In accordance with NIH guidelines (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-14-113.html), all graduate students in joint programs of the Rutgers Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences are required to complete Individual Development Plans (IDPs). These resources are also available to postdoctoral fellows at Rutgers. The purpose of the Rutgers IDP is two-fold: 1) IDPs provide a structure to systematically identify training needs and competencies, establish tangible research goals, and take stock of annual progress. Thus, IDPs help trainees stay on track with their research, paper and grant writing, and skill development. 2) IDPs help educate trainees as to various career options, define career goals, and create an annual plan to attain those career goals. In both of these areas, IDPs can serve as a tool to facilitate communication between trainees and their mentors. Moreover, educational research has shown that IDPs increase productivity (e.g. <http://postdoc.sigmaxi.org/results/>)  
 The development, implementation, and revision of IDPs require a series of steps to be conducted by the trainee and then discussed with the mentor, including the formation of an IDP committee consisting of the trainee, the PI, and a representative of the graduate school. In the **first** year of training, the Rutgers IDP document must be read in its entirety and the AAAS IDP completed. At the end of the **second** year of training, the Rutgers IDP document must be completed followed by a meeting with the mentor and graduate program director. For postdoctoral fellows, this meeting will include a professional from the projected career of interest. At the end of the **third** year, the AAAS IDP must be revised. At the end of the **fourth** year of training, the Rutgers IDP document must be completed again along with a meeting with mentor, graduate program director and for graduate students a professional from the projected career of interest. The trainee is welcome to have additional meetings as desired. Finally, **every year**, the trainee must submit a current CV. These documents and the completion of the requirements are monitored through a Rutgers Canvas site. The Rutgers IDP document is based on the UCSF IDP as well as the Kellogg School of Science and Technology at the Scripps Research Institute IDP and the AAAS IDP.