

Iowa State University Graduate Students and Postdocs in *Humanities & Social Sciences* Self-Assessment

The concept of an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for postdoctoral scholars was introduced by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)'s Science Policy Committee and is fairly well established for postdoctoral scholars in the sciences. According to FASEB, the purpose of the IDP is to "provide a planning process that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. Furthermore, IDPs serve as a communication tool between individuals and their mentors." This process is equally valid for graduate students and postdocs in the social sciences & humanities.

At ISU, we expect that graduate students and postdocs in the *Social Sciences and Humanities* will be provided the opportunity to develop the following six core competencies:

- *Teaching skills*
- *Research skills*
- *Writing & publication*
- *Communication skills*
- *Professional development*
- *Leadership and collaboration*

This process will be initiated by the graduate student or postdocs with full participation by the mentor(s). The IDP focuses on these six core competencies and their development in line with their career aspirations. The IDP process consists of four steps for graduate students or postdoc and mentor(s), and according to FASEB, these steps "are an interactive effort, and so both the graduate students or postdoctoral fellow and the mentor must participate fully in the process."

Basic Steps	For Graduate Students	For Mentor(s)
Step 1	Conduct Self-Assessment	Become Familiar with available career opportunities
Step 2	Write an IDP, share the IDP with mentor and revise	Review the IDP and help revise it
Step 3	Survey career opportunities with mentor	Discuss career opportunities with postdoc
Step 4	Implement the plan and revise IDP as needed, at least annually	Establish regular review of progress and help revise the IDP as needed, at least annually

The Self-Assessment Form

The self-assessment form is most likely to be a private document that the mentor(s) should not expect to see. The self-assessment form asks a number of questions

based on the above six core competencies, and the outcomes of the self-assessment will serve as the basis for the separate IDP form.

The IDP Form

The IDP form should be shared in a draft form with the mentor(s) at the meeting where the graduate student or postdoc accomplishments and goals will be discussed in light of the core competencies and the graduate student's career aspirations.

Meetings

A graduate student or postdoc is expected to conduct a self-assessment and generate a draft IDP to share with their mentor(s) within the first month of arrival at ISU, and on an annual cycle thereafter. Meetings between graduate student or postdocs and their mentor(s) will probably occur frequently, both formally and informally. However, a formal meeting where the IDP is discussed and signed should occur at least once per year.

Mentor – Graduate Student Interaction Guide

Some questions that may be addressed at the beginning of a mentoring relationship:

- What type of assistance does the mentee want from the mentor?
- What expectations do the mentor(s) have for the mentee?
- What expectations does the mentee have for the mentor(s)?
- How often will you meet?
- When, where, and how long will you meet?
- Who will be responsible for scheduling the meetings?
- Who will create meeting agendas and topics to discuss?
- What will be the ground rules for discussion?
- (e.g. confidentiality, candor, openness)
- Are there concerns and reservations for either the mentor or the mentee?

Resources

1. Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology (FASEB) website: <http://opa.faseb.org/pdf/idp.pdf>
2. University of Minnesota Office of Postdoctoral Affairs IDP document: <http://www.grad.umn.edu/prod/groups/grad/@pub/@grad/documents/asset/idpgradpdf.pdf>
3. USC Clinical and Translational Science Institute's KL2 Mentored Research Career Development Program Informational Booklet 2012-2014

Iowa State University Graduate Students and Postdocs in *Humanities & Social Sciences*
Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment (Step 1)

At the beginning of your graduate career you should work with your faculty mentor(s) to determine your short-and long-term goals. Conducting a self-assessment is the first step in developing an IDP (Individual Development Plan) and it will help you craft a vision for your growth over the course of your appointment that will build upon your existing skills and areas of strength while addressing areas that need further development. You might find it helpful to conduct a self-assessment toward the end of each year, so that you and your mentor(s) can reflect on the past year and develop an IDP that focuses on the upcoming year of appointment.

Use the self-assessment to take a realistic survey of your current abilities, identifying your strengths and defining the areas you will need to develop. Consider your proficiency in the following key areas: teaching, research, writing and publication, communication, professional/career development, and leadership and collaboration.

Following are questions to initiate the self-assessment process. These questions are not meant to be comprehensive; rather, they will serve as a tool that you and your mentor will use to articulate your career goals and define the competencies required to reach those goals.

Information

Name	<input type="text"/>
Years in Graduate School or Postdoc	<input type="text"/>
Department/Program	<input type="text"/>
Mentor Name	<input type="text"/>

General Questions

- What were your major goal(s) and priorities for last year?
- Did you succeed - which goals did you meet? For goal(s) that were not met, why not?
- What are your major goal(s) and top priorities this year?
- What type of work would you like to be doing? Where would you like to be in an organization?
- What is important for you in a career?
- What are your long-term career goals? What is your plan to achieve these goals?
- What can go wrong? What other preparations or alternative plans have you made?

Teaching

- Did you do any teaching in the past year (courses, seminars)?
- What sorts of feedback, formal or informal, have you received on your course content, syllabi, pedagogy, consideration of diverse learners and overall teaching abilities? In which areas do you need to improve? How will you improve your teaching and what resources are available?
- Would you like additional opportunities to teach? How will you find these teaching opportunities?

Research

- What are your primary (re)sources for research and where are they located?
- When do you plan to access these resources?
- What feedback have you received, formal or informal, on your research project?
- What research-related skills have you acquired in the past year?
- In what areas do you need to improve, or what other research training/skills do you need? How will you acquire these?

Writing & Publication

- What papers/articles/manuscripts did you write in the past year? Were these submitted for publication?
- Were they published?
- What papers/articles/manuscripts do you plan to write this year?
- What areas of your written communication skills do you feel need improvement?
- How will you improve your writing skills?
- What fellowships or grants did you write? Were they funded?
- If you were not successful, what can you do to improve your next grant application?
- What grants are you planning to write this year?

Communication

- What presentations did you make in the past year? What sorts of feedback did you receive on the content of your presentation and your presentation skills?
- Are there specific presentation skills you would like to improve? How will you do so and what are your resources?
- What presentations do you intend to make this year?

Professional Development

- What unique traits (personal and professional) do you possess? How can you apply these to your career goal(s)?
- Are you prepared for a job interview? If not, what do you need in order to be prepared?
- Is your CV ready to send out to prospective employers? If not, what do you need to do to get it ready?
- Are you prepared to give a job talk? If not, what do you need in order to be prepared?
- Have you prepared your teaching portfolio, including your teaching philosophy, syllabi, assessment methods etc?
How will you prepare or refine these?
- What career development programs do you need access to?

Leadership & Collaboration

- What collaborations have you established or do you plan to pursue (co-teaching, collaborative research, team project)?
- How are such collaborations beneficial to you?
- Have you identified opportunities to meet with individuals who may be interested in your research and professional experiences? How will you identify those opportunities/individuals?
- Have you communicated your scholarly, research and career interests to individuals in academic and professional communities who may be aware of employment opportunities that match your specific experience and skills? How will you expand your professional network?