**The Individual Development Plan for Rutgers iJOBS**

This Individual Development Plan (IDP) helps to address two needs. It provides a structure to systematically identify training needs and competencies, establish track able goals and take stock of year-by-year progress during your PhD and postdoc years. Thus, IDPs help graduate students and postdocs stay on track with their research, publications, grant writing and skill development. In addition to these milestones, the IDP helps you to plan and prepare for your future career and serve as a platform to facilitate communication between trainees and their mentors, ensuring that documented goals are feasible, applicable and appropriate.

A Sigma Xi survey found that trainees with structured plans communicated their goals “early and often,” and were more satisfied, productive and experienced fewer conflicts with their PIs. The NIH now requires that graduate students utilize IDPs to plan and track their progress1. Furthermore, the NIH Office of Management and Budget embraces time spent executing the IDP process; they fully support graduate students and post-doctoral fellows as not just scientists, but as trainees by stating that, “predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees have dual roles as trainees and employees and therefore must be engaged in both training and career development activities.”2

**Goals and Benefits of the IDP**

* Define research and career goals and create annual plans to reach your goals
* Provide structure for conversations regarding your goals and progress

**Part 1: State your career goals and evaluate your progress during the past year.**

| **Name:** |
| --- |
| Year Started Graduate School or Postdoc:      Today's Date:       |
| Primary mentor:       When do you plan to complete your PhD or postdoc (month/year):       |
| What is your “Long Term Career Goal” (academic, industry, teaching, business, marketing, law, public policy, clinical research, science writing, etc.)?      What has influenced that decision?     What skills do you have that you think will allow you to succeed in that career?      |
|  |
| What is your “Next Step Career Goal” (postdoctoral training, job, internship, etc.)?     Why have you chosen this as your next step and how will it help you achieve your long-term goal?      |
|  |
| If your career goals have changed in the past year, please describe motivation for the change.      |
|  |
| What were your primary career goals for the past year?      Which career goals did you meet?      If you did not meet a goal, why not?      |
|  |
| List areas of expertise acquired in the past year (e.g. scientific techniques, certification, leadership, communications):      |
|  |
| List publications completed within the past year:      |
|  |
| List fellowships applied for:      |
|  |
| List oral presentations (indicate date and venue):      |
|  |
| List teaching activities:      |
|  |
| List other professional activities, including those that have helped you explore different career options:      |
|  |
| List community/service activities, including participation in graduate student and postdoc committees, volunteer work and science outreach programs in the community:      |
|  |
| List applicable honors and awards:      |
|  |
| List applicable professional societies of which you are a member. Please indicate where you have taken a leadership role:      |

**Part 2: Assess your skills.**3

| **Core Competencies Self-Assessment Checklist** |
| --- |
| Rate your current level of development in each of the following areas, with 1 being "Needs Attention" and 9 being "Extremely Competent."4 |
|  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | n/a |
| **1** | **Conceptual Knowledge** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Analytical approach to defining scientific questions |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Design of scientifically testable hypotheses |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Ability to learn complex new subjects quickly |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Critical thinking skills |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2** | **Research Skills** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Experimental design |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Statistical analysis |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Data analysis and interpretation |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Ability to deal with large amounts of information/data |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Knowledge of Good Laboratory Practice |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Knowledge of Regulatory Policies |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Problem solving and troubleshooting / providing solutions |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| **3** | **Communication Skills** |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Written presentations |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Oral presentations |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Teaching |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Interpersonal communication |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Conflict resolution |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| **4** | **Professionalism** |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Workplace professionalism |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  Work ethic / willingness to work hard |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Responsiveness to feedback |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | In-person networking skills |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Online networking profile |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Resume preparation |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| **5** | **Leadership & Management Skills** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Leadership-Strategic vision |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Leadership-Motivating and inspiring others/mentoring |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Management-Project management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Management-Data and resource management/budget |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Management-Research staff management |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| **6** | **Personal qualities** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Independence |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Creativity / thinking outside the box |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Ability to collaborate/work in a team |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Taking initiative |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Listening skills |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Organization  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Ability to multitask |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Time management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Willingness to learn new things |  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Adaptability to change |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|  | Desire to advance/grow |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part 3: Set goals and learning objectives for the next year.**

**A. Setting Goals: Conceptual Knowledge and Research Skills**

Research project goals (briefly indicate how the goals may change in the coming year):

Anticipated publications (indicate projected titles):

Anticipated meeting or workshop attendance:

Fellowship or other funding applications planned (indicate grantor and name of award):

What specific scientific knowledge and research skills do you need to acquire or improve?

How will you work to attain them in the coming year?

**B. Setting Goals: Communication and Professionalism Skills**

What specific communication and professionalism skills do you need to acquire or improve?

How will you work to attain them in the coming year, (e.g., give presentations, write for a blog, improve your LinkedIn profile, fix your resume, attend networking sessions)?

**C. Setting Goals: Leadership, Management and Personal Skills**

What specific leadership, management and personal skills do you need to acquire or improve?

How will you work to attain them in the coming year, (e.g., attend workshops/seminars, seek advice of mentors/colleagues or advisors/counselors, ask to lead meetings and seek feedback, seek leadership positions on your campus or in a professional society)?

**D. Setting Goals: Career Development Projects**

When do you anticipate beginning your job search?

Please indicate if there are issues that affect your job search.

List activities that you will complete during the next year to learn more about, and move closer to, your major career goal (e.g., attend workshops, seek advice from counselors, read/research potential career paths, conduct informational interviews with professionals in your desired career path, take classes that enhance your skill set in areas related to your long term career goals).

**Part 4: Implement Your IDP**

Writing your IDP is just the beginning of the career development process. It serves as a road map for what you steps that you plan to take, but is useless if left unexecuted. So that you can successfully navigate your journey toward career placement, we will assign for you a mentor that is well versed in the requirements for your career of choice. Your mentor will be available to meet with you periodically, (whether in person or by phone/Skype), to discuss your career goals, ensure that your IDP commitments are appropriately aligned with your goals and help you to assimilate feedback and continually tune your IDP process.

Successful use of the IDP as a tool is up to you. Read it over regularly to check your progress. Revise and modify the plan as necessary as the challenge of implementation is to remain flexible and open to change.

**Make sure to update your resume and submit it with your IDP.**

**Documentation of IDP Review Meetings (Required):**

**Student/Postdoc:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|       |  |  |  |       |
| Printed Name |  | Signature |  | Date |

**Professional mentor:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|       |  |  |  |       |
| Printed Name |  | Signature |  | Date |

**References:**

 <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-14-113.html>

2 <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-15-008.html>

3 Note that additional self-assessment and career exploration tools available at: http://myidp.sciencecareers.org

4 www.nationalpostdoc.org/competencies