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# Individual Professional Development Plan

**Notre Dame Law School  
Career Development Office  
Individual Professional Development Plan  
Workshop Series**

- *Legal Ethics: Day One* Wednesday, 8/15/18
- *Litigation Practice* Thursday, 8/30/18
- *Transactional Practice* Thursday, 9/13/18
- *Expert Practice* Monday, 9/16/18
- *Workshop: Completing the IPDP* Thursday, 9/27/18

**Each Session Will Begin at 12:30**

**Lunch Will Be Provided at Each Session!**

**Name:**

**Email:**

## Your Individual Professional Development Plan

This Individual Professional Development Plan seeks to assist students at Notre Dame Law School in planning the initial stages of their legal career beginning from their earliest experiences at NDLS and into the early years in the workplace. This “IPDP” will form the cornerstone of your initial interactions with the Career Development Office that will take place during the fall of your 1L year.

It is important to note that your participation and disclosure of information here is completely voluntary. At the same time, we at the CDO have come to understand the importance of thoughtful planning in pursuing an effective job search. For many of you, developing this IPDP so early in your law school career will seem daunting, but remember that this is simply your initial plan. Your interests and preferences are likely to change as you engage in your coursework and internships, and your IPDP is meant to evolve along with them.

The IPDP consists of four parts:

- 1. Self-Assessment.** First, you will need to do a self-assessment, exploring your strengths and weaknesses, values, goals, beliefs, and life preferences. You will later need to evaluate how you will incorporate these into your future career.
- 2. Initial Employment Preferences.** Second, you will explore your employment preferences by considering career options, practice settings, geographic locations, workplace environments, and compensation benefits.
- 3. Mentorship and Networking Plan.** This section outlines the mentorship opportunities available at NDLS and introduces the importance of mentorship and networking to your professional life. Completing this section will be an ongoing exercise throughout your law school career.
- 4. Career Path Plan.** In this section, you will develop an initial plan for your career path. You will complete it during your initial one-on-one meeting with a CDO counselor and continue to update and revise it throughout your law school career.

# Section 1: Self-Assessment

## 1. Baseline Professional Development Assessment

**1.1. Motivation to Attend Law School.** As discussed during Welcome Week, experience teaches that there are four basic motivations to attend law school. Please indicate the degree to which these motivations impacted you. There are no correct answers here...only honest ones:

- ***“This was the best option that I had or could create upon completing my undergraduate education.”***

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

- ***“I believe that work as a lawyer will help me to create and live a financial lifestyle that I would enjoy.”***

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

- ***“I have an understanding of how a lawyer functions as a professional (perhaps in contrast to other types of jobs) and seek that level of responsibility and activity in my work life.”***

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

- ***“I want to make changes in society and believe that legal skills will be a valuable tool in these efforts.”***

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

No Motivation -----> Some Motivation -----> Strong Motivation

## 1.2. *Baseline in Key Early Workplace Skill Areas*

The ABA Legal Career Center has identified six skills that create a foundation of success in the initial phases of your legal career <http://www.abalcc.org/2015/11/30/law-students-need-professional-development-too/>

In this section of the IPDP, you will be asked to assess your baseline level of skills in each of these areas. With respect, then, to the skills listed below select the appropriate description as follows for each:

**1 = I Don't Have a Lot of Experience Yet**

**2 = I Have Some, But Not a Lot of Experience Yet**

**3 = My Experience Before Law School Allowed Me to Develop This Skill**

1      2      3      **Listening Effectively:** Gathering the information needed to undertake legal analysis is an acquired skill.

- Are you familiar with the process of active listening? See video here: <https://bit.ly/1J2hEMl>
- What professional or personal experiences have you had in which active listening played an important part?
- How have you had to listen actively in other areas of your life?

1      2      3      **Expressing Cogent Conclusions:**

- Have you had the opportunity to present ideas, research, project summaries or the like in the past?
- How would others describe your skills in this area?

1 2 3 **Managing Projects Efficiently:** Lawyers typically work for many clients at the same time. Managing competing, equivalent priorities forms a key skill in the success of lawyers.

- Have you had to manage multiple projects in the past?
- Have you worked for multiple supervisors simultaneously?

1 2 3 **Conveying Complex Information Clearly:**

- What experience have you had explaining complex information to those with no prior understanding or knowledge of the subject?

1 2 3 **Understanding Financial Documents:** Many practices areas require at least some basic understanding of financial documents and terminology

- What is your comfort level with financial terminology and concepts?
- What experience do you have working with financial documents?

1 2 3 **Posing Practical Solutions**

- Have you had the opportunity to develop workable solutions to difficult problems involving divergent interests?
- If so, did you successfully implement those solutions?

### 1.3 Professional Values and Life Preferences

One of the most important aspects of professional development resides in understanding what you value in your profession. Review the following list of values as a starting point in determining what will be important to you in your professional life.

#### Description of Potential Professional Values

1. **Achievement:** Your professional work accomplishes demonstrable outcomes.
2. **Location:** Your career choices allow you to choose where you live.
3. **Service:** Your work focuses on benefits to other individuals or society as a whole.
4. **Loyalty:** Your profession and life involve a series of deep and ongoing relationships.
5. **Balance:** Your work facilitates maintaining a health “work/life” balance.
6. **Leadership:** Your work allows you to function in roles in which you lead others.
7. **Personal Development:** Your work allows you to grow continuously and avoid routines.
8. **Security:** Your work follows an established, known pattern with predictable personal outcomes.
9. **Competition:** Your work takes place in a competitive environment.
10. **Community:** Your work and life place you in an important role within your community.
11. **Wealth:** You receive high compensation for your work and accumulate wealth.
12. **Expertise:** Your work allows you to develop as an expert in your field.
13. **Contentment:** Your work environment is more tranquil and/or little pressure.
14. **Recognition:** Your work brings personal recognition from peers and others.
15. **Prestige:** Your work places you among ‘elite’ members of society.
16. **Power:** Your work places you in a position to influence significant events and outcomes.
17. **Independence:** Your work allows you large control of financial outcomes and your time.
18. **Integrity:** Your work environment places great weight on your personal values.
19. **Challenge:** Your work presents continuing intellectual challenges and growth
20. **Creativity:** Your work allows you to try new things, use your ideas and follow new paths.

Having completed this evaluation as an initial step, now rank the items on the list using the Values Prioritizer Tool on the next page. How to use the Prioritizer?

**Step 1.** Compare the first entry in Row 1 to the entry in Column 2. (Column 1 should contain the same name as Row 1!). If the Value in Row 1 is more important to you than the Value in Column 2, mark an “X” in the box in where Row 1, Column 2 intersect.

**Step 2.** Repeat the process across the page for each item in Row 1...and then for each successive Row.

**Step 3.** When completed, total the number of “X’s” for each Row.

**Step 4.** Rank each Row in rank order by number of “X’s.” You have now ranked your Values!

***Placeholder for Blank Values Prioritizer***

***Placeholder for Illustration #1 of Values Prioritizer***



***Placeholder for Illustration #2***

## **1.4 *Personal Situation and Financial Responsibilities***

Each of you has certain personal and financial responsibilities that will impact your professional development. These factors can include:

- Existing family obligations
- Existing or anticipated financial commitments (including student loan debt)
- Personal health limitations
- Existing or future dependents
- Spouse, significant other (health, career)
- Geographical limitations
- Existing financial assets
- Ability to call upon family for financial support

What aspects of your personal or financial life will influence the course of your early career?

How will any of these factors influence decisions you might make about your career?

In what ways does your potential student loan debt influence your thinking about compensation for your work?

How do you think your personality type will influence the decisions you might make about your career?

## Section 2: Initial Employment Preferences

### 2.1 General Preference of Substantive Legal Settings

#### Litigation

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No Interest ----->      Some Interest      ----->      Strong Interest

#### Expert Knowledge

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

No Interest ----->      Some Interest      ----->      Strong Interest

#### Transactional

0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

No Interest ----->      Some Interest      ----->      Strong Interest

**At this early point in your legal career, which substantive setting, or combination of settings, appeals to you most? Why?**

## 2.2 Indications of Interest: Traditional Practice Areas<sup>1</sup>

Place a check by areas that you think would interest you. Over time, as your interests evolve, you can return to this list to update your selections.

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Academic Law                             | Family Law (Divorce/Custody) |
| Administrative Law & Regulatory Practice | Food & Drug Law              |
| Adoption Law                             | General Practice             |
| Agricultural Law                         | Government Contracts         |
| Air, Sea, & Space Law                    | Government Service/Relations |
| Alternative Dispute Resolution           | Health Care Law              |
| Animal Rights                            | Housing/Homelessness         |
| Antitrust/Competition Law                | Immigration/Refugee Law      |
| Appellate Law                            | Insurance Law                |
| Banking and Commercial Finance           | Intellectual Property law    |
| Bankruptcy Law                           | International Law            |
| Business Law                             | Juvenile Law                 |
| Children's Advocacy/Juvenile Justice     | Labor & Employment Law       |
| Civil Litigation                         | Legislative Practice         |
| Civil Rights/Civil Liberties             | LGBT+ Law                    |
| Commercial Law                           | Litigation, General          |
| Communications/Media Law                 | Malpractice                  |
| Community Economic Development           | Migrant Worker Advocacy      |
| Constitutional Law                       | Military Judge Advocates/JAG |
| Construction Law                         | Municipal Finance Practice   |
| Consumer Protection                      | National Security Law        |
| Consumer Regulatory                      | Poverty/Legal Services       |
| Copyright/Trademark/Patent               | Prisoners' Rights            |
| Corporate Practice                       | Privacy Law                  |
| Criminal Law                             | Probate                      |
| Cyberspace Law                           | Public Defense/Death Penalty |
| DUI Debtor/Creditor                      | Real Estate & Property Law   |
| Disability Law                           | Securities Law               |
| Drug Law                                 | Tax Law                      |
| Traffic                                  | Telecommunications Law       |
| Education Law                            | Tort Law                     |
| Elder Law                                | Trusts and Estates Law       |
| Election Law/Voting Rights               | Utilities Law                |
| Election Campaign Finance                | White Collar                 |
| Employee Benefits                        | Women's Rights               |
| Energy Law                               | Worker's Compensation        |
| Entertainment & Sports Law               | Workplace Disability/ADA     |
| Environmental & Energy Law               | Zoning & Land Use            |
| Estates, Wills and Trusts                |                              |

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<sup>1</sup> Capital University School of Law, Individual Development Plan, <http://law.capital.edu/IndividualDevelopmentPlan/>, accessed August 3, 2018

## Employment Settings

Choose 3-5 preferred practice settings to explore further:

### Academic

- General Counsel's Office
- Administration/Staff
- Faculty/Teacher

### Business

- In-House Counsel
- Government Affairs

### Government Agencies

- Federal
- State

### Prosecutor/Public Defender Offices

- Federal
- State
- Local

### Judicial

- Trial
- Appellate

### Law Firms

- Solo Practitioner
- Small (up to 10 attorneys)
- Medium (more than 10 but less than 50 attorneys)
- Large (more than 50 attorneys)

### Non-Profit

- Legal Services
- Public Policy
- Advocacy

## Location

Choose the location of the employer that best describes your preference

### Region

- Northeast
- Southeast
- Midwest
- Central
- Northwest
- Southwest
- Foreign Country

### Locale

- City
- Suburb
- Rural
- Combination

Specific Location(s):

## Employment Environment

Check the following employer characteristics that best describe your environment preferences.

- Conservative
- Liberal
- Team Oriented
- Independent Work
- Social
- Family Oriented
- Rigorous
- Laid Back
- Flexible
- Individual Office Space
- Challenging Work
- Sufficient Salary
- Interesting Work
- Varied Responsibilities
- Creative
- Structured
- Authority

Other Characteristics:

## Salary & Benefits

*Prioritize the following salaries and benefits using the following system:*

**1 = Very Important**

**2 = Important**

**3 = Not that Important**

|   |   |   |                            |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | High Salary (\$120,000+)   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Average Salary (\$55,000+) |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Medical Benefits           |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Retirement Benefits        |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Vacation Time              |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Flex Time                  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Tuition Reimbursement      |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Loan Repayment             |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Program                    |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | Option for Equity          |

Other Benefits (*List below*)

**My Dream Initial Career Setting**

## Section 3: Mentorship and Networking Plan

As a law student and a young lawyer, it will be important to develop strong mentors and a deep professional network. NDLS has several programs outlined below that will give you a head start in this regard.

**CDO Mentorship Program:** The CDO coordinates an annual mentorship program with Notre Dame Lawyers throughout the country. Students who participate are paired with an alumnus or alumna in a geographic and/or practice area that matches their interests. You will receive an email inviting you to register for the program this fall.

CDO Mentor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Advisors:** Each student receives a faculty advisor at the beginning of their 1L year to help guide them through their law school career. We are blessed with an amazing faculty at NDLS, and your faculty advisor can be a terrific mentor if you take the time to engage with him or her. Beyond your faculty advisor, we encourage you to get to know your professors, particularly those who teach in areas that interest you, as they can be great career resources.

Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SBA Mentorship Program:** The SBA coordinates an annual mentorship program that pairs 1Ls with a 2L or 3L based on common backgrounds and interests. Your fellow students are a valuable (and often underutilized) resource when it comes to your professional development, so please take the time to get to know them and ask them about their experiences with networking and the job search.

SBA Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CDO Summer Mock Interview Program:** The CDO coordinates an annual summer mock interview program that enlists Notre Dame lawyers across the country to conduct mock interviews with students working in their geographic area over the summer. The program is designed to prepare students for the fall recruiting season (and all rising 2Ls are required to participate) by giving them opportunities to sharpen their interviewing skills with practicing attorneys in their target market, but it also serves as a powerful networking opportunity.

Mock Interviewers:

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### ***Developing Your Professional Network***

At Notre Dame, we are fortunate to have one of the best and most loyal alumni networks in the world, and that network will be a critical resource in your professional development. Review the practice areas and geographic markets in which you indicated an interest in Section 2 and identify ten potential alumni contacts who work in those practice areas and/or geographic markets to begin your networking efforts. The CDO can help you do this when you meet with them. You should also consider alumni of your undergraduate institution, family members, friends, and any other people with whom you share a meaningful connection.





Networking Guide (15 pages)

## **Section 4: Career Path Plan**

In this Section, you will identify your long-term career goals and work backward to chart your career path. Consider the information you provided in Sections 1 and 2 of this IPDP. What do you hope to be doing ten years after you graduate from law school? In the space below, identify or describe the position you hope to hold and/or the type of employer you hope to work for. Be as specific as possible realizing that you can always change course as your goals and interests evolve.

10-Year Position:

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Now that you have identified a long-term goal, work with a CDO counselor to develop a plan for getting there. Start by identifying post-graduation positions that align with your goal and work backward to your 1L summer.

### ***Post-Graduation***

Potential Positions:

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Hiring Timelines:

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Target Markets:

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**2L Summer**

Potential Positions:

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Hiring Timelines:

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**1L Summer**

Potential Positions:

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Hiring Timelines:

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Use a spreadsheet to keep track of all your applications and employment leads.

***Coursework and Externships***

The courses you choose to take in law school can be used to help promote your career goals. Review the course offerings at NDLS, including the extensive experiential learning opportunities available through the clinics and externship programs. Make a list of courses and experiential learning opportunities that align with your intended career path outlined above.

Courses:

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Clinics/Externships:

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