

Professional Development Plan Guidance

Professional Development Plan

Purpose of the Professional Development Plan

Students conceptualize a personalized blueprint for approaching their Walden studies and present it in a written Professional Development Plan (PDP). Writing the essay allows students the opportunity to

- reflect on their personal history, professional accomplishments, and future aspirations;
- initiate a discussion with instructor about graduate study in general and the Walden program in particular; and
- articulate academic interests and set goals for their Walden educational experience.

Content and Structure of the Professional Development Plan

Although a general outline is provided for the content and structure of the PDP (see Week 1 Application Rubric), students are encouraged to write an essay that reflects their individual experience, achievements, and goals. Students write the essay in the first person and include their thoughts on how the plan relates to their chosen field of study.

Personal and Professional Goals

In this section, students write a brief personal introduction, state their personal and professional goals, and articulate how these goals intersect with their academic interests and selected field of study. Students reflect upon the mission and vision of the university. Students discuss how specialized learning and the attainment of a graduate degree will help them meet career and personal life goals.

Educational Background and Research Proficiency

When developing this section, students reflect on the formal and informal learning experiences that compose their educational background and discuss how these experiences support the direction of study established in Part I. Walden encourages students to include individual knowledge, skills, and accomplishments. Students explain the academic and research proficiencies they bring to the program and identify areas to improve while a Walden student. Students are expected to evaluate honestly their readiness to pursue graduate education.

Categories for students to consider when writing this section include the following (note that not everyone will have all of these experiences, and that is okay; the purpose of this exercise is to focus your reflection on what experiences you do bring to your graduate education and how your education will facilitate your development as a nursing professional):

- Academic coursework in nursing and related sciences.
- Academic coursework in other fields.
- Professional presentations, seminars, and workshops.
- Volunteer activities.
- Prior experience designing and executing research (if any).
- Publications and other writing experiences.
- Teaching assignments.
- Professional training.
- Academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Research strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of library, reference, and information technology resources.

Professional Goals, Learning Goals, Practicum

In these three sections relate your professional and educational background to your future goals as you complete your graduate degree.