

ITP Individual Development Plan

Description

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a mechanism for articulating and accomplishing both long- and short- term goals in pursuit of a desired career goal. This guide is intended to provide a planning process that will help identify both professional development needs and career objectives for ITP students. To receive maximum benefit from the IDP process, it is essential that both graduate and their faculty mentor(s) participate fully in the process. The IDP will need to be revised as circumstances change, and it is most helpful if the mentor and graduate student work together to modify the IDP.

Goals

Help individuals identify:

- Long-term career options they wish to pursue and the requisite tools to meet them; and
- Short-term needs for improving current performance.

Benefits

Students will have a process to assist them in developing long-term goals. Identifying short-term goals will provide a clearer sense of expectations, set benchmarks, and help identify milestones along the way to achieving specific objectives. The IDP also serves as a tool for communication between the student and a faculty mentor.

Outline of IDP Process

The development, implementation and revision of the IDP require a series of steps to be conducted by the student and his/her mentor. These steps reflect an interactive effort, so both the student and the mentor must participate fully in the process. The IDP should be completed by the end of the second semester. One copy retained by the student and mentor. One copy submitted directly to the ITP office to be placed in the student's file.

Basic Steps

	For Graduate Students	For Mentors/ Faculty
Step 1	Conduct a self-assessment	Become familiar with available opportunities
Step 2	Survey opportunities with mentor	Discuss opportunities with trainee

Step 3	Write an IDP, share with mentor and revise	Review IDP and help revise
Step 4	Initiate the plan	Help trainee implement the plan
Step 5	Review plan regularly to modify milestones as needed	Review plan regularly to modify milestones as needed
Step 6	Review annually	Review annually
Step 7	Revise the IDP as needed	Establish regular review of progress and revise IDP as needed

Execution of the IDP Process

...for Students

Step 1. Conduct a Self-Assessment.

- Assess your skill set, strengths and areas that need development. Formal assessment tools can be helpful. (Examples can be found in *Resources: Self Assessment* at the end of this document).
- 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. (For useful information see *Resources: Career Opportunities* at the end of this document). 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 Opportunities with Mentor.

- 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 needs and discuss with your mentor how these should be addressed.

Step 3. Write an IDP.

The IDP maps out the general path you want to take and helps match your skills and strengths (and gaps in both) to your career choices. It is an ever-changing document, since needs and goals will almost certainly evolve over time. The aim is to build upon current strengths and skills by identifying areas for development and providing a way to address these. The specific objectives of a typical IDP are to:

- Establish effective dates for the duration of your graduate appointment.
- 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. Implement Your Plan.

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

- Initiate the plans you have laid out for acquiring new skills in the immediate term. Review your plan regularly to be sure you are on track with your action items and to know when you need to be shifting into new phases. 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.

..*for Mentors*

Step 1. Become familiar with available opportunities.

By virtue of your experience you should already have knowledge of some career opportunities, but you may want to familiarize yourself with other career opportunities and trends in job opportunities (refer to sources such as National Research Council reports and *Science* career reviews; see also *Resources: Career Opportunities* at the end of this document).

Step 2. Discuss opportunities with graduate students.

This needs to be a private, scheduled meeting distinct from regular research-specific meetings. There should be adequate time set aside for an open and honest discussion.

Step 3. Review IDP and help revise.

Provide honest feedback - both positive and negative - to help graduate students set realistic goals. Agree on a development plan that will allow them to be productive in the laboratory and adequately prepare them for their chosen career.

Step 4. Establish regular review of progress.

The mentor should meet at regular intervals with the graduate student to assess progress, expectations and changing goals. On at least an annual basis, the mentor should conduct a performance review designed to analyze what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. A written review is most helpful in objectively documenting accomplishments. (An example is provided as an attachment – this can be modified to fit individual needs).

Individual Development Plan

Student Info

Name of Grad Student _____

Department or Program _____

Date of Admission _____

Anticipated date of completion/graduation _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Mentor Info

Name of Primary Mentor _____

Department or Program _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Name of Secondary Mentor _____

Department or Program _____

Signature (if necessary) _____

Date _____

Part I. Goals and Objectives (to be completed by trainee):

1. What is your particular area of interest (include research interests if applicable)?

2. What are your **short-term** career plans/goals after completion of this fellowship/degree program?

3. What are your **long-term** career plans/goals after completion of this fellowship/degree program?

4. **What are both your strengths and areas that need improvement?**

5. How do you plan to improve these areas of need and maintain your strengths?

6. What **opportunities** at UGA and beyond can assist you in reaching your professional/non-scientific objectives? For example, participation in meetings, courses or workshop attendance (identify meeting/workshop and date)?

7. Create a timeline for implementation from the steps you have identified. Identify those from whom assistance is needed.

Part II. Career Goals and Planning (to be completed by trainee):

1. Why does the career identified above appeal to you?
2. What other career paths interest you?
3. Why do these other careers appeal to you?
4. In order to be competitive for your desired career path, what additional training or experience is needed prior to applying for positions?
5. Are there constraints that will affect your job search? (partner's career, visa issues, geographic limitations, etc.)
6. When do you anticipate going on the job market?

Part III. Wellbeing (to be completed by trainee):

1. Research environment: What features of the lab group or your relationships with colleagues and collaborators are most helpful and supportive to your wellbeing? What concerns could negatively affect your progress?
2. Work-life balance: What do you do to maintain a balance between your work and life/personal needs? What would you like to continue to do, or do differently next year?

3. Do stresses or concerns exist in your personal life that could impact your work?
How are things going generally? Are you able to take regular breaks and vacations?

Annual Review

Part I. Overall progress: Review of the last year (to be completed by trainee):

1. Highlight your major **accomplishments** in the past year (e.g., **publications**, patents, honors or awards, grants or fellowships), be specific on the authorship, e.g., first author or co-author:

2. Brief overview of other **progress** in the past year:

3. List any **presentations** at professional meetings or conferences outside of UGA (or those held on campus but included an outside audience), be specific on the type, e.g., oral or poster:

4. **Coursework/Training:** What courses, seminars, conferences, lab meetings, etc. do you participate in? Are they meeting your needs? If not, what else would be helpful?

5. **Teaching Activities:** How much do you participate in? Is this giving you the experience in teaching that you need for your desired career?

6. **Administrative and Other Duties** (such as assistance with writing proposals or mentoring graduate or undergraduate students): How much do you participate

in, e.g., in percent effort? Are these activities relevant to your development of academic or professional skills? In what ways could these activities be interfering with your research productivity?

7. Did you accomplish all that you agreed on doing with your mentor, under the **Action Plan** during your initial meeting?

If not, what parts of the plan did you not accomplish and why? Describe/list any unusual or unanticipated **challenges** experienced.

8. **Mentoring** and Professional Collaborations:

- a. How often did you meet with your faculty mentor(s) last year?
 - b. Who is your secondary mentor? Is that person a faculty member? How often did you meet with him/her?
 - c. Do you have collaborators outside the lab? Please list their names and roles.
9. Service on Committees/Community organizations (i.e., volunteer activities)

10. Leadership Activities (i.e., leadership positions on committees or in community organizations, initiatives launched, etc)

Part II. Wellbeing (to be completed by trainee):

1. Research environment: What features of the lab group or your relationships with colleagues and collaborators are most helpful and supportive to your wellbeing? What concerns could negatively affect your progress?
2. Work-life balance: What do you do to maintain a balance between your work and life/personal needs? What would you like to continue to do, or do differently next year?
3. Do stresses or concerns exist in your personal life that could impact your work? How are things going generally? Are you able to take regular breaks and vacations?

Part III. Research Plan for Next Year (to be completed by trainee):

Research Training and Professional Progress

1. Provide a timeline of research activities planned for the next year. When planning for the next year, it is advisable to break large projects into smaller sections to create feasible timelines.

2. List all planned activities for the next year in the following categories. Provide as much detail as possible (titles, name of meeting, name of funding program, etc.). (those listed below are merely a guide)

Expected publications

Expected presentations and meeting attendance

Expected grant or fellowship applications

Expected leadership or management activities

Expected teaching activities (including mentoring)

Other expected professional training

Part IV. Mentor Comments and Recommendations (to be completed by mentors):

In this section, mentors should evaluate

- the trainee's progress from the previous year
- the feasibility and appropriateness of the plan for the next year
- the progress towards career goals

Recommendations/ Comments

Primary Mentor Comments and Recommendations:

Secondary Mentor Comments and Recommendations:

Resources*

Networking

Advanced Networking: Six Techniques for Maintaining Professional Momentum by Peter Fiske for ScienceCareers.org

Self Assessment

Fiske, P. S. (2001). Put Your Science to Work: The Take-Charge Career Guide for Scientists. Washington, D.C.: American Geophysical Union.

Bolles, R. N. (2002). What Color is your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers. Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press.

myIDP: Individual Development Plan for ScienceCareers.
<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

Choosing a Mentor

Choosing a Graduate or Postdoc Advisor by John Andraos for ScienceCareers.org

How to Get the Mentoring You Want from University of Michigan Rackham School of Graduate Studies

Good Mentoring Guidelines by the OITE Careers Blog for NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education

Identifying Mentors: Why is Matters by OITE Careers Blog for NIH Office of Intramural Training and Education

The Postdoc Experience

Kern, S. (2002). Fellowship Goals for PhDs and MDs: A Primer on the Molecular Biology Postdoctoral Experience. *Cancer Biology and Therapy* 1: 74-75.

National Academy of Sciences. (2000). Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience for Scientists and Engineers: A Guide for Postdoctoral scholars, Advisers, Institutions, Funding Organizations, and Disciplinary Societies. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Career Opportunities

American Association for the Advancement of Science. Science's Next Wave. [On-line]. Available: <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/>

The Scientist. Archives: Profession. [On-line]. Available: http://www.the-scientist.com/fragments/careers/careers_about.jsp

The Chronicle of Higher Education. Career Network Advice Columns. [On-line]. Available: <http://chronicle.com/jobs/>

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. (1997). Graduate Education: Consensus Conference Report. Bethesda, M.D. FASEB. [On-line]. Available: <http://opa.faseb.org/pages/Publications/educationreport.htm>

Heiberger and Vick, eds. (1996). The Academic Job Search Handbook (2nd ed.). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Reis, R. M. (1997) Tomorrow's Professor. Preparing for Academic Careers in Science and Engineering. New York: IEEE Press. 1997.

On-line Listserv: Tomorrow's Professor. Available: <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/index.shtml>

Barker, K. (2002). At the Helm: A Laboratory Navigator. Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press.

Resources on Non-Academic Careers

Robbins-Roth, C. ed. (1998). Alternative Careers in Science. Leaving the Ivory Tower. San Diego, Calif.: Academic Press.

Kreeger, K. Y. (1999). Guide to Nontraditional Careers in Science. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Personal Well-Being

Mommy Postdoc, PhD by Heather Patisaul for The Scientist

How Stereotypes Can Drive Women to Quit Science by Shankar Vedantam for NPR

Take Time to Smell the Roses by Caroline Kane and Sue Shafer for ASCB

On Being a Scientist and a Parent by Ursula Goodenough for ASCB

these resources are not considered endorsements, per se