

Individual Development Plan

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) encourages undergraduate researchers to set goals and identify strategies that will help them to reach those goals. It is a self-tracking tool that can be used to facilitate mentor-mentee communication and alignment of expectations.

Use the following five questions to guide development of the IDP. Annual (or more frequent) review of the plan provides opportunities to celebrate achievements, incorporate revisions and ensure progress toward goals.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

- **Ultimate goals**

- ▶ *I will be a professor of neuroscience at a research university.*

- **Long-term (5-10 years)**

- ▶ *I will be a postdoctoral fellow studying the genetic basis of neurological disorders.*

- **Intermediate term (2-5 years)**

- ▶ *I will earn my Ph.D. in neuroscience.*

- ▶ *I will contribute to the discovery of the genetic basis of Alzheimer's disease.*

- **Short-term (1-2 years)**

- ▶ *I will earn my BS degree in genetics.*

- ▶ *I will publish my undergraduate research project in a peer-reviewed journal.*

- **Immediate (6 months-1 year)**

- ▶ *I will earn an A in biochemistry class.*

- ▶ *I will learn brain slice immunohistochemical staining techniques.*

- ▶ *I will participate in a summer research program to experience another university.*

WHAT COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS WILL YOU NEED TO SUCCESSFULLY REACH YOUR GOALS? (SEE LIST AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR SPECIFIC IDEAS).

- Disciplinary knowledge
- Research and technical skills
- Professional and interpersonal skills
- Management and leadership skills

WHAT ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES WILL YOU ENGAGE IN TO GAIN THE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS?

- Taking classes
- Tutoring, study groups
- Technique training
- Research experiences
- Scientific meeting attendance
- Professional development workshops

HOW WILL YOU ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS IN MASTERING THESE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS?

- Mastery of coursework
- Mentor/instructor feedback
- Successful experimental outcomes
- Peer review

WHO WILL HELP YOU REACH YOUR GOALS AND HOW?

- Teachers
- Mentors
- Peers
- Family members

GOALS	COMPETENCIES & SKILLS	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS	SUPPORT PEOPLE & THEIR ROLES
Long-term 1. 2. 3.				
Intermediate 1. 2. 3.				
Short-term 1. 2. 3.				
Immediate 1. 2. 3.				

Examples of Skills

Research & Technical	Professional & Interpersonal	Management & Leadership
Critical Reading (scientific literature)	Reliability & Follow-through	Time Management (meeting deadlines)
Experimental Design	Communication (oral & written)	Prioritizing & Organizing Work
Experimental Techniques	Writing (manuscript, grant, fellowship)	Leading & Motivating Others
Computer Skills	Teaching	Research Project Management
Documentation/ Laboratory Notebook	Mentoring	Budget Management
Problem Solving & Troubleshooting	Collaborating & Working in Teams	Supervising/ Managing People
Data & Statistical Analysis	Giving/Receiving Constructive Feedback	Delegating Responsibility
Critical Analysis	Collegiality	
Responsible Conduct of Research	Networking	
Identification of New Research Directions & Next Steps		

IDP Worksheet Example

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a professional tool that outlines objectives you and your mentor/supervisor have identified as important for your professional development. A comprehensive review of your career goals and objectives identified at the beginning of your appointment and during your semiannual appraisal provide constructive feedback from your mentor/supervisor that can help you become an independent investigator.

Career Goals/Objectives	Educational Activities	Research Projects/ Products/Dates
Goal One: Objective 1. 2. 3.		
Goal Two: Objective 1. 2. 3.		
Goal Three: Objective 1. 2. 3.		

Describe the plan you and your mentor have for your transition from your current position to the next position:

Additional comments: