# Graduate Student Professional Skills and Competencies Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Competency</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Ways to develop skill/competency</th>
<th>Developed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ability to convey complex information to a variety of audiences | Demonstrates the ability to communicate information to colleagues, the general public, and industry leaders | ✓ Instruct a class (including asking a professor if you can guest-lecture for a course, if you don't have the opportunity to lead your own course)  
✓ Lead a workshop  
✓ Make a presentation to a general audience (outside of your discipline-specific area)  
✓ Attend workshops on oral communication and presentation skills | ☐          |
| Ability to deal with ambiguity                         | Demonstrates the ability to be adaptable and confident in decision making in a complex work environment | ✓ Handle multiple tasks at once  
✓ Decide and act without having the total picture  
✓ Tolerate and manage change effectively and be able to deal with complex personalities (see below) | ☐          |
| Ability to deal with complex personalities             | Demonstrates the ability to build teams around the right personalities and how to manage those personalities. Ability to view situations from a different perspective and be a good colleague and leader. | ✓ Take a personality inventory such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator  
✓ Teach a class  
✓ Work in groups (in and out of your discipline) | ☐          |
| Ability to meet deadlines | Demonstrates the ability to manage time for oneself, others, and a project | ✓ Create a research plan and stick to the scheduled deadlines  
✓ Communicate these deadlines to others  
✓ Attend workshops on time management  
✓ Commit to projects with deadlines (paper proposals/presentations; publication deadlines; research workshops) and meet those deadlines |  |
| Ability to reach and defend conclusions | Demonstrates the ability to analyze and critically evaluate arguments and evidence appropriate to discipline or project | ✓ Defend proposal or research ideas to committee or team  
✓ Submit grant and research proposals  
✓ Present work, ideas, or projects to wider audience |  |
| Analytical thinker | Demonstrates the ability to evaluate, articulate, and discover more efficient ways to perform a task | ✓ Conduct data analysis as part of your research  
✓ Take courses that strengthen your logic and reasoning skills  
✓ Manage a budget for a project or student organization |  |
| Clear and concise writing, editing | Demonstrates the ability to write easy-to-understand reports and papers based on data collections and findings | ✓ Submit grant and research proposals  
✓ Form peer-to-peer editing groups  
✓ Attend workshops on grant/proposal writing  
✓ Attend workshops on publishing  
✓ Write in different formats and for different audiences – research papers, op-ed and other articles for a general audience, blog posts |  |
| Collaboration | Demonstrates the ability to provide and receive constructive criticism, be reliable by following through on group tasks with minimal supervision, and provide support or encouragement to group members to accomplish a goal | ✓ Participate in group projects and presentations  
✓ Participate in a student organization  
✓ Engage in collaborative research |  
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ethics & Integrity | Demonstrates the ability to understand and apply professional codes of conduct as they relate to research and work within and outside of one’s discipline | ✓ Attend workshops on conducting ethical research  
✓ Learn discipline specific code of conduct  
✓ Communicate importance with undergraduate researchers  
✓ Take or audit courses that analyze ethical issues and teach ethical thinking |  
| Evaluation of individual and group dynamics and performance | Demonstrates the ability to form work groups and teams based on strengths of individuals. | ✓ Take a personality inventory such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator  
✓ Teach a class  
✓ Evaluate (as a group or for oneself) group interactions and one’s own contribution to group dynamics and performance |  
| Extracting relevant material from large bodies of data | Demonstrates the ability to integrate and makes sense out of multiple sources of data | ✓ Attend workshops on data collection, organization, and analysis in diverse disciplines  
✓ Learn about the big data initiatives on-grounds  
✓ Work collaboratively with colleagues to understand tools and methods for using and applying data |  

---

Graduate Career Development • Randall Hall, 118 • http://gradcareer.virginia.edu/  
Page 3 of 6
| Full engagement with projects from inception to completion | Demonstrates the ability to identify problem, set goals, create an action plan, complete steps in order to see project to end | ✓ Finish dissertation/thesis proposal
✓ Submit grant and research proposals
✓ Manage a project for the full lifecycle for an organization or department
✓ Initiate and complete events for your department or beyond, including conferences, invited speakers, and workshops; respond to opportunities for leadership provided by Grad Studies and others |

| Leadership | Demonstrates the ability to set visions, motivate others and delegate tasks. | ✓ Incorporate undergraduate interns into research program
✓ Assume a leadership role in a student or community organization
✓ Manage T.A.’s in your department
✓ Seek ways to provide leadership within your discipline (through national/regional scholars associations or other organizations) |

| Power of persuasion | Demonstrates the ability to lead others through authority, goal-setting, and reasoning | ✓ Practice goal-setting in a team environment
✓ Teaching a class
✓ Plan events or take on leadership roles that require management and persuasion of teams of people |
| **Presentation/public speaking skills** | Demonstrates the ability to articulate and transmit information clearly between people and groups and accomplish a task or carry out an action in front of an audience | ✓ Poster or oral Presentations in department, local, or national setting  
✓ Attend workshops on presentation skills  
✓ Join Toastmasters or other organizations to develop public speaking skills  
✓ Look for (or organize) opportunities for students in your department, or in interdepartmental groups, to give practice job talks and presentations |
| **Problem Solver** | Demonstrates the ability to adapt quickly to a situation, anticipate the consequences of a course of action, and learn and grow from mistakes | ✓ Seek out new tasks or intentionally take on tasks that you don't feel fully prepared for  
✓ Attend workshops on dealing with challenging teaching situations  
✓ Engage in “Case competitions” and other competitions that require quick problem solving |
| **Project management, organizational skills** | Demonstrates knowledge of the project management process including defining goals and objectives, building consensus, identifying tasks that must be completed, creating and maintaining a budget, determining resources needed, developing a plan to carry out tasks, identifying issues and risks, communicating the project status effectively to all stakeholders, completing tasks correctly and in a timely manner | ✓ Organize a conference or department event  
✓ Manage undergraduates or volunteers during graduate research  
✓ Create a timeline for your research |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Motivated, Self-Starter</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability to work without direction to complete a task</td>
<td>✓ Propose new policy or ideas for your department or student organization</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Identify original ideas for research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Propose changes in the curriculum of a course you are teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Seek out opportunities for self-directed work: organize events, teach</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>your own course if possible, volunteer for research tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic thinking</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability to leverage resources, clarify the direction and vision of a project, and identify understand how various relationships support the goal of the institution or organization</td>
<td>✓ Take on jobs, internships, or projects during graduate studies that require vision and strategy</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Talk to faculty members and administrators about their experiences working as part of an organization</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful in competitive environments</td>
<td>Demonstrates quick problem solving skills, effective communication skills, and productivity</td>
<td>✓ Publish in a peer-reviewed journal</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Apply for (and win) grants/fellowships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Participate in contests at the university level or beyond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorough and efficient research</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability to use knowledge and tools to develop new products, ideas, and applications; something here about analysis of all available data and communication to others</td>
<td>✓ Finish dissertation/thesis</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Submit grant and research proposals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Manage a project for the full lifecycle for an organization or department</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>