



## Individual Development Plan for the postdoctoral scholar

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) provides a planning process that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. The IDP is different from the annual evaluation required by the University. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs provides an IDP workshop every summer.

### Goals of the IDP

- Identify long-term career options and set goals
- Identify the necessary tools to reach the career goals
- Identify short-term needs for improving current performance to reach the career goals

### How to write an IDP

- **Step 1: Self-Assessment.** What skills and competencies do you need to develop? Take a realistic look at your current abilities and outline your long-term career goals. [MyIDP](#) is a useful tool that provides postdocs the opportunity to assess their own skills, strengths, and values.
- **Step 2: Career exploration.** What are my professional skills and interests? How do my interests and skills translate into potential career? Which careers have I not considered? Identify the job families and/or career titles that match your skills and interests. Then, set strategic goals and find the resources needed to guide you through the process.
- **Step 3: Writing an IDP Action Plan.** The IDP is a road map that will provide the general path you want to take and helps match skills and strengths to your career choices. This road map may change in time, since needs and goals will evolve during your postdoctoral training. This is an iterative process. The aim is to build upon current strengths and skills by identifying areas for development and providing a way to address these. Use SMARTER goal format when you write your IDP. SMARTER goals are specific, measurable, action oriented, realistic, and timely so that you can evaluate and readjust as needed.
- **Step 4: Implement your Plan.** Revise and modify the plan as necessary but remain flexible and open to change.

### Benefits of the IDP for the postdoctoral scholar as a mentee

- Assists in developing long-term goals
- Defines expectations and sets milestones along the way to achieve specific goals
- Provides a communication tool between the postdoc and research advisor

### Benefits of the IDP for the research advisor as a mentor

- Focuses postdoc interests on personal development by enhancing individual professional growth and productivity in the lab through milestones setting.
- Enlists an active IDP program for the postdocs in the annual grant report as applicable
- Improves the professional growth at the department and college level.

