

Individual Development Plan Information

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) help to identify an individual's long-term career objectives and develop an individualized plan or process to achieve those goals. Furthermore, IDPs serve as an excellent communication tool between individuals and their mentors.

Goals and Benefits

Helps students:

- Identify long-term career options they wish to pursue and the necessary tools to meet these
- Set short-term goals for improving current performance
- Communicate with mentors on achieving both short and long term goals

Helps mentors:

- Set realistic expectations that take into account the student's current skill set and future goals
- Assess progress and give constructive feedback based on student's performance and goals
- Focus on providing advice on those resources that fit the individual's career plan

Outline of IDP Process

The development, implementation, and revision of the IDP require a series of steps to be conducted by the graduate student and their mentor.

These steps are an interactive effort, and so both the graduate student and the mentor should participate fully in the process.

Basic Steps	For Graduate Students	For Mentors
Step 1	Conduct self-assessment.	
Step 2	Write an IDP. Share IDP with mentor and revise.	Review IDP and help revise.
Step 3	Implement the plan. Revise IDP as needed.	Establish regular progress review.
Step 4	Survey opportunities with mentor.	Discuss opportunities with student.

Implementing Individual Development Plans

For Graduate Students

Step 1. Conduct a Self-Assessment.

Assess your skills, strengths, and areas that need development.

One on-line resource is: <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

Other examples and information:

<http://sacnas.org/about/stories/sacnas-news/summer-2013/building-your-IDP>

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B6jsUuSjQdDackxTMVp5eks2X2M/edit?pli=1>

<http://www.grad.umn.edu/prod/groups/grad/@pub/@grad/documents/asset/idpgradpdf.pdf>

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. Consider your personality traits and what you are passionate about.

Outline your long-term career objectives. Ask yourself:

-What type of work would I like to be doing?

-Where would I like to be in an institution or organization?

-What is important to me in a career?

Step 2. 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:

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, and supervision). Map out a timeline and plan to attain your goals.

Step 3. Consult with your Mentor about your plan.

Identify developmental needs by comparing current skills and strengths with those needed for your career choice. Prioritize your developmental areas and discuss how these should be addressed.

Solicit advice and develop strategies about tackling the approaches you have defined to obtain specific skills and strengths. Discuss the time frame for short-term goals and if they are realistic.

Identify career opportunities and select from those that interest you. Revise the IDP as appropriate.

Step 4. Implement Your Plan.

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

Put your plan into action.

Revise and modify the plan as necessary. It will need to 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** on the basis of these discussions

For Mentors

Step 1. Become familiar with available opportunities and resources.

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.

You may also want to consider resources at SFSU that will help your student gain skills and technical abilities necessary to attain their goals.

Step 2. Discuss opportunities with graduate student.

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

Step 3. Review IDP and help revise.

Provide *honest feedback* to help the graduate student set realistic goals. Discuss BOTH current strengths and weaknesses as you perceive them.

Provide information on *resources* or help that is available to help them gain the skills and expertise to meet their goals.

Agree on a development plan that will allow the graduate student to be productive in the laboratory and adequately prepared for their chosen career. Give feedback about the timeline and feasibility of reaching the goals in the time frame given.

If the student is taking research for credit, discuss expectations the student should meet to achieve specific grades.

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.

Each semester, the mentor should give feedback on the progress the student has made in attaining their short-term goals and how it relates to achieving their medium and long-term goals. This can be considered a performance review that is designed to analyze what has been accomplished and what needs to be done.

If the student is taking research for credit, discuss how the students has met or not met expectations set at the beginning of the semester.

A written review can be very helpful in objectively documenting accomplishments. An effective means of communication can be to have the student write an email after your meeting to summarize the goals and expectations so that both you and the students are clear on the implementation of the plan.

Ten Tips for a Successful Mentor/Mentee Relationship

A successful mentor/mentee relationship should be fulfilling and beneficial for all involved. Utilize these ten tips for a more effective and productive relationship:

1. Keep communications open.

Mentee: Be up front. Let your mentor know what your goals are and what you hope to take away from the program.

Mentor: Help your mentee set realistic expectations. Also, if you know you will be unavailable because of business or personal travel, let them know.

2. Offer support.

Mentee: Remember that your mentor is there for you, but is only a guide.

Mentor: Encourage communication and participation. Help create a solid plan of action.

3. Define expectations.

Mentee: Review your goals. Make sure your mentor knows what to expect from you.

Mentor: Help set up a system to measure achievement.

4. Maintain contact.

Mentee: Be polite and courteous. Keep up with your e-mails and ask questions. *Mentor:* Respond to your e-mails. Answer questions and provide advice, resources and guidance when appropriate.

5. Be honest.

Mentee: Let your mentor know if you don't understand something or have a differing opinion.

Mentor: Be truthful in your evaluations, but also be tactful.

6. Actively participate.

Mentee: Listen. Be engaged. Ask questions.

Mentor: Engage in your own learning while you are mentoring, collaborate on projects, ask questions and experiment.

7. Be innovative and creative.

Mentee: Offer ideas on what activities and exercises you can do together.

Mentor: Share your ideas, give advice and be a resource for new ideas.

8. Get to know each other.

Mentee and Mentor: Remember that people come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Get to know each other on an individual basis.

9. Be reliable and consistent.

Mentee and Mentor: The more consistent you are, the more you will be trusted.

10. Stay positive!

Mentee: Remember that your mentor is offering feedback and not criticizing.

Mentor: Recognize the work the mentee has done and the progress made.

4. If you are considering applying to academic programs after graduating from SFSU, please fill out the table below. Look up requirements for admission at these institutions. Work in consultation with your advisor to get advice about how best to prepare for these programs.

Your UG Major			
Your GPA			
GRE/MCAT Scores			
Other Test Scores			
Prior Research Experience			
	Training Program 1	Training Program 2	Training Program 3
Institution Name			
Program			
Test Requirements			
Other Requirements			

5. Describe the overall goal of your research, research question(s) to be addressed, and general approach of your current research project. Work with your advisor to define these goals and find relevant resources to help you.

Overall Goal:

Research Question(s):

General Approach(s):

6. While at SFSU, you will need to develop your skills and abilities to achieve your short-term and long-term goals. Complete the table below to help you identify the skills to prioritize.

Below is a list of my talents and strengths that I can bring to my SFSU research training experience	Below is a list of skills and knowledge that I would like to enhance. <i>(For example, research techniques, presentations skills, and other skills.)</i>

7. Create a timeline to achieve these goals. Below is an example.

- Fall Semester 2017: Read literature and develop thesis project with advisor*
- Spring Semester 2018: Begin experiments and form a thesis committee*
- Summer Semester 2018: Gather data for thesis and present poster at meetings*
- Fall Semester 2018: data analysis conducted, and apply to graduate (Ph.D. programs)*
- Spring Semester 2019: Finish writing thesis and present to the department*

Checkpoint (Month, Year)	Milestone

8. Establish your plan for meeting with your academic and research mentors.

Examples of meetings with mentors and targets

- *Meet with Research Adviser once a week*
- *Meet at least quarterly to address career counseling and professional development activities*
- *Meet with thesis committee once every semester*

Meeting Date(s)/Frequency	Meeting Purpose/Target/Goal

9. An important aspect of the research training experience is the opportunity to attend and present your research at a scientific meeting. Please discuss these options with your mentor to plan the appropriate venue for you to share your results with the broader scientific community. When and where are these conferences and deadlines for submission of abstracts and travel awards.

10. List the days and times that you plan to devote towards your research project this semester. Communicate with your advisor about how your plan to set realistic expectations about goals for the semester. Establishing an achievable regular schedule will help to ensure you reach your short-term goals.

Times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend

11. Given all the things that you would like to achieve, it is important for you to maintain your health and well-being. List below specific coping mechanisms and support that will help you most while pursuing your goals.