IDP OUTLINE – trainee portion

1. SKILLS ASSESSMENT – what skills do I currently have?

2. CAREER ASPIRATIONS – what career pathways interest me? What do I like to do and what do I value about my work environment?

3. DESIRED SKILLS – setting goals for the skills I want.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – what support can I take advantage of?

IDP OUTLINE – mentor portion

1. SKILLS ASSESSMENT – what skills does my trainee currently have?

2. CAREER ASPIRATIONS – how can I support my trainee's career goals? What does my trainee like to do?

3. DESIRED SKILLS – helping my trainee set goals for the skills they need to be successful.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – what support can my trainee take advantage of? How can I advocate for my trainee?

IDP Outline Guidelines

A Career Development Plan (CDP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP) is tool designed to aid in building a career and professional development roadmap that fits a mentee's skills, interests, and values. The CDP/IDP is also meant to serve as a resource for initiating and sustaining discussions between mentees and mentors. The IDP is not meant to be a rigid compact, but instead, it is intended to develop mutual expectations of both mentees and mentors. Ideally, after completing an IDP, mentees will be able to engage in regular periodic discussions with mentors in order to identify specific ways they can work to develop their professional skills and move forward towards their career objectives.

This outline serves as a starting place to develop a comprehensive training plan that is customized for you. You and your mentor can share this one page outline with collaborators and/or outside mentors that may work with you, or use this as a guide when writing grant applications, letters of recommendation, or any other document that references your training goals. It is not as extensive / comprehensive as some of the other IDP templates out there, and so you should feel free to dive into the resources listed below if you want to go into more detail than is provided by this template. The goal here is to make sure that all research teams cover the basic questions that will create a supportive training environment, ensuring that everyone is on the same page about your professional development.

1. Skills assessment – what skills do I currently have?

Assessing your skills regularly will highlight your successes during your training and help you identify areas that you need to work on. Identify your strengths among the skills listed on the "Skills Assessment Categories" as a starting place for creating your IDP workshop.

2. Career aspirations – what career pathways interest me? What do I like to do?

Your career path should make the most of your skills and match your professional values. It's okay if you haven't settled on a path just yet. Think about the things that you like to do and the qualities that you value in a work environment to begin to explore what career might be the right fit. Below are some resources to help you identify how your skills and values could be applied towards a career:

3. Desired skills – setting goals for the skills I want.

Identify a few areas that you would like to work on over the next six months, and write goals to make progress. Your goals should be **SMARTS** -

- **Specific** – *Is it focused and unambiguous? Considering difficulty and timeframe, is this goal attainable?*
- **Measureable** – *Could someone identify whether or not you achieved this goal?*
- **Action-oriented** – *What action(s) do you need to take to get there?*
- **Relevant –** *What support will you need? Where can you get it?*
- **Time-bound** – *What timeframe are you accountable to?*
- **Supports** - *What resources do I need? Who can I connect with to learn about resources?*

4. Professional development – what support can I take advantage of?

Professional development can exist in many forms. Listed below are general ideas to kick off your thinking, but work with your PI and the offices here at Boston University that support you (like PDPA) to identify the right professional development opportunities that will enable you to meet your goals.

- Attend TGS-sponsored professional development events
- Participate in a mentoring circle
- Present your work at a conference
- Attend networking events

- Build your scholarship through teaching
- Arrange informational interview
- Connect with Northwestern alumni (and/or other alumni from additional institutions you are affiliated with)

Adapted from Boston University Professional Development and Postdoctoral Affairs

Additional Resources:

Skills assessment
- http://myidp.sciencecareers.org - Widely adopted IDP template that contains within it self-assessment tools that predict compatible biomedical career pathways.
- http://postdocs.usc.edu/mentoring/idp/ - USC has created self-assessment forms and IDP templates that are specific for STEM, humanities, and social science disciplines.
- https://www.npacommunity.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/competency-checklist.pdf - The National Postdoctoral Association has identified core competencies that postdocs from all disciplines should gain throughout their training, and this checklist is one way of scoring your progress.

Career aspirations
- http://myidp.sciencecareers.org - Widely adopted IDP template that contains within it self-assessment tools that aligns current skill competantcies with compatible biomedical career pathways.
- http://www.visualdna.com/quizzes/ - The 'Who Am I?' Quiz offers insight into your work style and personality traits that contribute to what you value in a career.
- http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/careers/career-planning-resources/143-an-overview-of-career-options-for-phds - The National Postdoctoral Association offers an overview of many of the career options available to those with PhD degrees
    - Northwestern is a sustaining member, trainees can register for a free affiliate membership here: https://npamembers.site-ym.com/general/register_member_type.asp?regkey=87D6852C-F8A3-4D9F-9000-5CB5EA3EFB2F)

Desired skills
- https://www.smartsheet.com/blog/essential-guide-writing-smart-goals - also provided as an adapted handout in the packet.

Professional development – what support can I take advantage of?
- OPA professional development news feed: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/resources-for/postdocs/news-events/stories/2016/categories/professional-development.html
- TGS news & events: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/news-events/stories/2016/categories/funding-career-development.html

References:

1. http://www.faseb.org/portals/2/pdfs/opa/idp.pdf
2. https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.npacommunity.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/competency-checklist.pdf
3. https://www.med.upenn.edu/postdoc/documents/IDPFormforPennpostdocs.Jan10.pdf

Skills Assesment Categories:

Research Skills
- Developing new research directions
- Experimental design
- Data evaluation
- Review and evaluation of scientific literature
- Problem solving/troubleshooting
- Statistical analysis
- Computer skills
- Lab records and data management

Professional Skills
- Oral presentation skills
- Manuscript writing skills
- Grant/fellowship writing skills
- Teaching skills (classroom setting)
- Teaching skills (one-on-one)

Time Management
- Meeting deadlines
- Establishing priorities

Interpersonal Skills
- Reliability
- Communicating effectively in writing
- Communicating effectively verbally
- English proficiency
- Identifying mentors
- Utilizing mentors effectively
- Mentoring others
- Ability to give and receive feedback constructively
- Networking/meeting new colleagues
- Ability to work in a team
- Collegiality towards others

Management and Leadership Skills
- Independent management of own research project
- Developing/managing budgets
- Chairing a meeting
- Establishing priorities for a team
- Delegating responsibility
- Leading and motivating others
- Supervising/managing people
- Working within an organization

S.M.A.R.T.S. Goals Template

Crafting S.M.A.R.T.S. Goals are designed to help you identify if what you want to achieve is realistic and determine a deadline. When writing S.M.A.R.T.S. Goals use **concise language**, but include relevant information. These are designed to help you succeed, so be positive when answering the questions.

Initial Goal *(Write the goal you have in mind)*:

1. Specific *(What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?)*

2. Measurable *(How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?)*:

3. Achievable *(Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve?)*:

4. Relevant *(Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives?)*:

5. Time-bound *(What's the deadline and is it realistic?)*:

6. Support *(What resources do I need? Who can I connect with to learn about resources?)*

S.M.A.R.T.S. Goal *(Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed):*

Individual Development Plan (IDP) Proposal Aid

Individual Development Plan Overview

A Career Development Plan (CDP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP) is tool designed to aid in building a career and professional development roadmap that fit a mentee's skills, interests, and values. The CDP/IDP is also meant to serve as a resource for initiating and sustaining discussions between mentees and mentors. The IDP is not meant to be a rigid compact, but instead, it is intended to develop mutual expectations of both mentees and mentors. Ideally, after completing an IDP, mentees will be able to engage in regular periodic discussions with mentors in order to identify specific ways they can work to develop their professional skills and move forward towards their career objectives.

IDP Resources

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a dynamic resource that assists graduate students and postdoctoral fellows with their research training, professional development and progression toward a desired career path. An IDP helps with the assessment of skills, interests and values as well as exploration of career options, identification of opportunities at Northwestern and beyond, and setting goals to follow a career path. An online, interactive career-planning tool, **myIDP**, was created to help trainees in the sciences complete assessments, identify career paths of interest and pursue their career goals. It is based on the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology's (FASEB's) Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Fellows. Northwestern's Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) provides postdoctoral fellows with reminders on accessing the myIDP tool as well as access to regular programming related to creating and implementing an IDP. The OPA also meets individually with postdoctoral fellows for one-on-one IDP consultation sessions. Information on IDPs and myIDP is also made available to Northwestern graduate students and faculty members. Trainees and mentors are encouraged to share the IDP via e-mail for use in one-on-one or group mentoring discussions.

Link to MyIDP: *http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/*

- Identify and examine your skills, interests, and values
- Match to career paths with a prediction of which ones best fit your skills and interests
- Set strategic goals for the coming year, with optional e-mail reminders to keep you on track
- Identify and highlight your accomplishments and "transferable skills"
- Review articles and resources to guide you through the process
- Share your IDP with mentors to get feedback and assistance

Additional Articles:

- http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2012_09_07/caredit.a1200100

IDPs – For Faculty Grant Proposals and Progress Reports

Beginning on October 1, 2014, annual progress reports are required to include a description of whether the institution uses IDPs or not and how they are employed to help manage the training and career development of those individuals.

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a tool that can be used by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to facilitate communication with their faculty mentors and advisors. At Northwestern University, The Graduate School (TGS) and the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) strongly encourage the use of IDPs for all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. The OPA provides postdoctoral fellows with reminders on accessing the myIDP tool as well as access to regular programming related to creating and implementing an IDP. The OPA also meets individually with postdoctoral fellows for one-on-one IDP consultation sessions. Information on IDPs and myIDP is also made available to Northwestern graduate students and faculty members. Trainees and mentors are encouraged to share the IDP via e-mail for use in one-on-one or group mentoring discussions.TGS and graduate programs, such as the Driskill Graduate Program in the Life Sciences (DGP), Interdisciplinary Biological Sciences (IBiS) Program, and the Northwestern University Interdepartmental Neuroscience (NUIN) program provide IDP templates and space for trainees and advisors to record and comment on the trainee's career, research and training goals. Both short- and long-term goals in these areas are discussed and indicated, as well as faculty and trainee expectations. Trainees complete an IDP upon joining a research program. The IDP will then be revisited every 6 months and updated annually. It is expected that goals and plans in all areas will evolve over time. Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are also strongly encouraged to make use of the online IDP made available by Science Careers at (www.myidp.sciencecareers.org).

IDPs & Faculty Mentor FAQs

I know that my trainee needs an IDP. What are the first few steps? You can begin by discussing the purpose of an IDP and asking if they have received a template from their graduate program, department, TGS, OPA, or myIDP. Encourage them to utilize the template that best suits their needs, and ask them to begin to complete an IDP before your next meeting with the trainee, perhaps by suggesting to complete skills, interests and values assessments. You can also refer them to the Trainee FAQ section below.

How can I help my trainee with their IDP? You are one of the most important links in a trainee's development process. You can play the role of coach, advocate, or objective observer; assist with exploring career options or directions not otherwise considered, and assist with setting goals and expectations. Faculty mentors and advisors are also often an excellent source of feedback about current skills and opportunities and ways to improve and gather more skills and expertise.

Do I need to provide copies of my trainees' IDPs along with my grant proposals and progress reports? No, you do not need to include the actual IDPs in your progress report.

Where can I find out more information on IDPs from an NIH Institute/Center?
- NIGMS Training Strategic Plan: http://publications.nigms.nih.gov/trainingstrategicplan/
- NIGMS IDP Webpage: http://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/strategicplanimplementationblueprint/pages/IndividualDevelopmentPlans.aspx

My trainee has an IDP. Are we all done? How often should I review/update my IDP? Every 6 to 12 months is a good time frame for discussing the IDP, including how the trainee is progressing. This time frame is short enough to keep your trainee focused on short-term goals, but gives adequate time to work on long-term development as well.

My trainee comes to me and asks for advice on a partially completed IDP. What should I do? Schedule a time to review and discuss their IDP. You can assist them with setting goals, and advise on their process of setting and achieving their career and professional development goals. If they need additional information to supplement their IDP, encourage them to connect with resources available from The Graduate School, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, University Career Services (for grad students only), and other courses and programs available at Northwestern.

I think my trainee should update their IDP. What if they're not getting on with it? Please remind them that their career and professional development can benefit from creating and using an IDP and you are encouraged to develop one. Additionally, postdocs and grad students funded by any NIH or NSF mechanism should have an IDP and discuss it with their mentors.

IDPs & Trainee FAQ

Is an IDP mandatory? Northwestern University, the OPA and TGS strongly encourage the use of IDPS for ALL postdoctoral fellows and graduate students. Your career can benefit from creating and using an IDP and you are encouraged to develop one. Additionally, postdocs and grad students funded by any NIH or NSF mechanism should have an IDP and discuss it with their mentors.

Is my IDP used in rating my performance? Am I rated against my IDP? No, it is for planning and developmental purposes, as well as serving as a guide for discussions between you and your mentor(s).

How often should I review/update my IDP? Every 6 to 12 months is a good time frame for updating. This time frame is short enough to keep you focused on your short-term goals, but gives you adequate time to work on some of your long-term development as well.

How can I learn more about training opportunities? The OPA provides information on a professional development opportunities offered at Northwestern that can help you in your professional development. Other sources include: friends, colleagues, online resources, professional organizations, as well as national and local print publications. Additionally, your IDP should reflect both technical and leadership competency development.

Do I need a written IDP? The process of putting your IDP in writing enables you and your advisor to thoughtfully map out a design for achieving your career development goals.

Is this a long-term (entire career) plan, or a short-term (few years) plan? The IDP serves primarily as a short-term plan. You can use it, however to provide a way of measuring progress towards your larger, long range career plans.

How can my advisor help with my IDP? Your advisor is one of the most important links in your development process. The advisor can play the role of coach, advocate, or objective observer. He/she can help you explore options or directions you might not otherwise consider in pursuit of your developmental goals. Advisors are also often an excellent source of feedback about current skill competencies and opportunities to develop them.

What are different sources to consider when developing an IDP (classes, job opportunities, and other sources)?

TGS, OPA, the School of Professional Studies and other courses through HR, the University libraries, etc. are available. Consider all sources: Online courses (some are free), volunteer opportunities, details, temporary assignments, university classes, book clubs, associations, and seminars are just a few of the options you can try. The classroom is not the only place for effective learning. Be sure to consider various experiences and activities as sources of training and development.

Who can help me? OPA**,** mentors, advisors, coworkers, friends, professional organizations, and a host of others form a support network for your professional development.

Why is feedback important? Feedback is essential for: **Professional Success** - To perform at the highest possible level, you must have a way of relating your efforts to your work environment. Getting feedback provides this mechanism; **Growth -** Life is about growth, growth is about interaction with your environment, and interaction is about feedback. Feedback can help direct your self-improvement efforts and provide a road map for your professional development; **Keeping Your Competitive Edge -** Your value to an organization (now and in the future) depends heavily on how you are perceived. Having and responding to this information raises your value to any organization; **Reality Check -** Feedback helps you discover what co-workers already know - how your efforts are affecting your team's mission and success; **Balance -** Good feedback helps you balance your perspective with your advisor's and others' in a non-hostile environment. It can provide relevant and helpful information in a productive format; **Maintaining Good Work Relationships -** Seeking and using honest feedback lets peers and advisors, know you care about how your actions, decisions, and attitudes affect them. It is difficult for us to see ourselves as others see us, yet their view of us can provide valuable information for improving our skills and our effectiveness. The format of this feedback can be as informal as asking what someone thinks about your work on a project, to using a highly formalized one.

When should I do my first IDP?

Now! You should begin to create an IDP at the early stages of your PhD and postdoctoral training. Start thinking about your career goals and how you would like to develop over the next 3-5 years. Write down your ideas on how you might accomplish some of this development. Then make an appointment with your advisor to discuss your ideas.

Should I develop a new IDP if I switch advisors, or as I transition to a more advanced stage in my predoctoral/postdoctoral training? Not necessarily. You may not need to develop a new IDP. Share your current IDP with your new advisor. Discuss your goals and your progress towards them. Together, decide which, if any, items need to change.