

Doctoral Student Individualized Development Plans¹

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are tools to assist in career and personal development. Your IDP is your road map to completing your degree. For graduate students, an IDP can help you set goals and take stock of whether you have accomplished those goals. Your yearly IDP is a chance for you to step back from your daily work, assess your progress, and plan for the future. Your advisor and mentors are invaluable resources to help you propose and execute next steps.

Individualized Development Plans have 4 necessary steps

1. Self-Assess - take stock of where you are and where you would like to be
2. Have regular meetings with your advisor. Set an ANNUAL meeting to discuss your IDP. This is in addition to your regular meetings.
3. Lead the discussion at your IDP meeting. This is YOUR plan.
4. Complete your action plan and check yourself against it regularly.

¹ This template draws from IDPS in use by Stanford, Scripps and from materials put forth by the American Academy for the Advancement of Science. For additional materials including career planning see myidp.sciencecareers.org.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- take the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree.
- be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of SBMI and UTHHealth.
- be a good citizen, maintaining a safe and clean space and working collegially with everyone
- maintain detailed, organized, and accurate notes regarding my progress.
- meet regularly with my advisor and provide her/him with updates on the progress and results of my activities.
- attend and participate in meetings, poster sessions, seminars, and journal clubs.
- keep up with original literature in my field.
- work with my research advisor to develop a thesis/dissertation project and select a committee.
- initiate requests for feedback and seek advice from my advisor, committee, and other mentors, allowing adequate time (i.e., a minimum of 1 week when classes are in session, possibly longer) for faculty review, comment, and revision.
- submit revisions in a timely fashion, in consultation with the chair and committee and to meet SBMI academic procedures as outlined in the catalog.
- discuss policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with my advisor and supervisors for GRA positions.
- discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my advisor.

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- be committed to their students' education and training as future members of their scientific community.
- be committed to helping plan and direct research projects, allowing students to take ownership of their own research while setting reasonable goals and establishing a timeline for completion.
- provide regular and honest feedback in an ongoing and timely basis.
- be committed to improving as a mentor.
- be open and encouraging to students regarding concerns and providing assistance to find acceptable solutions to problems as they arise.
- be knowledgeable of program's requirements/deadlines.
- advise and assist with thesis committee selection.
- lead by example and facilitate training in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as communication, writing, management, and ethical behavior.
- discuss authorship policies and work with students to publish work in a timely manner.

Student Name:

Entry Year Into the Program:

Advisor:

Committee Member(s):

Skills Assessment

Each year you will be expected to thoughtfully assess your skills. Please keep in mind you are in a training program. The expectation is improvement over time (rather than proficiency at the start.)²

Rate yourself on a scale from (1) highly deficient to (5) highly proficient for each skill at the point of completing this plan. Please indicate which skills are a target for the coming year.

Scientific Knowledge	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__
Broad based knowledge of science				
Critical evaluation of scientific literature				
Deep knowledge of my specific research area				

Research Skills	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__
Technical skills related to my specific research area				
Research design				
Statistical analysis				
Interpretation of data				
Creativity/ innovative thinking				
Navigating the peer review process				

² Skills assessment derived from National Postdoctoral Association's core competencies for PhD Scholars.

Communication	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__
Basic writing and editing (appropriate grammar and structure)				
Writing scientific publications				
Writing grant proposals				
Writing for nonscientists				
Speaking clearly and effectively				
Presenting research to scientists				
Presenting to nonscientists				
Teaching in a classroom setting				
Training and mentoring individuals				
Communicating one on one				
English fluency				
Seeking advice from advisors and mentors				
Working with constructive criticism				
Negotiating difficult conversations				

Professionalism	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__
Time management				
Demonstrating workplace etiquette				
Complying with rules and regulations				
Upholding commitments and meeting deadlines				
Maintaining positive relationships with colleagues				
Contributing to discipline (e.g. member of professional society)				
Contributing to institution (e.g. participate on committees)				

Management and Leadership Skills	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__
Providing instruction and guidance				
Providing constructive feedback				
Dealing with conflict				
Planning and organizing projects				
Time management				
Developing/ managing budgets				
Managing data and resources				
Delegating responsibilities				
Leading and motivating others				
Creating vision and goals				
Serving as a role model				

Responsible Conduct of Research	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__
Careful recordkeeping practices				
Understanding of data ownership/sharing issues				
Demonstrating responsible authorship and publication practices				
Demonstrating responsible conduct in human research				
Demonstrating responsible conduct in animal research				
Can identify and address research misconduct				
Can identify and manage conflict of interest				

Career Planning	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__
How to maintain a professional network				
How to identify career options				
How to prepare application materials				
How to interview				
How to negotiate salary/startup/etc.				

Goals for the Coming Year

In addition to the skill assessment, each year you will be asked to reflect on your previously stated goals as well as setting goals for the coming year. Here you will be asked only to set your academic goals, but you might consider setting broad career advancement goals or more granular project completion goals using this mode.

We recommend using SMART goals.

How to set a SMART goal

S – Specific – Is it focused and unambiguous?

M – Measureable – Could someone determine whether or not you achieved this goal?

A – Action-oriented – Did you specify the action you will take?

R – Realistic – Considering difficulty and timeframe, is this goal attainable?

T – Time-bound – Did you specify a deadline?

Keep yourself accountable

To ensure that you stick to the goals you set, it is important to make a concrete, specific plan for how you will keep yourself accountable. A friend or trusted colleague can help with this. For example, knowing that a colleague will be asking you about your progress may give you an incentive to complete your goal.

Example:

SMART goal	Read articles/books about medical device industry
Is this a recurring activity	Yes, weekly.
Start date	October 1, 2016
Target completion date	November 1, 2016
How will you be accountable	Take Erin out to coffee each Wednesday, and tell her about what I've learned.

YEAR 1

Courses

If entering from/with M.S. – courses transferred into Ph.D. program

Course	Semester Completed	Grade

Core classes to be completed

Course	Semester Completed

Required PhD Classes (if not required by your catalog year indicate N/A)

	Semester
Literature Review	
Methods	
Theory and Frameworks	

Qualifying Exams

Exam	Semester Completed	Pass/Fail/Retake

Meeting dates with advisor

Meeting Dates	Goals for Meeting	Outcomes

What activities did you and your mentor agree you should achieve your academic objectives in the coming year?

What skills have you identified as important development targets for this coming year?

What are your primary goals in your academic training? (INSERT SMART GOALS HERE)

What resources or support will most help with your transition to grad school?

What actions can be taken to make sure these needs are met?

What is important to you in a mentoring relationship?

Are there any factors that you are you concerned may negatively affect your progress? What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide?

If you know, what will be your financial support for the next year?

Other pertinent information regarding your progress in this year:

YEAR 2

Assessment. Please complete both the skills assessment and identify your progress regarding the previous year's goals.

Year 1 Milestones

Please indicate your success in achieving each goal. If goal was not met, what was the challenge/barrier? Please identify your plan for overcoming this obstacles and indicate the revised timeline for completion.

Milestone	Progress	Comments
Core Courses		
Required Courses		

Qualifying Exams

Exam	Semester Completed	Pass/Fail/Retake

Participation at Poster Session

Poster Title	Co-Authors	Course

Have you identified an area of interest for your thesis project?

Have you identified specific research questions? Theoretical frameworks?

Methods?

Challenges

Describe any unusual or unanticipated challenges you experienced this year in trying to accomplish the goals you set out last year with your advisor.

Meetings with committee

Committee Member	Meeting Dates	Goals for Meeting	Outcomes

Is your current level of contact with advisor sufficient?

Is your level of contact with committee contact sufficient?

Are you initiating the meetings?

Year 2 Planning

Milestone	Plan	Timeline for completion
Presentation at Research Seminar		
Preparation of Literature Review for Publication		
Composition of Dissertation Committee		
Comprehensive Exams		

What are your near-term research goals? For each goal, specify any areas where you feel you need specific improvement or additional training.

What program requirements do you need to complete, and what is your plan to fulfill them?

Professional Development (It is never too early to plan for the future)

Have you started to think about your long-term goals? (i.e., activities you want to be doing on a daily basis in 5-10 years after you graduate.)

—If so, list any early thoughts you have. If not, do you have any questions at this point?

Have you thought about what factors inform these goals?

—If so, list any early thoughts you have. If not, do you have any questions at this point?

What guidance would help you with your development and exploration of career options?

What features of the research group and your relationships with colleagues are most helpful and supportive to your personal development?

Are there any factors that you are concerned may negatively affect your progress?

What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide? Indicate if you need help finding professional or personal development resources.

YEAR 3

Assessment

Year 2 Milestones

Milestone	Progress	Comments
Presentation at Research Seminar		
Preparation of Literature Review for Publication		
Composition of Dissertation Committee		
Comprehensive Exams		

Please detail your involvement and projected involvement with the following areas

Conferences		
Service		
Outreach		
Extracurricular training/professional development		
Teaching/Mentoring		
Coursework/Training		

Challenges

Describe any unusual or unanticipated challenges you experienced this year in trying to accomplish the goals you set out last year with your advisor.

What actions have you taken to meet these challenges?

How can your advisor help you?

What fellowships are you applying to, and have you been able to get the guidance you need?

Many students find it useful to participate in additional training, teaching, conferences, outreach, and other activities. Do you need any help finding opportunities?

Meetings with advisor/Committee

Meetings with advisor

Meeting Dates	Goals for Meeting	Outcomes

Committee Member	Meeting Dates	Goals for Meeting	Outcomes

Is your current level of contact with advisor sufficient?

Is your level of contact with committee contact sufficient?

Are you initiating the meetings?

What are your near-term research goals? For each goal, specify any areas where you feel you need specific improvement or additional training.

What program requirements do you need to complete, and what is your plan to fulfill them?

Professional Development (It is never too early to plan for the future)

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What guidance would help you with your development and exploration of career options?

What features of the research group and your relationships with colleagues are most helpful and supportive to your personal development?

Are there any factors that you are concerned may negatively affect your progress?

What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide? Indicate if you need help finding professional or personal development resources.

Year 3+ Planning

Milestone	Plan	Timeline for completion
Dissertation Proposal		
Pursuit of funding		
Submission of paper		
Professional responsibilities		

What skills have you identified as important development targets for this coming year?

What activities did you and your mentor agree you should achieve your academic objectives in the coming year?

If you know, what will be your financial support for the next year?

YEAR 3 +

Indicate the Program Year:

Assessment

Milestone	Plan	Timeline for completion
Dissertation Proposal		
Pursuit of funding		
Submission of paper		
Professional responsibilities		

Planning

Milestone	Plan	Timeline for completion
Adherence to proposed timeline		
Pursuit of funding		
Submission of paper		
Training for Teaching		
Professional Development (CV, interview skills etc.)		
Participation in peer review process		
Preparation of job materials		

Do you have a clear/defined plan and endpoint for your thesis?

How confident are you in your ability to complete it by that point?

How firm a grasp do you feel you have of the field in which you work?

If insufficient, what help do you need in identifying relevant readings or other means to be a true expert in your field?

What are your near-term research goals?

For each goal, specify any areas where you feel you need specific improvement or additional training (e.g., the need to learn high-throughput sequencing). Include any techniques you want to learn, scientific collaborations, etc.

CHALLENGES

Describe any unusual or unanticipated challenges you experienced this year in trying to accomplish the goals you set out last year with your advisor.

What actions have you taken to meet these challenges? How can your advisor help you?

Which experience or experiences have been most valuable to you, your research, and/or your professional goals?

Career development? Writing teaching and research statements, CV review etc.