

# Transitioning from Protégé to Professional

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ADVANCED STUDY & DEVELOPMENT GROUP

# Perceptions in Science



Pacific Northwest  
NATIONAL LABORATORY

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undergraduate

PhD student

postdoc

PI / Professor

seen by  
undergraduate



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PhD student



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postdoc



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PI / Professor



# Are You a Professional?



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Yes.

# Protégé → Professional

**Protégé (noun):** “A person under the patronage, protection, or care of someone interested in his or her career or welfare.”

**Professional (noun):** “Characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession including exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace

Professional = f(**Productivity**, **Perception**)

**Papers**  
**Proposals**  
**Presentations**

**Attitude**  
**Appearance**  
**Actions**

# Attitude



A professional believes in themselves and knows that:

- 1) They belong on an equal playing field with their peers
- 2) They have unique and valuable things to contribute
- 3) They are skilled, but always have room to grow

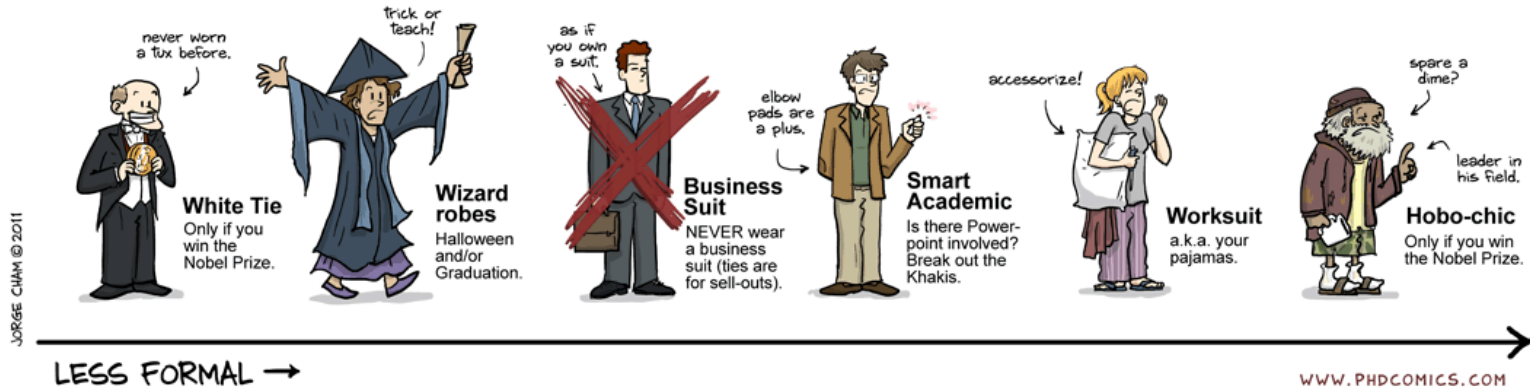
# Appearance



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## ACADEMIC DRESS CODE



Lab Director

Div. Director

Scientist

Postdoc

Grad Student

Undergrad

Everyday: Dress at your level  
Interview: Dress at your level + 1  
Never: Dress below your level



# Actions

An abbreviated list of things you should be doing (in my opinion):

- 1) Get out of your office and talk to people
  - Go to coffee time and interact with your colleagues
  - Talk to more people than just postdocs or students
- 2) Go to seminars and meetings on topics outside of your subfield
- 3) Work semi-regular hours (i.e., no 3 pm to midnight)
- 4) Be on time
- 5) Actively participate in meetings – being a silent wallflower suggests that you are not on the same level
- 6) Take initiative and responsibility for your own research
- 7) Treat everyone with courtesy and respect
- 8) Stop talking about your dissertation
- 9) Be mindful about what you share with your colleagues either in person or via social media
- 10) Do what you say you're going to do when you say you're going to do it

# Take Home Points

- By working at PNNL you are, by definition, a professional
- You have to actively work so that you stop being viewed as a student and start being viewed as a colleague

Professional = f(**Productivity**, Perception)

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- Becoming a professional scientist is massively important to getting a permanent job and should be viewed as a critical part of your postgraduate experience