

Creating and Individual Development Plan (IDP)

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an important tool for establishing goals and priorities, holding yourself accountable, and enhancing the likelihood of your future success. You can also use your IDP to track progress toward graduation and/or alignment with program goals.

Step 1: Conduct a self-assessment.

- What are your short-, medium-, and long-term professional goals?
- What skills and abilities will help you reach those goals?
- What professional development do you need to achieve your goals?

Step 2: Consult with your mentor.

- Discuss the results of your self-assessment with your mentor.
- Ask your mentor to help you identify career and professional development opportunities.
- Work with your mentor to prioritize your professional development needs.

Step 3: Write and revise your IDP.

- Write a draft IDP that includes your goals, strategies for goal attainment, professional development needs, and resources available and needed.
- Share with your mentor for feedback.
- Use your mentor's feedback to enhance your IDP with strategies and timelines for obtaining needed skills and strengths, acting on objectives, and achieving goals.

Step 4: Implement your IDP and revise/expand as needed.

- Break your larger goals into step-by-step plans with specific timelines.
- Communicate your successes and challenges to your mentor regularly. Use your mentor as an accountability partner.
- Revise and/or expand your IDP as necessary.

Sample IDPs

- [UW-Madison | Graduate School IDP Template](#)
- [University of Missouri IDP](#)
- [UMN First-Year Master's Student Example IDP](#)

Adapted from: University of Wisconsin Institute for Clinical and Translational Research "[Individual Development Plan: Helping Your Mentee Write an Individual Development Plan](#)" and Pfund, Branchaw, and Handelsman. *Entering Mentoring*. W.H. Freeman, 2014: pp. 50-51