

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

The Individual Developmental Plan (IDP) is an organized statement of your scientific and career development goals and serves as a communication tool between you and your mentor. This is not a performance evaluation. You have primary responsibility for your career development while your mentor can provide advice and guidance. The introspective process of writing an IDP and an increase in communication with your mentor can move your career forward, in the direction you prefer to go.

The IDP is initiated by you, reviewed by your mentor or other faculty advisors, discussed, and modified as a result of feedback. A [form](#) is provided to help guide you while preparing your IDP. Upon completion of your IDP form, discussion with your mentor, and making any modifications following the discussion, you must send a message indicating completion (*not* a copy of your form) to SGSPostdocOffice@UTSouthwestern.edu.

The steps to developing your IDP are to:

- Describe your research project(s) and define significance.
- Track your progress.
- Assess your skills and abilities.
- Consider any areas in which you need further development.
- Define desired career paths that you are considering.
- Obtain external feedback from others.
- Develop a plan of action by producing a time table to prioritize areas for development.
- Ask for your mentor's assistance to achieve your goals.
- Modify your IDP if changes are warranted after discussion with your mentor(s)

Many postdoctoral scholars would like to continue in a career of academic research after their postdoctoral training; having a research project that you can take with you will facilitate obtaining such a position. If this is in your career plan, development of your IDP is the ideal opportunity to begin this conversation with your mentor.

Subsequent updating of your IDP is just as important as first developing it. Your scientific and career goals can change and it is important that you communicate these changes to your mentor(s).

If you would like further information and motivation to develop your IDP, you may view the video recording of Dr. Melanie Cobb's presentation, "Setting Career Goals – IDP for Postdocs": <http://www4.utsouthwestern.edu:8080/psc/video/Cobb2.cfm>. This recording is on the intranet, which can be viewed on a networked campus computer or via [VPN](#).

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>