

CREATING AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

Preparing your IDP

The purpose of an IDP is to prepare you for your future career. It is important that you think carefully about your individual career goals and the skills that you need to be successful in that career. It is quite likely that your career success will require a much wider range of skills than the ability to design and perform research. Your mentor and other resources at UW and affiliated institutions will be helpful, but you must take primary responsibility for your career preparation.

The most effective way to begin this process is to define your career interest(s), based on your strengths and the jobs that you might want in different employment sectors (e.g. academia, industry, non-profit, government, or other research-related areas). If you find it difficult to identify your career interests, you will find workshops and seminars offered at UW and affiliated institutions that can inform you about these occupations. There are also a number of useful resources on the web:

- FHCRC Office of Scientific Career Development [<http://www.fredhutch.org/en/education-training/oscd.html>]
- FHCRC Student/Postdoc Advisory Committee [<http://www.fredhutch.org/en/education-training/spac.html>]
- The AAAS has developed an exceptional tool for IDPs in the sciences: [<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>]
- Video libraries of professional development workshops can be found at the Institute for Translational Health Sciences [<https://www.iths.org>] and the National Institutes of Health [https://www.training.nih.gov/for_trainees_outside_the_nih]

Crafting your IDP

Think about where you want to be in your career. Once you have an idea of your career goals, you will need to consider what skills are needed to be successful in that career and how you will develop those skills and gain needed experience. You should involve your mentor and committee members in helping you define what you need and to help you address those needs. This template includes prompts that will guide you in: 1) acquiring discipline specific knowledge and research skills; 2) gaining skills in written and oral communications, including teaching; 3) development of professionalism, management, and leadership skills.

For each goal, identify how you will accomplish the goal and the time by which the goal will be accomplished. No plan exists until the individual steps are defined and a time line is attached. If you can't decide on your preferred career path now, define what you need to know to make the choice, how you will obtain that information, and the time period over which you will work on determining your path. Execute that plan and then develop the actual IDP as your specific career goals become better defined.

Once you have drafted your IDP, meet with your mentor(s) to discuss the draft, and schedule regular meetings to review and assess your progress. Make use of as many mentors as you find helpful—you will find that most people are very willing to help to guide you in understanding your goals and defining what mentoring you need.

Updating your IDP

Your IDP should be considered a living document that will evolve over time as you move through your training. You will be expected to update it in consultation with your mentor before your annual committee meeting and discuss it at your committee meeting, and perhaps also update it after quarterly or semi-annual meetings with your mentor(s). You will be required to submit your IDP, along with your annual committee meeting report, to the MCB office each year. You should indicate the progress you have made since the last update of the IDP in any applicable area, as well as your plans for further development. Please note that it is not expected that you have new updates in all areas of your IDP each year. For example, early in your career, you will have more updates relating to newly acquiring discipline specific skills, while later in your career you will have updates related to communication skills (i.e. presenting at meetings, writing papers). Use your mentor and Supervisory Committee for advice about achieving the right mix of activities appropriate to your career stage.

The IDP must be signed by both mentor and mentee.

Individual Development Plan

Name:

Date:

Email:

Lab or Group:

Estimated month and year of graduation:

Quick Links (For convenience only; please complete every section.)

1. [Career Goals](#)
 2. [Acquirement of Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Research Skills](#)
 3. [Development of Career Skills](#)
 4. [Setting Goals for Progress](#)
 5. [Timeline for Planning to Move to the Next Step in Your Career](#)
 6. [Signatures of Mentee \(Student\) and Mentor \(PI\)](#)
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1. Career Goals

Identify your existing strengths and the gaps in your knowledge or experience, then think of ways to fill those gaps during your training period.

I. Overall career goal (as of now -- you can change your mind later)

II. What do you think you want to be doing in 10 years? (long-term objectives)

III. What do you want to be doing once you graduate? (medium-term objectives)

IV. What do you want to accomplish in the next year? (short-term goals; be specific)

2. Acquirement of Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Research Skills

I. Briefly describe your research project goals (1 paragraph)

II. What specific skills or expertise (methods, techniques, specific courses, etc) have you already acquired during the course of your project?

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III. What specific skills or expertise (methods, techniques, specific courses, etc) do you need to learn to accomplish this project?

3. Development of Career Skills

I. Development of communication skills (list progress you have made in this area and specific areas to improve in the future; e.g. grant writing, manuscript writing, poster and oral presentations, science writing for the public, networking)

II. Gaining experience in teaching or public outreach (list previous, current and future specific teaching opportunities, formal or informal training in didactics)

III. Developing mentoring skills (list previous and potential opportunities for training)

IV. Other opportunities for developing skills in leadership, mentoring, time management etc.

4. Setting Goals for Progress

I. Anticipated oral or poster presentations (list dates of previous and future presentations, if possible)

II. Anticipated publications (describe previous and anticipated titles/topics of manuscripts and anticipated dates of submission; include both first author and collaborative publications)

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III. Applications for funding (list specific source of previous and potential funding and type of award, with expected submission dates)

5. Timeline for Planning to Move to the Next Step in Your Career

I. Key contacts to make to explore career options and investigate leads

II. Potential sources for letters of reference (cultivate these relationships early)

III. Development of CV, research summary, etc.

IV. Other actions to facilitate the move to your next position (e.g. attending Biosciences career seminars, meeting with the Director of the Office of Scientific Career Development, other professional development, informational interviews, networking)

6. Signatures

Student Signature

Date

PI Signature

Date