



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

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EXTENSION



# Revamp of OLOD Professional Development Roadmap for Extension Agents

## **Road Mappers Team Members**

*Nadia Blejer Hahn (PM)*

*Nicole Manley (Asst. PM)*

*Tamara Elzey*

*Tim Human*



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# PART ONE: PROJECT SUMMARY

## Executive Summary

The UGA Extension Agent Professional Development ROADMAP project was requested by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Office of Learning and Organizational Development. The client had a desire for a more modernized version of the static training roadmap with primary goals of enhancing the overall presentation, aligning with role-specific competencies, and elevating user experience and accessibility of the job aid. The Road Mappers team, consisting of four graduate students from UGA's M.Ed. in Learning, Design, and Technology program, was tasked with developing an interactive, ADA & WCAG-compliant training resource accessible both internally and externally.

The interactive roadmap was designed to serve as the new job aid for both onboarding and current Extension employees which includes County Agents, Specialist and administrative staff. To achieve this, the team designed the new roadmap to present job specific training pathways in a clear, engaging and time-based format. Leveraging UGA's branding and accessibility standards, the team analyzed the current product, collaborated with stakeholders and worked to integrate existing professional development tracks, such as Extension Academy and EXTEND, into a final project that meets the client's needs.

Throughout the project, the team followed a structured project plan that included allocated tasks tailored to each team member's expertise, weekly team meetings to discuss the project and usability testing. Despite working within the constraints of a pro-bono agreement, the team utilized the available resources to create a final project that was delivered on time, meeting all the client's expectations.

## Significant Incidents

As the team planned to start working on the project, there was some confusion as to what authoring program or design software to use for the final deliverable. Each team member had a different recommendation as to how to make the roadmap more accessible and user friendly. To balance this, the project manager had each team member develop a low fidelity prototype to showcase their vision for the road map. The team met a week later, presented each version of the prototype and collaborated on how to create a final product that included each member's vision while meeting the needs of the client.

Once the team decided on a final presentation for the product, the discussion of which program to use began. The team decided to use a combination of Canva, Word and



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InDesign to create the final deliverable. One of the team members (Tamara Elzey) agreed to gain additional expertise in InDesign to further the team's development of the final project.

## Primary Stakeholders

We have a range of primary stakeholders, which we will list from most to least strongly affected.

Our most significantly impacted stakeholders are our learner audience. The general audience is University of Georgia Extension Agents, split into three categories: 4-H Agents, FACS Agents (Family and Consumer Sciences), and ANR Agents (Agricultural and Natural Resources). Since their positions are so active and varied nearly from the start, our job aid will be crucial for them to be able to easily keep track of their professional development training so they don't fall behind and are aptly prepared for the next phase of PD at all times.

Our next most significantly impacted primary stakeholders are the program coordinators, Dr. Kristi Carpenter and Traci-Liegh Curran, who work for UGA Extension and oversee training new UGA Extension Agents. It is their duty to ensure that the Agents are well-equipped to serve their communities, and if the job aid increases completion rates and decreases tardiness rates for trainings, then they can be even more confident in the efficiency and effectiveness of their program.

Other more indirect stakeholders are the Georgia community (the children, families, and agriculturalists served by the Agents), because Agents who have been keeping up with the schedule of their training will be more equipped to navigate the real-life situations they'll come across.

Lastly are other non-UGA Extension programs who may examine the job aid for their own purposes (general interest, comparisons to their own curriculum, intentions to collaborate with UGA Extension, etc.) will be influenced by the success of the job aid and training schedule, which could lead them choosing to or choosing not to somehow utilize it for their own interests.



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## Project Quality

The client requested the following terms for the final deliverable.

### Approval Requirements:

- i. All project goals and objectives must be approved by UGA Extension leadership.
- ii. The project product must meet agreed-upon specifications for accessibility, usability, and compliance with UGA Extension standards.
- iii. All deliverables must meet organizational standards for professionalism and accuracy, clarity, and quality, as verified by stakeholder review and testing.
- iv. Available UGA Extension professional development opportunities must be incorporated.
- v. All content and features must adhere to UGA Extension policies, branding, and accessibility requirements.
- vi. Formal sign-off is required from the client, project manager, and key stakeholders

Through teamwork and adherence to the above objectives, the project met the needs of the client. The Road Mappers team sent the final project to the client for feedback, furthering the quality of the product and the satisfaction of the client.

## Exceeding Expectations

When reflecting upon the final project and the client's feedback, the team feels that our final product exceeded the expectations of the client. The group worked together, leveraging each of their own expertise to collaborate and create a final product that is accessible for mentors and mentees in UGA Extension professional development.

As mentioned in the Significant Incidents, the team ultimately decided to work primarily within InDesign for the publication of the final product. While one team member was familiar with the program, she did have to participate in some professional development to gain further expertise. Leveraging that team member's LinkedIn Learning knowledge, the team members were able to gain the skills necessary to further the final product, exceeding everyone's expectations.

The team also produced these results under significant time restraints and other priorities bidding for their time and attention. Often, the proposed timeline for task completion needed to be altered to accommodate for all four individuals' schedules and the team excelled at remaining flexible and committed, allowing for a relaxed schedule and timely completion of quality work.



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## Corrective Strategies Employed by the Team

When the team first received the project, there were a few concerns within the team. The team decided to meet, list out the concerns and approach the client with them in hopes of receiving guidance and clarity. Some of the concerns were

1. The material was organized according to internal methods was therefore difficult for outsiders such as ourselves to follow
2. The links embedded within the documents appeared to be broken
3. What accessibility standards needed to be followed?
4. What branding packages needed to be incorporated in the final design to meet University expectations?
5. How elaborate or simplistic did the final design need to be?

After collaborating with the client in multiple meetings and email discussions, the team felt confident that it fully understood the client's needs and ultimately led to them delivering a final product that exceeded expectations.

## Evaluation Plan

Our evaluation plan throughout was semi-formal and thorough, split into roughly three phases: organization, first drafts, and revisions.

### **Phase 1: The Organization**

At the beginning, before we met with Dr. Carpenter and Ms. Curran, the four of us wrote and organized questions about what we wanted and needed to know about the project, which we asked in our first official meeting with our clients.

Once the clients emailed us a resource list, we organized a master notes list for the four of us to carefully comb through the resources and write notes on what we considered most helpful for our project, effectively prioritizing them. We utilized this for our Scope Document, which was officially evaluated and approved by us informally in a meeting, and officially evaluated and approved by our clients. After this was complete, we began to build out prototypes.

### **Phase 2: First Drafts**

In this process of step-by-step development, we created a list of the classes that are included in the three UGA Extension Agent training programs, which the project manager organized in Canva for us to visually assess. Using the project manager's guide as a reference, we created low-fidelity prototypes of how we envisioned the final job aid to appear and function. We then held an evaluative meeting where we assessed each



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other's prototypes for design, functionality, and accessibility (relating to Universal Design principles), and pinpointed the aspects we wanted to carry into our final project.

From then on, we collected a style guide based on UGA and UGA Extension standards and began to visually put together our final project in Canva, sampling various color schemes and graphics. We voted on our favorite color scheme and applied these designs to both the interactive base layer and the other layers. Once we all four agreed on the designs within Canva, we shifted it to Adobe InDesign and added functionality.

### **Phase 3: Revisions**

From then, we convened another meeting and watched as one of us screenshared and demonstrated the functionality of the different buttons and layers until we all approved the final product in terms of visual design, functionality, and accessibility.

Once our job aid is accepted by our clients (with any necessary changes added on our end), we suggest creating surveys to evaluate the UGA Extension Agents' opinions on the job aid and if it improves their job and training experience. Similarly, we suggest monitoring if training completion rates and tardiness rates change once the job aid is implemented.

### **Project Closure Description**

The Road Mappers team was dedicated to delivering a final product that would exceed client expectations. After the team completed a working beta version of the new Roadmap, it was delivered to the client, requesting their input. The team received feedback from the client, appreciative of the praise but still dedicated to delivering a final product that exceeded expectations. With the client's feedback in hand, the team met to review the client's feedback and plan on making the appropriate changes to the final product.

To close out the project, the project manager sent an email to the client detailing the changes made and including the final Roadmap product. With the client being well satisfied, the project was deemed a success and closed.



## PART TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS

### Client Recommendations

Our recommendations for the client are essentially to monitor UGA Extension Agent training progress and questions asked. After our job aid is widely implemented, we are interested to know if this increases retention and accuracy rates in long-term training plans or decreases tardiness in completing them.

We recommend distributing surveys to UGA Extension Agents to gauge how helpful they find the job aid and see if their answers match any trends in the training (such as positive responses matching higher completion rates). We also recommend tracking how many questions UGA Agents ask about the training schedule and seeing if it has decreased after the job aid has been implemented.

We also recommend a review of the UGA internal department brand kit fonts. Fonts included such as Oswald are not inherently WCAG compliant. In order to maintain accessibility standards across the brand kit, we recommend a reconsideration of this font for projects such as this.

### Team Recommendations

Clearly outline what's required for successful fulfillment of each role: PM, ID, Graphics Designer, etc., then assign each team member a role and associated duties. Ensure the PM understands how much they'll drive the outcome of the project based on their organizational skills and ability to effectively communicate with all stakeholders and team members. Schedule regular zoom team check ins to ensure accountability is maintained, tasks are getting completed, and each team member understands the next steps.

### General Manager Recommendations

We appreciate the variety of interesting Project Case options. Valuable information was presented in the initial Project Case discussion allowing students to choose which project they felt was best suited to their individual skills and interests. We commend the General Manager for maintaining open communication throughout the duration of the project. Our recommendation for the General Manager is to consider hosting a session with each team at the completion of the project to allow for a candid conversation regarding how the project *really* went so that constructive criticism can be offered in a safe and monitored environment.

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