

# VPCAT Scholar Career Development Plan (VS-CDP)

**Vice President's Clinical and Translational  
(VPCAT) Research Scholars Program**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. <a href="#">Purpose of the VS-CDP</a> .....	2
2. <a href="#">SMART Goals</a> .....	3
3. <a href="#">Matrix Mentoring Model</a> .....	3
4. <a href="#">Step 1: What Skills Do I Need?</a> .....	4
<i>Identify the skills you need to create your career goals.</i>	
5. <a href="#">Step 2: What Resources Do I Need?</a> .....	4
<i>Identify resources you need to achieve your research and career goals.</i>	
6. <a href="#">Step 3: What is My Career Vision?</a> .....	5
<i>Create your career vision to better align short-term goals with your long-term vision.</i>	
7. <a href="#">Step 4: How and Where Do I Spend My Time?</a> .....	5-7
<i>Identify your professional effort and responsibilities to better align with your goals.</i>	
8. <a href="#">Step 5: How is My Personal Well-being?</a> .....	7
<i>Identify your well-being status and personal responsibilities.</i>	
9. <a href="#">Step 6: What Are My SMART Goals?</a> .....	8
<i>Create and update at least 3 professional SMART goals to accomplish over your program tenure.</i>	
10. <a href="#">Step 7: Meet with Your VPCAT Senior Mentor</a> .....	8
<i>Meet with your VPCAT senior mentor to evaluate and assess your SMART goals in real-time.</i>	
11. <a href="#">Appendix A: SMART Goal Examples</a> .....	9-10
12. <a href="#">Appendix B: SMART Goal Progress Examples</a> .....	11-12

## PURPOSE OF THE VS-CDP

The **VPCAT Scholar Career Development Plan (VS-CDP)** is the first step to refine your planned academic activities and goals while still early in your career.

The VS-CDP is a tool that provides a framework for learning how to evaluate your priorities, your time, your skills, and your resources in an effort to help you create goals commensurate with your long-term career and research objectives. Following the VS-CDP self-mentoring exercises, you will then utilize the online **Customized Career Development Platform (CCDP)** tool to enter, track, and update your SMART goals in real-time. Your invited mentors can support and track your progress using the CCDP, while providing individualized advice and support.

As a program tool, the VS-CDP does not replace reporting requirements set forth by your college, department, and/or the institution to successfully advance in your faculty appointment. Rather, the VS-CDP becomes an organized outline to enhance and motivate discussion around your planned goals and objectives with your mentors and senior peers.

This process is meant to be iterative in its nature. Consistently using the VS-CDP framework throughout your career will help you to continue to set specific, achievable goals as you go forward.

## SMART GOALS

As outlined in the table below, your goals should be **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ction-oriented and attainable, **r**elevant and realistic, and **t**imely.

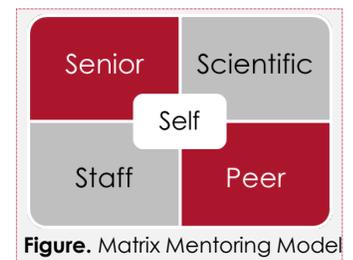
It is important to review and discuss your goals with your mentor(s) to ensure your goals are feasible. Moreover, you want to make sure your goals align with and support achievement of your *Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator*. With insights from your mentor(s), you are better equipped to create appropriate goals that will help you achieve your objectives.

<b>S</b> pecific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your goal clearly and specifically state what you are trying to achieve?</li> <li>What is it you are trying to accomplish?</li> <li>Does your goal answer who and what?</li> </ul>
<b>M</b> easurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will you and your mentors know if progress is being made on your goal?</li> <li>In what ways will you measure success?</li> <li>Does your goal answer how?</li> </ul>
<b>A</b> ction-Oriented and <b>A</b> ttainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What results will you be able to see when your goals are accomplished?</li> <li>What concrete things will you be able to do as a direct result of accomplishing these goals?</li> <li>Does your goal lead to dissemination or translation?</li> </ul>
<b>R</b> elevant and <b>R</b> ealistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are these goals aligned with your projected career path?</li> <li>What effect will achieving this goal have on your career?</li> <li>Are there additional resources you need to achieve your goals?</li> <li>Why does this matter to the community?</li> </ul>
<b>T</b> imely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What amount of time/effort will it require to achieve your goals?</li> <li>Is it feasible to perform the goals as proposed?</li> </ul>

## MATRIX MENTORING MODEL

The VPCAT **Matrix Mentoring Model** supports you via a holistic framework that includes five levels of mentorship: self, senior (career), scientific, peer, and staff (see **Figure**).<sup>1</sup> The different types of mentorship are synergistic and create a nurturing environment that fosters accountability, communication, and skills development to create empowered principal investigators.

The first, and central, component of the model is self-mentorship. You are able to be your own best mentor. To do so, **it is critical that you understand your priorities** while advancing in a faculty role that requires you to make decisions regarding the investment of your time across a variety of valuable academic endeavors. The VS-CDP is a tool for guiding self-reflection and -assessment. It is your first step towards self-mentorship.



**Figure.** Matrix Mentoring Model

As you prepare your VS-CDP and goals, consider those individuals who are part of your mentoring matrix and how they can best be utilized and/or provide feedback to ensure your ultimate success.

<sup>1</sup>Byington CL, Keenan H, Phillips JD, Childs R, et al. A Matrix Mentoring Model That Effectively Supports Clinical and Translational Scientists and Increases Inclusion in Biomedical Research: Lessons From the University of Utah. *Acad Med.* 2016 Apr;91(4):497-502. [PMCID: PMC4811725](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/264811725/)

## STEP 1: WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?

The first step in creating your career goals is to consider what skills you *need to cultivate* to become an independent principal investigator. Some areas to consider as you decide what skills to enhance are:

- Career Development (*i.e.*, skill sets/resources relevant to advance research/career goals)
- Research (*i.e.*, skill sets in study design, qualitative/quantitative research, biostatistics, etc.)
- Leadership & Team Management (*i.e.*, skill sets in management, communication, etc.)
- Promotion & Career Advancement (*i.e.*, understanding of FARA/promotion process)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Describe some of the skills you may need to develop in the box below. We *strongly encourage* you to discuss this section with your VPCAT senior mentor. As a career mentor, their insights related to identifying and refining skills needed to achieve independence may be incorporated below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

## STEP 2: WHAT RESOURCES DO I NEED?

Another important area to consider as you write your career goals is what resources you *need to have and/or access* to achieve your career and research aims. Some areas to consider as you decide on what resources you need are:

- Paid Personnel (*i.e.*, research coordinator, data analyst, statistician, bioinformatician, etc.)
- Funds for Service/Access Fees (*i.e.*, UPDB/APCD access, Utah CTSI services, DNA testing, etc.)
- Scientific & Collegial Collaborations (*i.e.*, patient population, other institutions, community, etc.)
- Equipment & Supplies (*i.e.*, freezer for sample storage, software, animals, assays, etc.)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** List some of the resources you may need in the box below. We *strongly encourage* you to discuss this section with your VPCAT senior mentor. As a career mentor, their insights related to identifying, negotiating, and/or accessing resources needed for your advancement may be incorporated below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

### STEP 3: WHAT IS MY CAREER VISION?

Much like a mission statement, a “**career vision**” is a statement outlining your long-term professional objectives to provide a clear direction for your future. Take, for example, this strong career vision:

“My vision is for a fulfilling career as (a) an independent health services researcher integrating the fields of medical informatics, infectious diseases, and infection prevention; (b) one who is recognized as a national and international leader on preventing the spread of antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated infections, as well as our understanding of pathogen transmission in healthcare settings; and (c) an academician with an enduring devotion to mentoring, faculty development, and service in the ongoing cultivation of new generations of highly trained clinical investigators.”

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Provide your 3-4 sentence career vision in the space below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

### STEP 4: HOW AND WHERE DO I SPEND MY TIME?

Understanding how and where you spend your time is important, especially as a junior faculty. Starting proactive approaches to effort management early in your career allows you to mitigate chances for others to make important decisions for you.

#### 4.1. What are your current levels of effort and what you will need to succeed in the future?

**INSTRUCTIONS:** In the first column, list the estimated % of professional effort CURRENTLY devoted to each of the domains of responsibility. After considering your *Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator* submitted in your application, list the effort you will require to achieve your independence for each of the following domains of responsibility in the second column. Each column should total 100%. We strongly encourage you to discuss this section with your VPCAT senior mentor as their insights related to identifying and/or negotiating appropriate levels of effort may be incorporated below.

Current % FTE	Future % FTE	Professional Domains of Responsibility
%	%	<b>Clinical</b> [Effort associated to direct patient care; patient care administration; call or service; committees/presentations; etc.]
%	%	<b>Education</b> [Effort associated to <u>didactic and bedside</u> teaching; courses; curriculum development; course administration (grading, meeting students); teaching/mentoring residents, interns, and students; committees/conferences; etc.]
%	%	<b>Research</b> [Effort associated to direct research; research administration (i.e., accounting, management of staff, etc.); pursuit of extramural funding; manuscript preparation; career development related to research; scientific networking events/conferences, committees, and/or reviewer roles that directly relate to expanding your research platform; etc.]
%	%	<b>Administration</b> [Effort associated to day-to-day management; mandatory faculty duties (meetings, committees, etc.); institutional service (committees, advisory boards, etc.); work associated to directorships/leadership roles within the University; etc.]
<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

## 4.2. What are your current responsibilities?

**INSTRUCTIONS:** List your current responsibilities in each of the domains below. As you consider each responsibility, ask yourself if what you are doing in each area is moving you closer to your career vision. If the responsibilities are not helping you achieve your aim of research independence, consider including them below in **Section 4.3. What will you need to stop doing?**

**Clinical:** Effort associated to direct patient care (see table above for further examples)

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Education:** Effort associated to didactic and bedside teaching (see table above for further examples)

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Research:** Effort associated to direct research (see table above for further examples)

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Administration:** Effort associated to day-to-day management (see table above for further examples)

Click or tap here to enter text.

### 4.3. What will you need to stop doing?

**INSTRUCTIONS:** After reviewing your offer letter, your *Plan for Transition into an Independent Investigator*, and the above list of responsibilities, list duties or roles that should be eliminated in the next 6-12 months to better align your effort with your career vision. We *strongly encourage* you to discuss this section with your VPCAT senior mentor.

Click or tap here to enter text.

### STEP 5: HOW IS MY PERSONAL WELL-BEING?

An important component to your professional success is your personal well-being. It is just as important to apply the methods you used to consider and set your development and professional goals towards reflecting on and setting your personal goals.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** For each of the following personal areas of responsibility, designate by circling or highlighting the corresponding number that best represents your current status and/or level of agreement with 1 being “extremely unsatisfied” and 5 being “extremely satisfied.”

Personal Areas of Responsibility	Extremely Unsatisfied		Satisfied		Extremely Satisfied
Personal Well-being (e.g., sleeping, eating, exercise, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Home and Family (e.g., spouse, partner, children, pets, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Community & Other Areas (e.g., church, vacations, community, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

**INSTRUCTIONS:** After considering your responses above, provide a list of ideas to increase your well-being and/or satisfaction in areas you consider lacking. We *strongly encourage* you to discuss this section with your VPCAT senior mentor. As a career mentor, they have insights related to how best to maintain personal well-being while transitioning into independence. Their shared personal advice, approaches, and/or tips may be incorporated below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

## STEP 6: WHAT ARE MY SMART GOALS?

By completing Steps 1-5 of the VS-CDP, you have performed the necessary self-reflection in order to create and/or refine your SMART goals. You have used the framework to consider what skills you require, what resources you need, your career vision, and how much time you have to devote to completing your goals -- or perhaps what you will need to give up to achieve your goals.

Now, taking the knowledge you gained through the VS-CDP self-mentoring exercises, you will log into your Customized Career Development Platform ([CCDP](#)) online account to enter, update, and track your SMART goals. As described in the [VPCAT Scholar & Mentor CCDP User Guide](#), the CCDP allows you to enter and update SMART goals in real-time. Bare minimum, you will enter/update your SMART goals within your online CCDP *at least three times*: Initial Team Meeting and at the Mid and Final Program Mentor/Mentee Review Meetings.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** **1]** Add and/or update three (3) SMART goals and expected outcomes to your CCDP account (see [User Guide](#)). **2]** For each goal, include 2 or more specific milestones with a description of resources, skills, and foreseen obstacles. **3]** Include details regarding your progress in achieving your milestones as appropriate. See [Appendix A](#) for examples of *initial* SMART goals and [Appendix B](#) for examples of progress descriptions for SMART goals.

## STEP 7: MEET WITH YOUR VPCAT SENIOR MENTOR

Because SMART goals are incremental learning objectives designed to move you toward your overall career or professional aspirations, **it is important to regularly reevaluate them to ensure alignment to your overall vision.** This is where your VPCAT senior mentor will be of great benefit.

Over the course of the program, you will meet with your VPCAT senior mentor to discuss the development and progress of your SMART goals at a minimum of three points, though we highly encourage you to meet more often (see [VPCAT Scholar Handbook](#)). Utilize these opportunities to gain their guidance with and assistance in refining your goals and milestones in order to better position you to succeed. As you can invite your mentor(s) to your CCDP account, they can support and track your progress, as well as provide individualized advice and support. Moreover, via the CCDP, you can maintain real-time communication about goal progress, victories, as well as request additional guidance via the notification/comment options (see [CCDP User Guide](#)).

## APPENDIX A: SMART GOAL EXAMPLES

### SMART Goal # 1

A. List your first goal that addresses and meets each of the SMART Goal's five criteria.

Submit a K23 Award to NICHD focusing on sexual orientation disparities in unintended pregnancy, perinatal health, and maternal and fetal outcomes for the October 2020 deadline.

B. List your skills or resource needs, and any challenges or obstacles you face in achieving your goal.

To be successful, I will need to:

1. Over the next 8 months, draft 2 manuscripts focused on my K23 research with my mentors. This work will culminate in the submission by October 2019 providing time to revise prior to K submission. I will need:
  - a. Help identifying and creating a relationship with a statistician to both analyze the preliminary data for the manuscripts and serve as an advisor for my K23
  - b. Additional ad hoc writing training by reviewing and editing manuscripts assigned by mentors followed by discussions
2. Finalize my K23 mentoring team (primary mentor, co-mentor, advisors, etc.) by Jan 2020.
3. Locate funding to support stats analysis required for manuscripts and K prep.
4. Have a strong draft of my Spec Aims by January 2020 necessary to attend the Spring 2020 Grant Writing Academy Workshop.

### SMART Goal # 2

A. List your second goal that addresses and meets each of the SMART Goal's five criteria.

Understand and follow the FARA process requirements in order to be promoted to Associate Professor by 2023.

B. List your skills or resource needs, and any challenges or obstacles you face in achieving your goal.

To be successful, I will need to:

1. Meet with my Department's RPT coordinator to gain insights on process.
2. Achieve sufficient success in research productivity including planning for the right amount of publications, conference attendance, and institutional activities.
3. Work with mentors to determine appropriate level of protected time necessary to achieve this goal.

### **SMART Goal # 3**

A. List your third goal that addresses and meets each of the SMART Goal's five criteria.

Complete preliminary career development training in order to position myself as an appropriate NICHD K23 candidate.

B. List your skills or resource needs, and any challenges or obstacles you face in achieving your goal.

To be successful, I will need to:

1. Continue with and complete my current writing 101 course by January 2020.
2. Attend the Erasmus Casual Inference Short Course offered at Stanford University in April 2019, which will require planning on time to travel and locating funding for both registration fees and travel expenses. Need meet with my accountant.
3. Attend the Swiss Epidemiology Winter School: Causal Inference in Observational Epidemiology offered at the University of Pittsburgh in November 2019, which again, will require setting time aside and expenses.
4. I am realizing that time and focus may be a challenge to accomplish so much over the next two years. I will need to learn from my mentors and work with them to create a plan to address balancing my independent work with department projects.

## APPENDIX B: SMART GOAL PROGRESS EXAMPLES

My **prior** VS-CDP first SMART goal was:

Submit a K23 Award to NICHD focusing on sexual orientation disparities in unintended pregnancy, perinatal health, and maternal and fetal outcomes for the October 2020 deadline.

My progress towards achieving this first goal was as follows:

For the past year, I have continually worked towards achieving this goal.

1. Advised by my mentor, I began collaborating with Dr. Angela Presson, who has agreed to serve as my biostatistical advisor for my K. I have met regularly with Dr. Presson discussing and analyzing the data for the "*Disparities in Unintended Pregnancy*" manuscript which was submitted for review in November 2019. I am first author and my mentor and Dr. Presson are co-authors. Due to exciting new preliminary data, we are still analyzing data for and preparing the draft of "*Disparities in Maternal and Fetal Outcomes*" manuscript. Throughout this period, I regularly reviewed manuscripts assigned to me by my VPCAT mentor. Quarterly, we would review my comments and edits together and Dr. Keenan gave constructive feedback on areas to consider incorporating.
2. I have nearly finalized my mentoring team. My primary mentor will be Dr. Mandy. Dr. Dan will serve as Co-Mentor. Members of my Advisory Committee will be Dr. Barb (Epi), Dr. Jim (Informatics), and Dr. Presson (Stats). I am still determining the need for an advisor focused on Virology. I have a meeting scheduled with Dr. Tim in early January 2020.
3. Together with my Department accountant, we reviewed my development funds account. I have some budgeted funds for SDBC statistical services, yet with my upcoming travel, I was able to negotiate with my Department to cover half the SDBC associated costs.
4. I have a very rough draft of my Specific Aims page. It may not be ready for the Spring 2020 Grant Writing Academy workshop, though I realized this may be a possibility. Considering the new data being analyzed, I may need to consider pushing the K submission to February 2021.

My **prior** VS-CDP second SMART goal was:

Understand and follow the FARA process requirements in order to be promoted to Associate Professor by 2023.

My progress towards achieving this second goal was as follows:

For the past year, I have continually worked towards achieving this goal.

1. I still need to meet with my Department's FARA coordinator, though I received great information at the VPCAT FARA course taught by Dr. Rubin. In general, through my meetings with my mentor, I know I am on track, but I need to work on understanding the details.
2. I have had 2 published manuscripts this year and 4 abstracts accepted. Though the 2 publications are not strictly in my K focus, both are within prestigious journals and one I am first author on. I was accepted to the AAN Emerging Leaders Program, which I will do throughout 2020, and leads to a national committee placement.
3. Still providing more clinical effort than I had hoped, though it has improved.

My **prior** VS-CDP third SMART goal was:

Complete preliminary career development training in order to position myself as an appropriate NICHD K23 candidate.

My progress towards achieving this third goal was as follows:

For the past year, I have continually worked towards achieving this goal.

1. I completed my writing 101 course.
2. I attended the Erasmus Casual Inference Short Course, which I was able to pay for through developmental funds. I continue to meet with my accountant to ensure my funds are in order. Further, the knowledge I gained from this course was instrumental in preparing and submitting my "*Disparities in Unintended Pregnancy*" manuscript.
3. Due to scheduling conflicts, I was unable to attend the Swiss Epidemiology Winter School; Causal Inference in Observational Epidemiology.
4. I meet regularly with my mentor, Dr. Bob, who has advocated strongly for a reduction in my clinical load. This has been a great help and led to my Department Chair agreeing to reduce my clinical load by 1 half day. I continually follow the tip from Dr. Keenan to block out grant writing time, though I know I could be better.