

## Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Graduate Students

### I. Purpose

The IDP is a tool to assist trainees with career and professional development. The IDP provides a platform for trainees to identify professional goals, assess competencies relevant to these goals, and develop a plan to achieve specific objectives related to their career goals. The trainee-developed IDP becomes a platform for discussion with their PhD mentor, to foster communication important for the trainee's professional development. The process is interactive and reiterative to ensure training success and satisfaction.

### II. Process

Several steps are involved in the development, implementation, and revision of the IDP. The trainee and mentor are active participants, working together to design a plan that helps the trainee meet goals identified in the IDP. The process involves identification of short-term objectives, with clear expectations and milestones that address long-term career goals. The IDP is changeable and should evolve over time.

#### ***Basic steps for Trainee***

1. Conduct a self-assessment
  - a. Define your time commitment to various components of the graduate experience.
  - b. Assess your skills and interests.
  - c. Use outside resources to get feedback on your skills, strengths, and weaknesses. The following **self-assessment tools** provide a nice resource for this self-assessment.  
<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>
2. Survey opportunities with mentor
  - a. Identify career opportunities that interest you.
  - b. Define differences between your current skills and additional skills needed for your identified career objectives.
  - c. Prioritize areas for development and discuss strategies for addressing objectives with your mentor.
3. Write/update your IDP, share it with your mentor, and review together
  - a. Identify specific skills that you need to develop in the short-term (e.g. 1-2 years)
  - b. Define strategies to develop each skill. Use the "SMART" principle:
    - i. **Specific** - is it focused and unambiguous?
    - ii. **Measureable** - define metrics to know whether the objective is achieved.
    - iii. **Action-oriented** - identify concrete steps to achieve the objective.
    - iv. **Realistic** - is the strategy feasible?
    - v. **Time bound** - define a deadline.
  - c. Discuss draft with mentor
4. Implement the plan, and revise as needed (at least annually)
  - a. Review your plan with your mentor on a regular basis.
  - b. Revise as necessary.

#### ***Basic steps for Mentor***

1. Be familiar with training requirements and opportunities.
2. Discuss opportunities with trainee.
3. Review your trainee's IDP and help revise. Provide written comments at the end of this document.
4. Establish regular periods for IDP review and revision, as needed.

## Individual Development Plan for Graduate Students

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize the findings in your “myIDP Summary” (see: <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>):

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Long-term Career Goals:

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**Time Distribution** – what percent of your time is spent in each of the following activities?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Coursework
- \_\_\_\_\_ Research
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clinical activity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership (describe):
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing abstracts and/or manuscripts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing grants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attending lab meetings, journal clubs, or seminars
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attending scientific or professional meetings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (describe):

**Trainee Self-Assessment of Skills (place a check mark in the column that applies):**

Scholarship Skills	Needs Improvement	Competent	Proficient	Expert
Core science knowledge				
Translational knowledge				
Laboratory skills				
Analytical skills				
Responsible conduct of research				
Manuscript writing and preparation				
Grant writing				
Overall productivity				

Professional Skills	Needs Improvement	Competent	Proficient	Expert
Teaching				
Communication				
Management				
Leadership				
Networking				
Teamwork				
Collaboration				
Embracing diversity				
Interview skills				

**Short-term (1-2 year) Objectives:**

List three **Academic Goals** for the next year (e.g., courses to take, skills/knowledge to enhance, progress on projects, etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Strategies and resources needed to achieve the short-term Academic goals stated above:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List three **Professional Goals** based on the Career Advancement Goals in your “myIDP Summary.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

• Strategies and resources needed to achieve the Professional goals stated above:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_