

## GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES (updated November 2024)

### I. GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS RESOURCE CENTER

The [Graduate and Postdoctoral Scholars Resource Center \(GPSRC\)](#) leads graduate retention and professional development at UC Irvine. GPSRC supports the academic, professional, and career development of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars with free, year-round skills training, workshops and certificate programs in areas including grant writing, mentorship and diversity, communication, and wellness.

### II. MENTORING and STUDENT SUCCESS

The [Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience \(DECADE\)](#) program fosters an inclusive environment for graduate students from diverse backgrounds. A full-time staff coordinator facilitates workshops, mentorship opportunities, and peer networks to help students balance academic progress with wellness. Via DECADE, Graduate Division also provides professional development awards to fund student participation in academic conferences.

[Next Gen Pathways](#) (new since 2023) originally focused on mentorship for first-generation, international, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) graduate students. Now expanded to all incoming graduate students, the program matches mentees with advanced graduate students, faculty, and alumni. Students are steered through the “hidden curriculum” of graduate education via mentor advising and connections. Next Gen Pathways also hosts in-person workshops and events to build community and campus belonging at the start of students’ academic careers.

[Competitive Edge](#), a signature pre-entry professionalization program for diverse doctoral students, will relaunch in late summer 2025 with expanded student capacity and additional curricula on mentorship, professional and personal development.

[Mentoring Excellence Program \(MEP\)](#) is a 5-week certificate program for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars enhancing their mentoring skills. The program cultivates a pool of mentors qualified to support their peers in campus-wide initiatives. Completion is required to serve as a mentor for many UCI Graduate Division mentoring programs. Participants report that completing the program improves their experiences as mentees and provides them with a skill set sought after inside and outside of academia. Curricular areas include effective interpersonal communication, resilience, mentoring diverse students, and conflict resolution.

[Graduate International Connection \(GIC\)](#) is a peer-to-peer mentoring program integrating international students from over 65 countries into Irvine’s core academic community. Each incoming international graduate student is assigned a knowledgeable peer mentor the summer before their arrival. In-person panels and activities provide additional opportunities to build a supportive network with other students, practice English, and learn about the campus and American culture.

### III. TEACHING, PROFESSIONAL, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**Public Speaking Certificate** is an eight-week program teaching effective presentation skills and public speaking fundamentals. Participants learn how to overcome nerves, distill research into an engaging pitch, and develop effective vocal techniques. Student presentations are recorded in week one and week eight and evaluated for improvement.

**Improv for Teaching** is a four-session program that equips educators with the skills necessary to create engaging classroom environments. Its objective is to instill confidence in teachers, enable them to think quickly on their feet, and remain composed in unforeseen situations.

**Certificate in Teaching Excellence Program (CTEP)**, offered by the Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation (DTEI), delivers comprehensive pedagogical training for UCI graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in a flexible, self-paced manner. Upon completion, participants will be proficient in: (1) designing lessons using evidence-based pedagogical principles; (2) analyzing and evaluating teaching practices, and; (3) facilitating learning through advanced pedagogical techniques.

The **Pedagogical Scholars Program**, facilitated by the Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation (DTEI), is a prestigious initiative designed to prepare future faculty members. Admission to this competitive program is based on demonstrated excellence in teaching, promising scholarly work, and service contributions to the University, department, and professional community. Participants benefit from advanced pedagogical and professional development within a supportive interdisciplinary environment. Additionally, scholars receive personalized guidance for the academic job market and are awarded a \$2,500 stipend for their participation.

**Preparing for Faculty Careers.** This summer certificate program prepares graduate students and postdoctoral scholars for the academic job market. In six interactive sessions, participants learn how to search for academic positions, write an application for an academic position, craft an effective teaching philosophy, and prepare for job interviews.

**California State University Pre-Professor Program (CSU PREPP)** is a semester-long curriculum guided by CSU faculty mentors, emphasizing teaching, promotion, and mentorship expectations at a California masters' granting institution. Notably, Irvine is the sole UC campus partnering with the CSU system to prepare graduate students and postdoctoral fellows for permanent faculty roles within CSU. Since its inception in 2019, the program has expanded from 2 fellows to 24 per semester, with a significant portion of UCI PREPP participants self-identified as racial/ethnic minorities or underrepresented students. Participants benefit from a \$1,000 completion award and additional professional development funding.

**California Community College Internship Program (CCCIP)** is a year-long training program to prepare UCI graduate students for permanent faculty positions at California community colleges. Participants receive mentorship from experienced community college faculty and gain valuable in-class observation and teaching experiences. A new 2024 agreement signed with the California Community College Office of the Chancellor (CCCCO) will provide funding to support additional UCI interns at community colleges. Interns benefit from a \$7,500 summer fellowship as part of the program.

**Grad Slam** is a systemwide competition showcasing outstanding three-minute research presentations by graduate students. Launched in 2014, this competition underscores the relevance and value of UCI graduate scholars and their research. 50 semi-finalists share their

achievements with the campus community and broader public, with one student progressing to the UC systemwide finals. Participants gain valuable communication experience and exposure to industry representatives and distinguished academic researchers who serve as judges.

**A2i (Accelerate to Industry)** prepares UCI graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in STEM and non-STEM fields with skills and knowledge to embark on a range of industry careers. Through workshops, career panels, company site visits, and an annual conference, participants interact with alumni, industry stakeholders, hiring managers, and university leadership to broaden their professional networks and secure internships. Since Fall 2023, A2i has brought together over 250 participants from 14 UCI graduate schools.

**Graduate Professional Success for STEM Ph.D.s and Postdocs (GPS-STEM)** is a career and professional development program for Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows. The program aims to better prepare scientists for careers in the STEM workforce. It identifies, creates, and supports innovative approaches to graduate and postdoctoral training. In surveys, a large percentage of alumni attribute their career preparedness to GPS-STEM.

Building upon the success of its NIH-BEST (Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training)-funded predecessor, GPS-BIOMED (2014-2019), GPS-STEM now encompasses five schools (Biological Sciences, Medicine, Engineering, Physical Sciences, and Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences) and 20+ departments.

Upon completion of myIDP (Individual Development Plan), trainees are encouraged to discuss their career trajectory with research mentors. Via a four-pillar model, GPS-STEM advances academic and industry preparation: *Explore* (increase awareness and interest in diverse science-related careers); *Train* (improve professional, communication, and grant writing skills); *Experience* (provide hands-on industry site visits, internships and externships); and *Transition* (build networks for students and postdocs to transition to careers in academia and beyond).

#### **IV. WELLNESS and INCLUSION SERVICES**

Irvine's Graduate Division **Wellness and Inclusion Team** is the first of its kind in the UC system. Focusing on the retention of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, the team provides individual academic counseling sessions and wellness workshops. Counselors also proactively connect students to campus partners and resources.

Via its **POWER** (Peers Offering Wellness Education Resources) Initiative, counselors train twenty graduate ambassadors annually to develop and lead wellness workshops within their respective programs and schools.

#### **V. OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

UC Irvine **Associated Graduate Students** (AGS) is a graduate student-led campus organization serving graduate students. AGS provides small travel grants for professional development and student-created events. As part of its advocacy mission, AGS sends graduate students to Sacramento to lobby on behalf of graduate education. It also organizes an annual graduate research symposium and other community-building events.

#### **Dream Center**

#### **Student Wellness and Health Promotion**

**Basic Needs Center**

**Disability Services Center**

**Division of Career Pathways (DCP)** is the career center at UCI. The GPSRC collaborates with the Career Educator for Graduate Students at DCP to facilitate career development workshops. These are hosted either in the GPSRC or virtually.