Career Planning and Development

Careers don't just happen—they are planned. It may be hard to think beyond graduation, but it is crucial for your long-term success to set a goal and make a plan for reaching it.

There are a multitude of possible career paths for graduate students, so be sure to tap into the following campus resources to optimize your time and training at UCSF with your long-term goals in mind.

My Annual Plan (MAP) and myIDP
Developed for UCSF students, MAP is an annual planning tool to help you identify short and long term goals to help you make timely progress through your degree program and achieve your career objectives. Download your MAP [1] and start making plans today!

Once you have taken your qualifying exams (or if you are a postdoc), you will want ramp up your career planning, and use the more in-depth career planning tool "myIDP [2].” This award-winning online tool will help you examine your personal and professional goals, and to explore a wide range of career options.

The Office of Career and Professional Development
The Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD) helps prepare UCSF students and postdoctoral scholars for careers rich in scholarship, leadership and discovery. OCPD provides programs, services, individual assistance, and web and print resources designed to enhance your academic, professional, and career development. Visit the OCPD website [3].

Motivating INformed Decisions: The MIND Program
MIND is an experimental career exploration program that challenges the current perceptions of PhD training. The program provides training and resources to UCSF students and postdocs and provides a resource for career exploration that can be utilized by trainees nationwide. The program brings together students, postdocs, faculty, and professional partners who are applying their doctoral degrees in diverse fields. Visit the MIND website [4] for more information on the program and how to participate.

Identifying a Mentor and Cultivating a Mentoring Network
The Council of Graduate Schools has produced Great Mentoring in Graduate School: A quick-start guide for protégés [5], a useful guide that includes helpful advice and tips on a range of topics such as identifying a mentor, engaging with mentors to develop a professional identify, cultivating networks, and serving as a mentor to others.

Networking and Career Exploration through Campus Organizations
There are over 100 registered clubs and organizations at UCSF, including many focused on exploring career interests and options. They also provide valuable opportunities to network with your peers, faculty, UCSF alumni, and leaders in academia, industry, and other areas of science. Some great examples:

- Interested in science advocacy and communicating science? Get involved in Carry the One Radio [6]. Founded by a group of UCSF neuroscience and biomedical sciences students, Carry the One has developed a series of short, accessible podcast interviews with scientists, in order to bridge the gap between the scientific community and the public.
- Concerned about science policy? Check out the Science Policy Group [7], dedicated to educating UCSF students and postdocs about science policy issues as well as taking action to support science advocacy.
- Looking for career path? The Basic Science Alumni Seminar Series [8] is designed to facilitate informal conversation between graduate students and Graduate Division alumni, allowing students to learn more about their post-graduate career options. Originally created by and for iPQB graduate students, the series has expanded to include speakers from other graduate programs, and students from all programs are invited to attend.

Keep exploring! See the full list of campus organizations [9].

Among universities nationwide, the UCSF Graduate Division is leading the way in examining career outcomes for doctoral students. We hope that this effort will help prospective and current students consider a variety of possible educational and career paths. Take a look at the career outcomes data we have gathered on UCSF alumni of the basic sciences [10] and social sciences [11] at UCSF. If you are interested in career outcomes for a specific program, visit that individual program's page on this website and follow the "career outcomes" link at the right side of that page. See the full list of programs and links to individual program pages [12].