

Title: Prioritizing in grad school

Prioritizing in grad school is crucial for ensuring you complete your requirements, stay focused, achieve your goals, and manage burnout.

How can I use boundaries to help with priorities?

**Take your time when considering a new project**, activity, responsibility, or collaboration. For example, you might let yourself say "no" to a new activity at any time, but require yourself to wait 48 hours before saying "yes." This may help with agreeing to something out of guilt or impulse.

**Write down your goals**: short term, medium term, and long term. Keep them in a place that is easily accessible so you can assess your progress periodically. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is good for this! If you need an excuse for turning down an opportunity, you can honestly say that it's not in your IDP!

- <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org>

**Share your goals with others** for accountability and support. If your advisor is not supportive of your goals, find other mentors who are.

**Balance your workload**. Consider how much energy you have in a day and how that equates to time and effort for various tasks, like care tasks, research, course work, professional development, and health.

- Recognize that not all tasks require the same energy or time and consider categorizing tasks based on the amount of energy, focus, or brain power they require.

- When planning your schedule, consider balancing intellectual, brawny, and clerical work according to your needs.

**Set appointments with yourself** on your calendar to accomplish goals. For example, commit to 30 minute time blocks for answering emails, 60 minute blocks for writing and meals. This can help you see where you are spending your time and if that spending matches your goals. If you follow through with your self-meetings, you won't overbook yourself meeting with others.

**Evaluate whether an activity is helping you work toward your goals**. If not, consider replacing it with an activity that is! To make it easier to say "no" you can draft a template response like, "This sounds like a great opportunity, however, I cannot commit to this and accomplish my goals." This boundary acknowledges that you are interested, but that you have time limits.

**Being happy is a very legitimate and important goal**. Prioritize your happiness!