Individual Development Plan (IDP) for 2nd Year Students in Biology/Biochemistry

This document is a modified version of materials developed at Stanford University for graduate students in the Biosciences. Updated October 2019

As a graduate student, you are responsible for actively seeking the training and guidance you need to form a solid foundation for your future career. The IDP is designed to serve as a framework for self-assessment and discussion with your mentor and thesis committee by helping you to 1) clarify your career goals and the steps needed to achieve them; 2) assess whether you are acquiring the knowledge and skills you will need to be successful in your chosen career; 3) develop an action plan to return to and/or keep on track to obtain those skills and knowledge. We hope that this process will spark useful conversations between you and your mentors regarding career goals, skills, and interests.

Fill out this form and discuss it with your advisor prior to your first meeting with your thesis committee (Fall Term, Year 2). The last two pages of this IDP should be included as part of the written progress report that you provide to your thesis committee. *Updated IDPs should be completed and discussed at every annual committee meeting. Note that the questions on the form will change according to your year in the program.*

Steps in Completing the IDP

1. Read the list of responsibilities on the next page.

2. Register for MyIDP at https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/Overview/Summary and take the on-line questionnaires to evaluate skills, interests, and career goals. Use the on-line questions as a starting point for self-reflection and for considering how to get the most benefit from the mentoring relationship with your advisor.

3. Fill out the forms below. Your answers should be included as part of your written progress report for your thesis committee meeting.

4. Meet with your advisor to discuss your IDP prior to your first thesis committee meeting.
You are responsible for scheduling the meeting with your advisor. You should share your completed IDP form with your advisor before the meeting.

5. Lead the discussion.
The IDP covers topics other students have found helpful, but you may have additional questions, ideas, or objectives related to your training. If so, this meeting with your advisor (and the subsequent meeting with your thesis committee) are great times to bring them up.

6. Complete the Action Plan and follow up.
The last page of the IDP encourages you to establish concrete steps in the meeting with your advisor. Complete the Action Plan together with your advisor and include it in the report to the thesis committee. Keep your Action Plan accessible and check on it every couple months to ensure that you are staying on track.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES – *STARTING POINT FOR DISCUSSION*

…take the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree.

... meet regularly with my advisor and provide her/him with updates on my activities and experiments.

... work with my advisor to develop a thesis/dissertation project.

... initiate requests for feedback and seek advice from my advisor, thesis committee, and other mentors.

... be knowledgeable about the policies and requirements of IMB, my training grant (if applicable) and my home department.

... participate actively in lab meetings, seminars, and journal clubs.

... keep up with original literature in my field.

... be a good lab citizen, maintaining a safe and orderly space and working collegially with others.

... maintain a detailed, organized, and accurate lab notebook.

... discuss policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with my advisor.

... discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my advisor.

ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES – *STARTING POINT FOR DISCUSSION*

... be committed to your student's education and training, and to improving as a mentor.

... help plan and direct your student's research project, allowing them to take ownership of their research while setting reasonable goals and establishing timelines for progress and completion.

... provide regular and honest feedback.

... encourage your student to discuss their concerns and help them find solutions to problems.

... be knowledgeable about your student's requirements and deadlines.

... lead by example and facilitate your student's training in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as communication, writing, management, and ethical behavior.

... discuss authorship policies, acknowledge your student's scientific contributions, and work with your student to publish their work in a timely manner.

Note any comments/additions/changes to these responsibilities following your discussion.

2nd Yr IDP cont'd

TRAINING/MENTORING

1. What are your primary goals in your academic training?

2. What is important to you in a mentoring relationship?

3. What features of the lab group and your relationships with colleagues do you find most important for your wellbeing and success?

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

RESEARCH GOALS

Do you have a good grasp of how this project fits into your lab's research as a whole?
… into the field as a whole?

What is your assessment of how well your project is progressing?

Specify any areas where you need additional training or skill development. Include techniques you want to learn, collaborations, etc.

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

List any involvement you have committed to or are thinking about in the following areas:
COURSEWORK/ TRAINING, TEACHING/MENTORING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CONFERENCES, SERVICE/OUTREACH.

YEAR 2 MILESTONES – Expectations for student making satisfactory progress
- student is intellectually engaged
- student is mastering the relevant literature
- student understands the questions/hypotheses their experiments address and the basis for those questions/hypotheses
- student has made concrete progress in the lab (this could be interpreted broadly to include mastering methods, devising new methods, has obtained interpretable data, etc)
- student is spending adequate time on their research

SELF-EVALUATE based on these milestones and discuss with your advisor

SCIENTIFIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT

One important goal of PhD training is to develop a skill set that is transferrable beyond graduation.

Sign up for MyIDP at https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/Overview/Summary

Take the "Self-assessment of Skills/Values/Interests questionnaire to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses relative to where you think a student at your stage should be.

List skills that you perceive to be relatively weak. Ask your advisor whether s/he agrees or disagrees with your assessment. This will help you set goals for your training.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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.

Take the Career Exploration questionnaire at My IDP
(https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/Overview/Summary
Concisely summarize the types of careers that seem to be a good match for your interests/strengths/values at this time. Which of these sound most appealing to you?

ACTION PLAN

This plan is to be developed jointly by the student and mentor.

What is your plan for communicating regularly with your advisor?

How often do you and your advisor plan to meet?

Do you plan to include written summaries as part of this communication? If so, how frequent?

What skills did you identify as important development targets for the coming year?

List any activities in which you and your mentor agree you should participate to achieve your academic objectives in the coming year.

Are there any additional actions to aid your success that can be initiated or continued by you or your mentor?

Is there anything else you would like to discuss with your advisor at this time?