CREATING AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
Making the most of your training

Many students join our team to explore career options, and we fully support this process. In this situation, we believe that being clear about that goal, and using this form to design a systematic approach to exploring your options is the most successful approach. Please be as honest and direct about what you want to get out of this experience as possible.

For trainees with clear career goals: the more explicit you can be the easier it will be for us facilitate your progress.

It is not necessary to complete every section. If you feel a section is not relevant to your goals discuss it with your primary mentor.

All mentors who are part of our team must agree with and sign the plan outlined below.

The purpose of the IDP is for you to think about the specific career in science for which you are preparing. That career might be at a:

- Research university (similar to the University of Washington, for example)
- Private research institute (similar, perhaps, to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center)
- Biotechnology or pharmaceutical company
- Federal or state laboratory (perhaps the NIH, CDC, or state public health lab)
- Teaching position at a 2 or 4-year university or college
- Federal regulatory agency (for example, the FDA)

While your individual program is designed to prepare you as a scientist or physician scientist, it is important that you think carefully about your individual career goals and the preparation that would assist you in being successful in that career. It is quite likely that your career success will require more than the ability to design and perform research. Your mentor and other resources at UW and affiliated institutions will be helpful, but you must take primary responsibility for your career preparation.

The most effective way to begin this process is to define your career interest(s) in terms of your desired future occupation, based upon the roles that you might play in the types of institutions listed above. If you find it difficult to answer specifically, you will find workshops and seminars offered at UW and affiliated institutions that can inform you about these occupations. See, for example, the Bioscience Careers website [http://courses.washington.edu/phd/] and the Future Faculty website [http://www.uwmedicine.org/research/resources-for-researchers/events/future-faculty]. Make use of many sources of information, such as the AAAS, your individual scientific association, and the National Postdoctoral Association with information for graduate students and postdocs [http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/].

Once you have an idea of your specific career goals, you will need to consider what it will take to be successful in that career, how you will develop those skills and gain needed experience. You should involve your mentor in helping you define what you need and in addressing those needs. This template includes prompts that will guide you in 1) acquiring discipline specific knowledge and research skills; 2) gaining skills in written and oral communications, including teaching; 3) training in responsible conduct of research; 4) training in protection of human and animal subjects and laboratory safety; and 5) developing professionalism, management, and leadership skills.

For each goal, identify how you will accomplish the goal and the time by which the goal will be accomplished. No plan exists until the individual steps are defined and a time line is attached. If you can’t decide on your preferred career path now, define what you need to know to make the choice, how you will obtain that information, and the time period over which you will work on this choice. Execute that plan and then develop the actual IDP as your specific career goals become better defined.

This template was drawn liberally from templates developed by UW Graduate School and the Department of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine.
Once you have drafted your IDP, meet with your mentor(s) to discuss the draft, and schedule regular meetings to review and assess your progress. Make use of as many mentors as you find helpful—you will find that most people are very willing to help to guide you in understanding your goals and defining what you need to receive from the mentoring relationship.

Your IDP should be considered a living document that will evolve over time as you move through your career training, and perhaps after quarterly or semi-annual meetings with your mentor(s). You may use this template directly or modify it to address your own career development and training needs.
1. General Information

Mentee:

Primary Mentor:

Training or Degree Program:

Research focus area(s):

Date of Completion of IDP:

Planned schedule for meetings with mentor to evaluate progress:

2. Career Goals

Identify your existing strengths and the gaps in your knowledge or experience, then think of ways to fill those gaps during your training period.

I. Overall career goal:

II. What do you want to be doing in 10 years? (long-term objectives)

III. What do you want to be doing in 5 years? (medium-term objectives)

IV. What do you want to accomplish in the next year? (short-term goals; be specific)

3. Acquiring of Discipline-Specific Knowledge and Research Skills

I. Briefly describe your primary research project (1 paragraph).

II. What specific knowledge do you need to gain to accomplish this project? For each one, describe how you will learn this material: e.g. specific courses, tutorial with mentor, etc.

III. What specific research skills (methods, techniques) do you need to learn to accomplish this project? For each one, describe how you will learn these skills: e.g. graduate school or laboratory courses, from other students or postdocs in the research group, collaboration with another lab, etc.

4. Gaining skills in oral and written presentation of research findings (talks, posters, writing manuscripts and grant applications).

I. Anticipated oral or poster presentations: list frequency and dates of presentations, if possible.
   1. Lab meetings/ research team meetings
2. **Work in Progress**: e.g. presentations to dissertation committees, division/department retreats.

3. **National or international meetings**: list and provide dates of specific meetings.

**II. Anticipated publications**: describe anticipated titles/topics of manuscripts and anticipated dates of submission; include both first author and collaborative publications.

1. **Anticipated first-author manuscripts**

2. **Anticipated publications as a collaborator**

**III. Timeline for submitting applications for funding for predoctoral, postdoctoral, or other training/career development awards**: list specific source of potential funding and type of award, with expected submission dates.

1. **NIH applications**

2. **Applications to foundations and other sources**

**IV. Gaining experience in teaching**: list specific teaching opportunities, formal or informal training in didactics.

**V. Timeline for planning to move to the next step**: e.g. postdoc position or other position for current graduate students; faculty or other position for current postdocs.

1. **Key contacts to make**

2. **Potential sources for letters of reference**: cultivate these relationships early.

3. **Other actions to facilitate the move to your next position**: e.g. job opportunities, introductory letters from mentor.

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**5. Training in responsible conduct of research**

Briefly describe plan for training in specific topic areas to include 1) conflict of interest; 2) data acquisition and ownership; 3) peer review; 4) responsible authorship; 5) research misconduct; 6) researcher/trainee responsibilities; and 7) collaborative science.

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**6. Training in protection of human and animal subjects, and laboratory safety**

1. **Formal training**

2. **Training from mentor or other lab members**
7. Development of professionalism, leadership, management, and mentorship skills

Professionalism

Leadership (team management)

Management (program coordination)

Mentorship skills

8. Timeline
Outline the key milestones in progress toward your goal in bullet points, at appropriate time intervals (short-term goals: ¼ year. Longer-term goals: 1 year).

9. Ongoing Mentoring Meetings

1. Frequency of meetings with primary mentor

2. Plan for scheduling these meetings

3. Composition of your mentoring/dissertation committee

4. Frequency of meetings with mentoring/dissertation committee

10. Formal Evaluation of Trainee Progress
Review of mentee’s progress toward each of the above outlined milestones will occur semi-annually at the trainee’s advisory committee meetings; oral evaluation will be prepared by mentor and shared with trainee and advisory committee members.