

For Postdoctoral Mentors: Description of the Postdoctoral Scholar Individual Development Plan¹

The Individual Developmental Plan (IDP) is initiated by the postdoctoral scholar as an organized statement of scientific and career development goals and serves as a **communication tool** between the scholar and the mentor; this is not a performance evaluation. While the postdoctoral scholar should be encouraged to take primary responsibility for his/her career development, your role is to provide advice and guidance. Please read the IDP and discuss it in person; your postdoctoral scholar will modify it as a result of feedback. A [form](#) and [instructions](#) are provided to help guide your postdoctoral scholar in preparing his/her IDP. Upon completion and discussion of the IDP form the postdoctoral scholar must send a message indicating completion (*not* a copy of the form) to SGSPostdocOffice@UTSouthwestern.edu.

Please:

- Provide feedback to your postdoctoral scholar to identify and prioritize areas for development.
- Assist in defining career paths for your postdoctoral scholar.
- Be aware of “beyond the bench” training that is available in the [Postdoctoral Certificate Training Program](#). Encourage your scholar to complete required courses and participate in optional activities that will further their career development.
- Offer assistance. Remember that postdoctoral scholars are trainees, not fully independent, and need mentoring.

Why is an IDP important?

- According to a 2005 Sigma Xi Postdoc survey², postdoctoral scholars who began their appointment with a written career plan compared to those without:
 - 23% higher rate of papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals
 - 30% higher rate of first-authored papers published and
 - 25% higher rate of grant proposals submitted
- Career development for the scholar
- Communication between the scholar and mentor

¹Our Individual Development Plan process is modeled after that promulgated by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB): <http://opa.faseb.org/pdf/idp.pdf>

²Davis, G. 2006. Improving the Postdoctoral Experience: An Empirical Approach. In *R. Freeman and D. Goroff (Eds.), The Science and Engineering Workforce in the United States*, Chicago, IL: NBER/University of Chicago Press. (To appear) http://www.nber.org/~sewp/Davis_SurveyAnalysis20060201.pdf