

🔴 Hot Seat Protocol 🔵

Red Teaming & Blue Teaming Your Career with Friends Who Want You to Win & Help Save the World

*The following is a **career planning workshop series** created by EA at UCLA. We built and pilot tested this with EA university groups in mind but we think it's useful for anyone interested in scrutinizing their career plan — actually in our pilot test many of us felt this was the highest value activity we've done as a club!*

If you've run the hot seat protocol we'd love to get your feedback, letting us know what worked and didn't will help us refine future versions of the workshop.

Please reach out to Avi at aparrack@stanford.edu with any thoughts!

When using the workshop, laptops are handiest but we've included a printer friendly version as well.

This document is free to share and modify.

Welcome! You're about to take part in a collaborative process designed to clarify, strengthen, and accelerate each member's career plans — with rigor, and earnestness.

At the heart of it is the **hot seat**: a rotating spotlight where one person's career plan becomes the focus of the group's attention — first through critical feedback (red teaming), and then through hands-on help (blue teaming). Together, we sharpen plans, stress-test assumptions, identify blind spots, and build each other up.

How It Works

A group of **2–6 participants** commits to {**2*participants} meetings**, where each member rotates through the hot seat twice over a series of weeks. By default, sessions are 2 hours with this week's hot seat. You begin with phase 1 and rotate through until each participant has completed a Red Team Session and a Blue Team Session.

When it's your turn in the **hot seat**, you'll move through **4 distinct phases**:

1. **Red Team Prep Phase**
   You fill out a structured career memo (next tab in this document!), sharing your current plans, uncertainties, goals, and theory of change.

2. **Red Team Session**
   Your teammates critique your plan, pressure-test it, and challenge your assumptions — with care and honesty. You'll leave with new insights and action items.

3. **Blue Team Prep Phase**
   You revise your career plan, take action on any easy wins, and think about how the group can best *boost* you in the next session.

4. **Blue Team Session**
   Now your teammates help actively: offering intros, ideas, resources, accountability, or encouragement. The focus shifts from critique to support.

When you're *not* in the hot seat, your job is simple:
Show up, enjoy snacks, and offer your best thinking as a red teamer or blue teamer to help someone else improve their career plan.

Included in this doc are the Red Team Session and Blue Team Session templates, **share this doc with all participants** and ask them to make a copy.

Each participant can review and fill out the template in preparation for their turn in the hot seat.

Group Commitments

This process works best when it's grounded in **reciprocity, trust, and thoughtful participation**. Make a soft but sincere commitment to one another: to attend sessions, engage fully, and offer honest, constructive feedback.

The hot seat can bring out vulnerable reflections — beliefs, doubts, and hopes about the future. It takes trust to share your aspirations and open yourself up to critique. That trust is earned when the group shows up with care, respect, and a shared intention to help each person grow.

- **Red team feedback** should come from a place of wanting the best for the hot seat — challenging ideas with kindness and rigor.
- **Blue team support** should be real, concrete, and generous — lending your aid to bolster the hot seat and help them make progress on their career plan.

When everyone has had a turn in the hot seat, the cycle is complete. You forge ahead with clearer career visions and concrete steps forward which survived trial by fire and ice.

🔴*Career Red Teaming — Hot Seat Prep*

Session Date: **May 18, 2025**

Hot Seat Name:

Session Timer: ⧖ **2:00:00**

👋 Hi there — this is your personal prep template to get ready for your turn in the red teaming hot seat!

First you'll want to make a personal **copy** of this template.

Below, you'll walk through a series of short prompts to help you write your **career memo**. The goal is to bring clarity to your own thinking *and* to give the red team a clear, concrete picture of where you're at — so they can offer targeted feedback.

- ❖ **Before the session! (Prep Phase)**

You can write as much or as little as you like, but we recommend a **bullet point style** that's quick to write and easy to scan. You don't need to make it polished — just aim for clarity and honesty. You'll have the chance to explain and expand on anything during the session itself, but having a solid outline beforehand helps the red team stay oriented and gives you something to iterate on.

This template has an **order of operations**, initially skip the first 3 sections and fill out your **career memo**, after filling it out, return to the ⚠ **Pick Your Hats** section. The sections marked by ⊕ are for you and the red team to work together on during the session but feel free to have a peek, or do it in advance if that seems helpful!

- ❖ **During the session! (Hot Seat)**

Share this **career memo** with your red team then help them walk through it, explaining what you've written, directing and reacting to their feedback. The red team should have comment access and can mark up the memo with ideas that strike them.

⚠ *Pick Your Hats*

After filling out the **career memo** below but before the session, the person in the hot seat selects a number of hats equal to the number of red team members by marking their preferred hats on the hat table. These choices represent the kinds of perspectives or feedback they'd most like to receive.

At the start of the session, each red team member chooses one of the selected hats — ideally one they feel well-suited to wear — and uses it as a **lens** to guide their feedback throughout the session.

> 💡 **Important:** The hat is a guiding perspective, not a restriction. Red team members are encouraged to speak freely and share personal thoughts, but should aim to offer feedback that aligns with the chosen hat when possible — especially when framing critiques or suggestions.

This lets the hot seat steer the *flavor* of feedback they get, and helps the red team provide a rich, balanced mix of perspectives.

Teammate	Hat	Description
	Astronaut Hat	*Challenges you to aim higher, think bigger, and consider more ambitious versions of your plan. "What if you 10x'd your goals?"*
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	Concretizer Hat	*Drills your goals down into testable hypotheses, small experiments, and action steps. "What can you do in the next 2 weeks?"*
	Long View Hat	*Takes the 10–20 year perspective. Helps you think about legacy, compounding choices, and how short-term actions build to long-term arcs.*

	Evidence Checker Hat	*Asks: "What's your confidence based on?" Looks for supporting data, sources, and tests — especially around assumptions or perceived fit.*
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	Heretic Hat	*Challenges norms and limitations. "What rules are you following that you don't have to?" "What if you did something most people consider unreasonable?"*
	Boundary Setter Hat	*Helps guard against overcommitment, burnout, and work-life imbalance. Encourages you to think about health, joy, and sustainability.*

OR think about the lens / angle that seems most helpful to you, you can make your own hat(s) below.

During the session you can assign the hats you've picked out!

Hat Selection	
Name	Role
Person	Astronaut Hat
Person	Concretizer Hat
Person	Heretic Hat
Person	Boundary Setter Hat

⊕ *Action Items*

Leave this blank for now! This section will be filled out live during the session to capture clear next steps and decisions coming out of the red team discussion.



The Crucial Skill Set

During the session, the hot seat and red team will collaboratively identify the ***key skills or traits*** *most crucial to achieving the hot seat's Plan A. These could include things like:*

A specific technical expertise, communication, persuasion, strategic decision-making, leadership, networking, talent-sensing, integrity under pressure, etc. etc.

As these emerge through discussion, they'll be added to the ***Crucial Skills Table****. For each one, the* ***hot seat*** ***will self-assess*** *three values using percentiles:*

1. ***Current Level:***
   "Where am I now compared to others who care about or work in this area?"

2. ***Reachable Level (1–2 years):***
   "Where could I get to with serious focus over the next year or two?"

3. ***Target Level (Plan A):***
   "What percentile would I likely need to be at to pull off my Plan A — to be influential, competitive, or unusually effective in this space?"

> 🔍 *The red team can offer input here (e.g., what levels they think are needed or where the hot seat is under/overestimating), but the main voice is the hot seat's own reflection.*

This creates a concrete view of the ***growth gap*** *between now and Plan A — helping prioritize learning, stretch goals, and personal development.*

Crucial Skills

Skill	Current Level	Upskilled Level	Target Skill Level

World Model & Theory of Change

*This section helps you clarify the **problem(s) you care most about**, your **understanding of what might work**, and how your **career could fit into the solution**. It's a chance to anchor your plans in a model of the world and your role in improving it. Further it will help the red team give sharper, more targeted feedback on what you want to forge into a rock solid foundation that is a source of well founded motivation for your work.*

1. What's wrong with the world?

*Write out your view of the most important problems humanity is facing — especially the one(s) you feel drawn to work on. Explain why you think they're serious, and briefly estimate how **big**, **neglected**, and **tractable** they are. If applicable, mention relevant forecasts (e.g., AI timelines, climate risks, policy bottlenecks, geopolitical dynamics).*

→ ***Fill in your world model here:***
(What's important to work on? How important is it? How solvable does it seem?)

2. What might actually work to fix it?

Brainstorm every possible lever, intervention, or strategy you've heard of — or imagined — that might help. These could be personal, political, technical, institutional, cultural, etc. Think expansively. You're not committing yet — just mapping the space of possible approaches so you can be confident and have principled reasons to lean into one method over another.

→ ***List or describe approaches that seem promising:***
(What efforts, roles, or strategies seem like they could actually move the needle?)

3. What's your theory of change — and career fit?

Based on the above, how do you want to contribute? What kind of work, over what timeframe, by what means? What's your *theory of change* — the pathway by which your actions, skills, or projects will lead to meaningful progress?

→ **Describe your theory of change here:**
(How does your career plan connect to the change you want to see?)

Career Capital & Assets

Before we dive into future plans, let's take stock of what you're already working with.

*Even if you're early in your journey, it's useful to list the **career capital** you've accrued so far — the skills, experiences, and credentials that could serve as leverage. Alongside that, note any **assets** that might shape your trajectory — such as savings, personal runway, key contacts, institutional affiliations, or reputational signals.*

This will help the red team reason more concretely about what's already within reach, what's realistic on different timescales, and where you might want to invest further effort.

Career Capital

(What are the professional resources you've built so far?)
Examples:
Skills, credentials, degrees, published work, job history, personal achievements, institutional reputation, learning momentum

Assets

(What other resources might help you execute your plan?)
Examples:
Runway (time/money), strong mentors or contacts, access to key networks, geographic flexibility, citizenship or visas, supportive community, mental health / resilience factors

---

Plan A, B, …Z

Now sketch out your potential career trajectories at different levels of optimism and fallback. These plans help clarify your goals, your margins of safety, and what you're optimizing for.

Plan A — The Moonshot

If everything goes nearly perfect, what does your dream trajectory look like? What's the maximum-impact version of your career where you're doing work you love, and making the kind of difference you want?

Plan B — Steady Impact Path

What's your still-ambitious but more reliable route? Maybe this version involves fewer risks, more stability, or a slower timeline — but it still feels meaningful, exciting, and profoundly good.

Plan Z — Safety Net

What could go wrong when pushing for your Plan A? If things fall apart, what's your fallback / recovery plan? What would you do to land on your feet and how would you get back on track for your Plan A?

Next Steps

Finally, let's outline your concrete plan for moving toward your Plan A. Focus first on the immediate actions you're considering in the next few months, then sketch a rough direction for the next few years.

This gives the red team a clear sense of what you're aiming to do next — and where feedback, adjustments, or resources might be most useful.

The Next Few Months

What are your immediate goals or experiments? These could be decisions, applications, research rabbit-holes, networking efforts, learning targets, or small projects you want to test.

The Next Few Years

Zoom out a bit. If things go reasonably well, what's your trajectory over the next few years? This doesn't need to be detailed — just enough to show the arc you're aiming to build.

Uncertainties

What are your biggest uncertainties? The red team will try to weigh in or make a plan to help you resolve them.

Supporting Materials

You're invited to bring along relevant materials — such as a resume, project proposal, application draft, or anything else you want the group to look at. You can also paste links here.

🔵*Career Blue Teaming — Hot Seat Prep*

Session Date: **May 18, 2025**

Hot Seat Name:

Session Timer: ⧖ **2:00:00**

👋 Hi there — this is your prep template to get ready for your **Blue Team Session**: the second half of your turn in the hot seat.

By now, you've been red teamed — you've received thoughtful critiques, surfaced blind spots, and likely revised your plan. The Blue Team Session is your chance to **consolidate those insights into forward motion** with the help of your group.

You'll use this template to:

- Reflect on changes and progress since your Red Team Session
- Identify specific areas where support is most valuable
- Guide your blue team in offering **concrete help, resources, and briefly use them to boost you by doing some research, networking, or acting as your focus group**!

The Blue Team Session is much more a la carte, here use any section of the template that seems useful or create your own. Don't be afraid to direct your blue team towards what you think will boost you the most.

Progress Update

Begin by reflecting on what's changed since your Red Team Session.

- What were the most important takeaways from the Red Team Session?
- What changes have you made to your plan?

- What action items have you already taken?
- Where do you feel stuck or still uncertain?

Crucial Skill Resources

*Return to your list of Crucial Skills. Now that you've identified key areas for growth, the Blue Team will help you gather **learning resources**, **practice strategies**, and potential **mentorship options**.*

Use the table below to co-create your development roadmap.

Crucial Skills

Skill	Current Level	Upskilled Level	Target Skill Level	Learning Resources

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Focus Group — Materials & Targeted Questions

*Here's your chance to get **focused feedback**. Bring 1–3 specific questions or items you'd like the group to help you refine. This could include:*

- *A resume or website review*
- *A personal statement, grant proposal, or draft email*
- *A career dilemma you're working through*

Focus Group Item 1:
Context & Ask:
Blue Team Feedback:

Focus Group Item 2:
Context & Ask:
Blue Team Feedback:

Focus Group Item 3:
Context & Ask:
Blue Team Feedback:

Career Capital & Assets — Expanding What You Have

Now let's turn to what the group can offer you. This includes:

- ***Network introductions***
- ***Tangible offers of help*** *(like housing, software, workspace, etc.)*
- ***Help improving your online presence or visibility***
- ***Advice on unlocking new assets you might not have considered***

Network Expansion

The blue team should help you by brainstorming opportunities, listing of finding good connections or networking targets for you.

Resources for Upskilling

The blue team outlines strategies/structures and finds resources and curriculum for your upskillinn on your crucial skills.

Digital Presence Boost (Optional)

This section can be used for a collaborative sprint — e.g., improving your LinkedIn, polishing a website, or brainstorming how to signal your skills better online.

Ways You Can Continue to Help Me

As the blue team goes about their career in future what are the ways they can help you? What should they have their eye out for? Include some notes about, types of introductions/connections you want, what opportunities to pass along, what to collaborate with you on etc.



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The Blue Team Session is much more a la carte, here use any section of the template that seems useful or create your own. Don't be afraid to direct your blue teamers here towards what you think will boost you the most.

Progress Update

Begin by reflecting on what's changed since your Red Team Session.

- What were the most important takeaways from the Red Team Session?
- What changes have you made to your plan?

- What action items have you already taken?
- Where do you feel stuck or still uncertain?

Crucial Skill Resources

*Return to your list of Crucial Skills. Now that you've identified key areas for growth, the Blue Team will help you gather **learning resources**, **practice strategies**, and potential **mentorship options**.*

Use the table below to co-create your development roadmap.

Crucial Skills

Skill	Current Level	Upskilled Level	Target Skill Level	Learning Resources

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Focus Group — Materials & Targeted Questions

*Here's your chance to get **focused feedback**. Bring 1–3 specific questions or items you'd like the group to help you refine. This could include:*

- *A resume or website review*
- *A personal statement, grant proposal, or draft email*
- *A career dilemma you're working through*

Focus Group Item 1:
Context & Ask:
Blue Team Feedback:

Focus Group Item 2:
Context & Ask:
Blue Team Feedback:

Focus Group Item 3:
Context & Ask:
Blue Team Feedback:

Career Capital & Assets — Expanding What You Have

Now let's turn to what the group can offer you. This includes:

- ***Network introductions***
- ***Tangible offers of help*** *(like housing, software, workspace, etc.)*
- ***Help improving your online presence or visibility***
- ***Advice on unlocking new assets you might not have considered***

Network Expansion

The blue team should help you by brainstorming opportunities, listing of finding good connections or networking targets for you.

Resources for Upskilling

The blue team outlines strategies/structures and finds resources and curriculum for your upskillinn on your crucial skills.

Digital Presence Boost (Optional)

This section can be used for a collaborative sprint — e.g., improving your LinkedIn, polishing a website, or brainstorming how to signal your skills better online.

Ways You Can Continue to Help Me

As the blue team goes about their career in future what are the ways they can help you? What should they have their eye out for? Include some notes about, types of introductions/connections you want, what opportunities to pass along, what to collaborate with you on etc.