

Individual Development Plans for Graduate Students in the College of Pharmacy

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) provide a planning process that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. Furthermore, IDPs serve as a communication tool between individuals and their mentors. IDPs have been incorporated into performance review processes in many organizations, and they are now being used in the mentoring of graduate students. Indeed, their use is increasingly being required by many funding agencies for fellowships and graduate student participation in extramurally funded research projects. An IDP is considered one important component of broader mentoring efforts in graduate education.

Goals

Help individuals identify:

- Long-term career options they wish to pursue and the necessary tools to meet these goals.
- Short-term needs for improving current performance.

Benefits

Graduate students will have a process that assists in developing long-term goals. Identifying short-term goals will give them a clearer sense of expectations and help identify milestones along the way to achieving specific objectives. The IDP also provides a tool for communication between the graduate student and a faculty mentor.

Outline of IDP Process

The development, implementation and revision of the IDP requires a series of steps to be conducted by the graduate student and his/her mentor. These steps are an interactive effort, and so both the graduate student and the mentor must participate fully in the process.

Documentation and Deadlines

For those students beginning graduate study in Pharmacy before June 1, 2014: the IDP annual review must be completed by October 1, 2014, and annual due dates will be on October 1 of each following year.

For those students beginning graduate study in Pharmacy after June 1, 2014: the first IDP must be completed by January 31, 2015 and subsequent reviews will be due by January 31 of each following year.

All graduate students and mentors: Upon completion of the IDP annual review, both the student and mentor keep copies, and the mentor sends a copy to Lois Baker in the College of Pharmacy Graduate Program Office.

BASIC STEPS

<i>... for Graduate Students</i>	<i>... for Mentors</i>
<u>Step 1:</u> Conduct a self-assessment	Become familiar with available opportunities
<u>Step 2:</u> Survey opportunities with mentor	Discuss opportunities with graduate student
<u>Step 3:</u> Write an IDP, share IDP with mentor and revise	Review IDP and help revise
<u>Step 4:</u> Implement the plan and revise the IDP as needed (at least annually)	Establish regular review of progress (at least annually) and help revise the IDP as needed

Implementation of the IDP Process

... for Graduate Students

Step 1. Conduct a Self-Assessment

- Assess your skills, strengths and areas which need development. Formal assessment tools can be helpful. (Examples can be found in *Resources: Self Assessment* at the end of this document).
- Take a realistic look at your current abilities. This is a critical part of career planning. Ask your peers, mentors, family and friends what they see as your strengths and your development needs.
- Outline your long-term career objectives. (For useful information see *Resources: Career Opportunities* at the end of this document). Ask yourself:
 - What type of work would I like to be doing?
 - Where would I like to be in an organization?
 - What is important to me in a career?

Step 2. Survey Opportunities with Mentor

- Identify career opportunities and select from those that interest you.
- Identify developmental needs by comparing current skills and strengths with those needed for your career choice.
- Prioritize your developmental areas and discuss with your mentor how these should be addressed.

Step 3. Write an IDP

The IDP maps out the general path you want to take and helps match skills and strengths to your career choices. It is a changing document, since needs and goals will almost certainly evolve over time as a graduate student. The aim is to build upon current strengths and skills by identifying areas for development and providing a way to address these.

The specific objectives of a typical IDP are to:

- Establish effective benchmarks and target dates for the duration of your graduate training.
- Identify specific skills and strengths that you need to develop (based on discussions with your mentor).
- Define the approaches to obtain the specific skills and strengths (e.g., courses, technical skills, teaching, supervision) together with anticipated time frames.
- Discuss your draft IDP with your mentor.
- Revise the IDP as appropriate (e.g., semiannually or annually).

Step 4. Implement Your Plan

The plan is just the beginning of the career development process and serves as the road map. Now it's time to take action!

- Put your plan into action.
- Revise and modify the plan as necessary. The plan is not cast in concrete; it must be modified as circumstances and goals change. The challenge of implementation is to remain flexible and open to change.
- Review the plan with your mentor regularly. Revise the plan regularly on the basis of these discussions.

Implementation of the IDP Process (cont.)

... for Mentors

Step 1. Become familiar with available opportunities

- By virtue of your experience you should already have knowledge of some career opportunities.
- But you may want to familiarize yourself with other career opportunities and trends in job opportunities.
- Refer to sources such as National Research Council reports and *Science* career reviews; see also *Resources: Career Opportunities* at the end of this document.

Step 2. Discuss opportunities with graduate student

- This needs to be a private, scheduled meeting distinct from regular research-specific meetings or thesis committee meetings.
- There should be adequate time set aside for an open and honest discussion.

Step 3. Review IDP and help revise

- Provide honest feedback, both positive and negative, to help graduate students set realistic goals.
- Agree on a development plan that will allow graduate students to be productive in their research and adequately prepare them for their chosen career.

Step 4. Establish regular review of progress

- The mentor should meet at regular intervals with the graduate student to assess progress, expectations and changing goals.
- On at least an annual basis, the mentor should conduct a performance review designed to analyze what has been accomplished and what needs to be done.
- A written review should be included to objectively document accomplishments.

SEE IDP ANNUAL REVIEW FORM

This document was adapted from one prepared by the Science Policy Committee of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB).
[Jennifer A. Hobin, Ph.D., FASEB Office of Public Affairs]

Resources

Self Assessment

AAAS Science Careers: *My IDP* Individual Development Plan Assessment Tool:

<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

Career Opportunities

AAAS Science Careers: <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/>

AAPS Career Center: <http://www.aaps.org/careers/>

The Scientist. Careers: <http://careers.the-scientist.com/>

UI Graduate College Website on Academic and Non-Academic Careers (links to multiple resources):

<http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/career-success?portal=current-students>