

LESSONS FOR SUCCESS RESEARCH CONFERENCE— GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PREPARATION OF A FIVE-YEAR CAREER PLAN

The general purpose of a five-year career plan is to provide a framework for mapping out your short term (i.e., five years) career plans. If you are an assistant professor, the plan should meet your university's expectations for tenure and promotion. If you are a predoc or postdoc, you may include a section on training in addition to your plans for developing as a teacher, researcher, and providing service. In the five-year period, if you will transition to a new position (e.g., assistant professor), consider the expectations for the type of department/college/university in which you expect to be employed. Consider also including intentional activities to create a more supportive research culture.

The framework of the plan should be meaningful itself and also within consideration of one's long-term career goals. The development of a five-year career plan requires the writer to reflect on career goals as well as on the best strategies or plans to achieve those career goals.

In general, the plan includes three sections: research, teaching, and service.

Research:

Include in this section those goals and activities that relate to scholarly/research productivity, including, but not limited to, grant writing, conduct of studies, manuscript preparation and publication, conference attendance, conference presentations, and activities that develop research skills, and training/actions to make your lab and your science more welcoming to all. The Research Statement that you prepare for your application reveals the substance of your research program. The five-year career plan provides a map for how you intend to move your research program forward (e.g., grants, dissemination).

Teaching:

Include in this section those goals and activities that relate to assigned teaching responsibilities and/or the development of teaching skills, including culturally responsive teaching.

Service:

Include in this section those goals or activities that would be considered service by your department and university. These activities might include, for example, academic advising (graduate, undergraduate); serving on department committees, university committees, National committees, editorial boards; and/or peer review panels.

Research Training (for predocs and postdocs only):



Predocs and Postdocs may include a section on training in addition to the above sections, or instead of any section that is not relevant to your current career stage. These activities might include, for example, participation in academic courses, research training courses, research lab experiences, and mentored activities.

Develop and prepare your five-year career plan by establishing your long and short-term career goals. Reflect on how best to achieve your goals. The five-year career plan should be a product of that reflection. Logistically, tie each of the five years to an academic calendar year as this reflects the university annual review time period. Begin with the current academic year to illustrate the foundation from which you are planning.

Indicate the proportion of effort that you anticipate devoting to each area. This allotment of effort should be consistent with your department/college/university expectations and your career stage. As stated above, in the five-year period, if you will transition to a new position, consider the expectations for the type of department/college/university in which you expect to be employed.

Identify your anticipated role in each year (e.g., fourth-year doctoral student, postdoctoral fellow, Year 1 tenure-track assistant professor).

In the LfS application review process, the five-year career plan assists reviewers in determining the alignment of an individual's career goals with the conference goals so that the application review process identifies the most promising applicants.

Within the context of the LfS Conference itself, the five-year career plan communicates your career goals to your LfS conference faculty. The five-year career plan may identify issues that you choose or your mentor chooses to discuss in your one-on-one session(s). After LfS the five-year career plan can serve as a tool for self-evaluation at the end of the year (i.e., what goals you accomplished) and for annual career planning.

For each of the five years of your plan, describe goals/activities within each of the three sections (teaching, research, service) to illustrate (a) how you distribute your effort and (b) your anticipated trajectory and productivity. The more detail you provide, the clearer the picture that will emerge. The plan likely will include more detail in Years 1, 2, and 3 as compared with Years 4 and 5. Nevertheless, your planned trajectory for career development across the five years should be readily evident to the review committee.

See sample on next page.

SAMPLE: The beginning of a plan is illustrated below; this plan is an example of what might be included for a first-year assistant professor. As explained above, you need to create your career plan beginning with the current year and your current position (YEAR 1) and then plan for the remaining years based on your career goals and objectives.

YEAR 1: Assistant Professor (first year) 2025-26	
TEACHING (50%)	<i>Provide an indication of teaching expectations each year, including development of teaching skills. For example:</i> • Prep two new courses to be taught in Spring (graduate child language disorders; reading disabilities) • Attend two sessions per semester at the Center for Teaching, with at least one focused on culturally responsive teaching, and solicit peer feedback on my teaching • Go over student course evaluations from each semester with department mentor and establish two goals for teaching next year critical to attaining tenure.
RESEARCH (45%)	<i>Provide a picture of the trajectory of your research plans in order to accomplish what you have outlined in your research statement. Consider the logistical aspects of research as well as the big picture aspects that will move you toward tenure and promotion. For example:</i> • Fall, start-up monies to purchase lab equipment and set up lab • Develop plan for student involvement in research lab – paid assistants, volunteer lab assistants, student theses, etc. • Draft a lab manual that explicitly states all lab policies and expectations • Participate on one PhD student committee to understand department culture for research PhD training • Submit two manuscripts for publication (a) dissertation study [Feb], and (b) dissertation follow up study with younger typicals [June] • Develop community relationships with preschools and schools in order to recruit participants • Grant submission: Submit ASHFoundation New Investigator Award and internal grant to conduct small-scale study as ECR R21 pilot work. • Prepare IRB for upcoming studies
Service (5%)	<i>Consider service requirements of your department as well as additional service choices that will serve to advance career goals. For example:</i> • Required advising, 20 undergraduates, 5 masters students; set up system for peer mentoring to increase advising efficiency; develop plan to make application recommendation letter writing efficient • Solicit input from mentoring committee on most beneficial service activities • Contact associate editor of JSLHR to indicate willingness to review manuscripts; review only manuscripts (n = 2) within immediate area of expertise