professional development advisors. The 1st year series is designed to build a foundation of knowledge that empowers students to actively engage in career and professional development throughout their graduate training. Meetings with the OPD ensure that students continue to make progress and are aware of resources available to them.

***NIH Policy regarding IDPs:** <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-14-113.html>
“The NIH encourages grantees to develop institutional policies that employ an IDP for every graduate student and postdoctoral researcher supported by NIH awards. Beginning on October 1, 2014, annual progress reports are required to include a description of whether the institution uses IDPs or not and how they are employed to help manage the training and career development of those individuals. NIH progress reports using the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) must include a report on the use of IDPs in Section B. Accomplishments, Question B.4.”

1st Year Series Participation Policy

Policy: The Office of Professional Development facilitates a 1st Year Series for all 1st year BGREAT PhD and MS graduate students, focused on exploring communication styles, workplace dynamics, barriers and challenges in the biomedical research community, as well as building a foundation for career exploration and professional development. Active participation in this seminar series is a required component of BGREAT 1st year training. Active participation is defined as, for each month of the 1st academic year, either attendance at the in-person session, or completion of the asynchronous online module.

Other policy details and logistics

- PhD students will not be able to schedule their 2nd year IDP meeting, or receive subsequent approval of their oral prelim committee, unless they have completed this series.
- For MS students, program-specific coursework grades may not be granted unless this series is completed.
- The OPD will notify students of relevant date, time and other logistical details of the 1st Year Series prior to the start of the first year students' fall academic semester.
- Beginning September 1, 2020, first year students were notified of this series as a requirement. The policy was formally approved by the BSGC in November 2021.
- Students may reach out to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and their Director of Graduate Studies to request an exemption, which will be granted on a case by case basis.
- OPD staff will update the tracking sheet to indicate whether a student has completed the 1st Year Series. This list will be shared with the DGSs and GPCs and used to ensure that deadlines are met.

Vote to require, by program

- | | |
|--|---|
| ● BMBB - required (Gordon) | ● PCHL PhD - required (Campbell) |
| ● GPN - required (Vulchanova) | ● Rehab Sci - required (Lowe) |
| ● IBP - required (van Berlo) | ● Stem Cell Biology MS - required (Kierstead) |
| ● MCDB&G - required (Sivaramakrishnan) | ● PHCL MS - required (Campbell) |
| ● MICaB - required (Kelekar) | |

PhD Student-specific policies

2nd year Career Exploration Checkpoint - IDP Meeting Policy

Policy: All 2nd year PhD students are required to do a self-assessment and meet with Sharolyn or Jenna from the Office of Professional Development (OPD) to ensure that a plan is in place for career exploration & professional development. Students are encouraged to utilize the information discussed in the meeting to develop the career and professional development portion of their IDP.

*The timing of and requirements for this meeting may vary by program, and are communicated by the Directors of Graduate Studies and/or Graduate Program Coordinator.

-Rehab Science - all students for 2019-2020, first year students beginning Fall 2020

-BMBB - all students all years

-MD/PhD students - varies by program, year 2 of grad school is most common

How to set up and prepare for your IDP meeting

Complete the [Office of Professional Development pre-meeting form](#). The pre-meeting form will direct you to:

- Create an account and fill out assessments at <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>. For the assessments, do your best to use the whole range of scores. Come prepared to talk about your summaries.
- Share your most recent CV or resume by attaching it to the form. You do not need to make any updates - OPD staff will use it to learn more about your professional history.
- View the available OPD appointment slots to schedule your appointment. (You'll see a link to the OPD Appointment Calendar after submitting the pre-meeting form.)

Meetings will vary based on individuals. This is just a conversation - there is no exam, and OPD staff are not reporting on what is discussed. It will be up to you to share anything that is discussed with your Research Advisor/Principal Investigator and/or Director of Graduate Studies. Common discussion topics:

- Resources to help improve skills you think you need to work on
- How to explore your career interests
- Goals for the summer, or for the next year
- Workplace communication
- How you've been balancing your obligations during graduate school

Other policy details and logistics

- Beginning January 1, 2020, this meeting is required for students' advancement to a PhD candidate. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education (Dr. Colin Campbell) or other oral prelim approval designated staff will not approve a PhD student's oral preliminary examination committees until the student has completed the process outlined above.
- Students may reach out to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and their Director of Graduate Studies to request an exemption, which will be granted on a case by case basis.
- OPD staff will update a tracking sheet to indicate whether a student has completed their IDP meeting. This list will be shared with the DGSs and GPCs and used to ensure that deadlines are met.

4th/5th Year Career Check-in Policy

Policy: All students graduating from BGREAT PhD graduate programs are either strongly encouraged or required* to meet with Office of Professional Development (OPD) staff during the summer before the start of their 5th year to ensure that the student is aware of and connected to career and professional development resources to aid them in planning and preparing for their post-graduation careers.

*Program-specific guidelines are agreement between BGREAT and DGSs:

DGSs should indicate 'required' or 'encouraged'

BMBB - required (Goldstrohm and Yong)	MICaB - required (Kelekar)
GPN - required (Vulchanova and Lesne)	PCHL PhD - required (Campbell)
IBP - required (van Berlo)	Rehab Sci - required (Lowe)
MCDB&G - waiting for response	

How to set up and prepare for your 4th/5th year meeting

Complete the [Office of Professional Development pre-meeting form](#). The pre-meeting form will direct you to:

- Update the OPD on your career and professional development progress and list any specific topics you would like to discuss during the meeting.
- View the available OPD appointment slots to schedule your appointment. (You'll see a link to the OPD Appointment Calendar after submitting the pre-meeting form.)

Conversations in the meeting will focus on current skills, interests, values, and career exploration progress. Students will leave the meeting with a list of SMART (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**elevant, and **t**ime bound) goals for their transition out of their graduate program to the next career step. In some cases, a student may set up additional meetings in order to utilize the OPD as an accountability tool to stay on track.

Other policy details and logistics

- The OPD will reach out to all PhD students at the end of the spring semester of their 4th year
- Beginning in June of 2020, this meeting is required for all BGREAT PhD students.
- Students may reach out to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and their Director of Graduate Studies to request an exemption, which will be granted on a case by case basis.
- OPD staff will update a tracking sheet to indicate whether a student has completed their 4th/5th year meeting. This list will be shared with the DGSs and GPCs and used to ensure that deadlines are met.

MS Student-specific policies

Vote to require, by program

Stem Cell Biology MS - required (Keirstead)

MPaT MS - required (Campbell)

Fall IDP Meeting

Policy: All BGREAT first year masters students are required to meet with Sharolyn or Jenna from the Office of Professional Development (OPD) during the fall semester. Students are encouraged to utilize the information discussed in the meeting to develop the career and professional development portion of an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

How to set up and prepare for your Fall IDP meeting

Complete the [Office of Professional Development pre-meeting form](#). The pre-meeting form will direct you to:

- Create an account and fill out assessments at <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>. For the assessments, do your best to use the whole range of scores. Come prepared to talk about your summaries.
- Share your most recent CV or resume by attaching it to the form. You do not need to make any updates - OPD staff will use it to learn more about your professional history.

- View the available OPD appointment slots to schedule your appointment. (You'll see a link to the OPD Appointment Calendar after submitting the pre-meeting form.)

Meetings will vary based on individuals. This is just a conversation - there is no exam, and OPD staff are not reporting on what is discussed. It will be up to you to share anything that is discussed with your Research Advisor/Principal Investigator and/or Director of Graduate Studies. Common discussion topics:

- Resources to help improve skills you think you need to work on
- How to explore your career interests
- Workplace communication
- How you've been balancing your obligations during graduate school

Other policy details and logistics

- For Stem Cell Biology MS students, the Fall IDP meeting should occur by September 30.
- For MPaT MS students, the Fall IDP meeting must be scheduled by October 15
- Students may reach out to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and their Director of Graduate Studies to request an exemption, which will be granted on a case by case basis.
- OPD staff will update a tracking sheet to indicate whether a student has completed their Fall IDP meeting. This list will be shared with the DGSs and GPCs and used to ensure that deadlines are met.

Spring Career Check-In

Policy: All BGREAT first year masters students are required to meet with Sharolyn or Jenna from the Office of Professional Development (OPD) during the spring semester. Students are encouraged to utilize the information discussed in the meeting to implement the career and professional development portion of an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

How to set up and prepare for your Spring Career Check-in

Complete the [Office of Professional Development pre-meeting form](#). The pre-meeting form will direct you to:

- Update the OPD on your career and professional development progress and list any specific topics you would like to discuss during the meeting.
- View the available OPD appointment slots to schedule your appointment. (You'll see a link to the OPD Appointment Calendar after submitting the pre-meeting form.)

Conversations in the meeting will focus on current skills, interests, values, and career exploration progress. Students will leave the meeting with a list of SMART (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**elevant, and **t**ime bound) goals for their transition out of their graduate program to the next career step. In some cases, a student may set up additional meetings in order to utilize the OPD as an accountability tool to stay on track.

Other policy details and logistics

- For Stem Cell Biology MS students, the Spring Career Check-in should occur by April 1.
- For MPaT MS students, the Spring Career Check-in must be scheduled by April 15.

- Students may reach out to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and their Director of Graduate Studies to request an exemption, which will be granted on a case by case basis.
- OPD staff will update a tracking sheet to indicate whether a student has completed their Fall IDP meeting. This list will be shared with the DGSs and GPCs and used to ensure that deadlines are met.

Suggested Handbook Section (PhD track)

The Office of Professional Development (OPD) provides support, resources and skill-building opportunities to UMN Medical School trainees (biomedical MS and PhD students and postdocs) as they develop into skilled scientists and navigate careers in the biomedical workforce with confidence. The purpose of the OPD is to educate, inform, and prepare graduate students and postdocs for careers in the biomedical workforce. As a division of BGREAT, the OPD works with the Associate Dean of Graduate Education and the Directors of Graduate Studies of BGREAT programs to support trainees in career progress as well as align graduate and postdoctoral training with best practices in scientific training.

Professional development complements your research training and is critical for your success during and after graduate school. Whether you decide to pursue a role in academia, industry, policy, law, education, or in one or more of the many other fields that hire biomedical PhD and MS graduates, knowledge of careers and non-technical skills are required. The required seminar series and meetings provided by the OPD (outlined below) are opportunities for you to initiate and carry out plans to explore careers and develop your non-technical skills during your time in graduate school. In addition, The NIH encourages students to utilize Individual Development Plans (IDPs), required of all NIH-funded trainees, to facilitate research productivity, skill development, career exploration, and professional progress. Leaders in the field of career and professional development find that IDPs for career and professional growth are most effective when they are paired with meetings with career and professional development advisors. The 1st year seminar series is designed to build a foundation of knowledge that empowers you to actively engage in career and professional development throughout your graduate training. Meetings with the OPD ensure that you continue to make progress and are aware of resources available to you.

1st year series: The Office of Professional Development facilitates a 1st year series for modules for all 1st year BGREAT graduate students, focused on exploring communication styles, workplace dynamics, barriers and challenges in the biomedical research community, as well as building a foundation for career exploration and professional development. Active participation in this seminar series is a required component of BGREAT 1st year training. Active participation is defined as, for each month of the 1st academic year, either attendance at the in-person session, or completion of the asynchronous online module.

2nd year IDP meeting: All 2nd year students are required to do a self-assessment and meet with Sharolyn or Jenna from the Office of Professional Development (OPD) to ensure that a plan is in place for career exploration & professional development. Students are encouraged to utilize

the information discussed in the meeting to develop the career and professional development portion of their IDP.

4th/5th year career check-in: All students graduating from BGREAT PhD graduate programs are required to meet with Office of Professional Development (OPD) staff during the summer before the start of their 5th year to ensure that the student is aware of and connected to career and professional development resources to aid them in planning and preparing for their post-graduation careers.

Additional details

- The OPD will notify students of relevant date, time and other logistical details of the 1st Year Series prior to the start of the first year students' fall academic semester.
- Schedule your meetings by filling out the [OPD pre-meeting form](#). After completing the form, you can view the available OPD appointment slots to schedule your appointment. (You'll see a link to the OPD Appointment Calendar after submitting the pre-meeting form.)
- Participation in the 1st year series and the 2nd year IDP meeting are required for progress towards the degree. PhD students will not receive approval of their oral prelim committee unless they have completed the 1st year series and their IDP meeting.
- Students may reach out to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and their Director of Graduate Studies to request an exemption, which will be granted on a case by case basis.

Suggested Handbook Section (MS track)

The Office of Professional Development (OPD) provides support, resources and skill-building opportunities to UMN Medical School trainees (biomedical MS and PhD students and postdocs) as they develop into skilled scientists and navigate careers in the biomedical workforce with confidence. The purpose of the OPD is to educate, inform, and prepare graduate students and postdocs for careers in the biomedical workforce. As a division of BGREAT, the OPD works with the Associate Dean of Graduate Education and the Directors of Graduate Studies of BGREAT programs to support trainees in career progress as well as align graduate and postdoctoral training with best practices in scientific training.

Professional development complements your research training and is critical for your success during and after graduate school. Whether you decide to pursue a role in academia, industry, policy, law, education, or in one or more of the many other fields that hire biomedical PhD and MS graduates, knowledge of careers and non-technical skills are required. The required seminar series and meetings provided by the OPD (outlined below) are opportunities for you to initiate and carry out plans to explore careers and develop your non-technical skills during your time in graduate school. In addition, The NIH encourages students to utilize Individual Development Plans (IDPs), required of all NIH-funded trainees, to facilitate research productivity, skill development, career exploration, and professional progress. Leaders in the field of career and professional development find that IDPs for career and professional growth are most effective when they are paired with meetings with career and professional

development advisors. The 1st year seminar series is designed to build a foundation of knowledge that empowers you to actively engage in career and professional development throughout your graduate training. Meetings with the OPD ensure that you continue to make progress and are aware of resources available to you.

1st year series: The Office of Professional Development facilitates a 1st year series for modules for all 1st year BGREAT graduate students, focused on exploring communication styles, workplace dynamics, barriers and challenges in the biomedical research community, as well as building a foundation for career exploration and professional development. Active participation in this seminar series is a required component of BGREAT 1st year training. Active participation is defined as, for each month of the 1st academic year, either attendance at the in-person session, or completion of the asynchronous online module.

Fall IDP Meeting: All BGREAT first year masters students are required to meet with Sharolyn or Jenna from the Office of Professional Development (OPD) during the fall semester. Students are encouraged to utilize the information discussed in the meeting to develop the career and professional development portion of their IDP.

Spring Career Check-in: All BGREAT first year masters students are required to meet with Sharolyn or Jenna from the Office of Professional Development (OPD) during the spring semester. Students are encouraged to utilize the information discussed in the meeting to implement the career and professional development portion of their IDP.

Additional details

- The OPD will notify students of relevant date, time and other logistical details of the 1st Year Series prior to the start of the first year students' fall academic semester.
- Schedule your meetings by filling out the [OPD pre-meeting form](#). After completing the form, you can view the available OPD appointment slots to schedule your appointment. (You'll see a link to the OPD Appointment Calendar after submitting the pre-meeting form.)
- Participation in the 1st year series and Fall IDP and Spring Career Check-in meetings are required for progress towards the degree. Program-specific coursework grades may not be granted unless this process is completed.
- Students may reach out to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education and their Director of Graduate Studies to request an exemption, which will be granted on a case by case basis.

Optional Programming

Career Exploration Series

Each month during the academic year, the OPD hosts a panel of professionals who have navigated from a PhD to roles within a particular career path. The OPD facilitates a Q&A with the panelists to learn about their role, how they got to where they are now, and skills that current trainees can leverage or develop if they want to follow a similar career path. Panelists are often alumni of BGREAT programs, and almost always encourage attendees to follow up with them for further discussion if they have more questions. The Career Exploration Series is a great way to learn about career options and make connections with professionals who have already made similar transitions! The Career Exploration Series panels are recorded and can be accessed via the [OPD Mediaspace channel](#) (note: a UMN login is required to view the recordings).

OPD Seminar Series

Each month during the academic year, the OPD presents informational seminars on topics related to career and professional development. Topics have varied widely, including our popular job document series that helps trainees prepare a resume, CV, or cover letter for job applications; Postdoc Month (June 2021), which focused on identifying postdoc options that are a good fit and preparing to apply and interview for the position; and using individual development plans to set and reach goals. The OPD Seminar Series is recorded and can be accessed via the [OPD Mediaspace channel](#) (note: a UMN login is required to view the recordings).

Optional Individual Appointments

The OPD will meet with individual trainees with whatever frequency is appropriate for and desired by the trainee. Appointments can focus on career exploration, communication skills, transition preparation, job applications, interview practice, document review, or other topics related to career and professional development. To schedule an appointment, trainees can fill out the [OPD pre-meeting form](#).

Additional OPD Resources

[OPD newsletter](#)

All BGREAT students and postdocs are added to the newsletter on a semester (graduate students) or monthly (postdocs in the Medical School) basis. Anyone can subscribe to the newsletter, which alerts the community to local and national events, resources, and opportunities.

[OPD website](#)

[OPD Twitter account](#)

[Resource Guide for Students and Postdocs](#)

[Resource Guide for Faculty](#)

Description of the OPD for grants

READ ME

Please note that the OPD **strongly encourages** students applying for F31s to meet with an OPD staff member to discuss how to incorporate OPD offerings into their 'Training Goals and Objectives' section. While the materials below can be used to describe the OPD in broad terms in the 'Facilities and Other Resources' section, insertion of this paragraph in an application is not enough to demonstrate a student's individual plan for career and professional development. Students may also request a letter of support from the OPD - a meeting to discuss the application is required.

Faculty/PIs who plan to reference the OPD in training grants are **strongly encouraged** to meet with Sharolyn to discuss how they plan to collaborate with the OPD to support their trainees, should the grant get funded. A request for a letter of support from the OPD for a grant requires, at a minimum, a meeting to discuss expectations of the PIs and the OPD.

Office Description

The Office of Professional Development (OPD) at the University of Minnesota Medical School is centrally located in the Mayo Building of the University of Minnesota campus and is easily accessible for graduate students in Medical School graduate programs. Established in 2019, the OPD provides support, resources and skill-building opportunities to UMN Medical School trainees (biomedical MS and PhD students and postdocs) as they develop into skilled scientists and navigate careers in the biomedical workforce with confidence. The OPD has established a framework to ensure that every graduate student engages in career exploration and professional development. The OPD facilitates a first year series to create community and build a foundation of knowledge about biomedical careers and professional identity, connects graduate students to local and national resources and opportunities, and meets individually with students throughout their graduate school training to encourage development and implementation of Individual Development Plans (IDPs). The OPD also provides resources to trainees in the form of alumni panels, financial support for career development opportunities, and seminars. [Students applying for an F31 can insert their personal experience with the OPD here].