**Individual Development Plan**

Your graduate training is a key period of growth toward your scientific knowledge and professional growth. Your relationship with your mentor is an important aspect of that growth; maintaining clear, open communication is essential to optimize your training and research experience. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is designed to help encourage this communication, help you reflect on your goals, make plans to help achieve those goals (keeping in mind the goals of the funding supporting you), and to address challenges that arise along the way. There is no single prescribed pathway to graduate and career success. Rather, every career takes a unique path; designing that path requires input and reflection on your part and collaboration with your mentor and others.

1. *Conduct a self-assessment*
2. *Survey opportunities and responsibilities with mentor*
3. *Write an IDP, share IDP with mentor and revise*
4. *Set up assessment plan*
5. *Implement the IDP*
6. *Assess plan “success” with key performance indicators (KPIs) and milestone checks*
7. *Revise the IDP as needed*

***Step 1. Conduct a Self-Assessment***

* Assess your skills, strengths, and areas which need development.
* Take a realistic look at your current abilities. This is a critical part of career planning. Ask your peers, mentors, family and friends what they see as your strengths and your development needs.
* Outline your long-term career objectives. Ask yourself: -What type of work would I like to be doing? -Where would I like to be in an organization? -What is important to me in a career?

***Step 2. Survey Responsibilities and Opportunities with Mentor***

* Discuss the current source of funding and responsibilities of that investment in you
* Identify career opportunities and select from those that interest you.
* Identify developmental needs by comparing current skills and strengths with those needed for your career choice.
* Prioritize your developmental areas and discuss with your mentor how these should be addressed.
* Discuss internal, project wide, and other external opportunities

***Step 3. Write an IDP***

The IDP maps out the general path you want to take and helps match skills and strengths to your career choices. It is an evolving document, since needs and goals will almost certainly change through time. The aim is to build upon current strengths and skills, and to gain new skills by identifying areas for development and providing a way to address these.

The specific objectives of a typical IDP are to:

* Establish expected dates for your graduate tenure.
* Identify specific skills and strengths that you need to develop (based on discussions with your mentor).
* Define the approaches to obtain the specific skills and strengths (e.g., courses, technical skills, teaching, supervision) together with anticipated time frames.
* Discuss your draft IDP with your mentor.
* Revise the IDP as appropriate.

***Step 4. Set up Assessment Plan***

* Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) and milestones
* Implement SMART planning
  + Specific
  + Measurable
  + Attainable
  + Relevant
  + Timebound
* Set a timeline for frequent assessment and course correction

***Step 5. Implement your IDP***

The plan is just the beginning of the career development process and serves as the road map. Now it’s time to take action!

* Put your plan into action.
* Revise and modify the plan as necessary. The plan is not cast in concrete; it will need to be modified as circumstances and goals change. The challenge of implementation is to remain flexible and open to change.
* Review the plan with your mentor regularly. Revise the plan on the basis of these discussions.

***Step 6. Assess plan “success”***

* At your listed assessment points check your progress against your KPIs and milestones

***Step 7. Revise the IDP as needed***

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**Mentee name:**

**Mentor name:**

**Date:**

Step back and self-assess! It’s easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. Fill out this form, using the questions as a jumping off point to understand your research progress, development, and goals.

**Part I. Self-Assessment**

Current Skills: Which of your past accomplishments will contribute to the success of your graduate training? What skills are you bringing? (Include papers, presentations, techniques, etc. If you are changing fields, consider how your prior experience might be applied.)

Career Goals: What are your first and second choices of long-term careers - i.e. what position do you hope to hold 10 years from now? Be as specific as you can, and indicate relative enthusiasm for each choice.

Life/Work Intersection: What are the primary factors driving these goals (e.g., personal interest in specific research area, teaching, business, government, writing; geographic priorities; family commitments; financial objectives; position in home country; immigrating to the US; etc.)?

Long-term goals: These should paint a vision of your future.

a. Research Goals: What specific area(s) of research do you wish to explore during your training? Are there specific methods or approaches that you would like to gain familiarity with and/or become expert in?

b. Professional Development Goals: What professional skills would you like to acquire during your training? Examples might include: public speaking, grant writing, manuscript preparation, team-work personnel management, teaching, mentoring, etc.

Objectives: What are some activities that might help you achieve the research and professional goals you outlined on the previous page? goals on the previous page?

a. Research objectives: For example, a course, meeting or workshop attendance (specify if possible); fellowship or grant applications; anticipated publications (list tentative title if appropriate); may include objectives in the coming year or longer-term objectives. Include a relative timeline for each objective (i.e. are these objectives dependent of each other? Do some make sense to approach immediately, while others make sense to delay?)

**Part II. Survey Responsibilities and Opportunities**

Discuss the following areas with your mentor

1. Research Projects: expectations from current funding support as well as any independent research projects you hope to pursue
2. Skills: skillsets you wish to gain
3. Publications: Publication goals (e.g., number of articles, types of journals, position in author list)
4. Grantwriting: Plans to write for additional support for additional research funding or stipend funding

1. Professional meetings: Conferences you would like to attend that align with your funded research topic or research interests
2. Mentoring or supervision: Number and stage of people you would like to mentor and specific topics you are interested in mentoring
3. Teaching: Experience you would like to gain through educational presentations, course lectures, webinars etc.
4. Service activities: Service to the university or to your field
5. Additional Professional Development

**Part III. Agreed Upon Action Plan for Next Year**

Consider the following as you develop an action plan with your mentor. The goal of our research group is to conduct research, provide educational opportunities, train participants, and communicate our science. This is a collaborative effort that requires team support. You are here because of the hard work and dedication of those that came before you and your hard work and dedication will assist others that will follow in your footsteps. Remember, our goals are to both meet our obligations to the funders and support individuals’ training and career goals.

* Are there specific actions that you and/or your mentor can undertake that will support your success (e.g., modify working styles, meetings to discuss progress, networking opportunities)?
* How can your faculty mentor help you achieve your goals?

Include a progress assessment plan within your action plan

* Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) and milestones
* Implement SMART planning
  + Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound
* Set a timeline for frequent assessment and course correction

**Action Plan**

**Current Funding Duration:**

1. Research Projects: expectations from current funding support as well as any independent research projects you hope to pursue
2. Skills: skillsets you wish to gain
3. Publications: Publication goals (e.g., number of articles, types of journals, position in author list)
4. Grantwriting: Plans to write for additional support for additional research funding or stipend funding

1. Professional meetings: Conferences you would like to attend that align with your funded research topic
2. Mentoring or supervision: Number and stage of students you would like to mentor and specific topics you are interested in mentoring
3. Teaching: Experience you would like to gain through educational presentations, course lectures, webinars etc.
4. Service activities: Service to the university or to your field
5. Additional

This IDP is a living document, and the goals within should be revisited each semester with the next 6 months and 1 year in mind.