

# Individual Development Plan

## University of Minnesota Medical School

### About the IDP:

Predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees are successfully pursuing a wide range of careers in both academic and non-academic environments. Trainees should consider broadening their skill sets to prepare for these possible careers. The Individual Development Plan is an ongoing exercise designed to guide your thinking about your long-term and short-term career plans. To assist in the process, you will take advantage of the web tool myIDP ([read more about myIDP here](#)) to identify potential careers and set realistic goals that will help you be successful in whichever career path you choose. To create an IDP, you will assess your skills and interests, explore your career options, and set a few goals related to those careers. This section can take as little as 10 minutes, although we recommend spending additional time researching your career options. Following this exercise, you will meet with a mentor to help you gain insight into your plans for the future.

### Start the IDP here:

#### Step 1: Assess your skills, interests, and values

Go to <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org> and set up a new account or login. Fill out the skills, interests and values assessments. This will provide you with a list of careers ranked according to your input, found in Consider Career Fit -> My Career Path Matches.

#### Step 2: Select personalized career paths

Spend some time thinking about and exploring the career options in the “Read About Careers” resources on the IDP website, and explore other web resources. Then select 3 (or more, if you’d like) careers from the list that you think would be the best long-term fit for you. Let the myIDP assessment guide your choice, but you do not have to choose the careers that myIDP ranked highest for you. List your top three careers in the table below, along with the interest and skills match scores from myIDP.

*Table 1: Career paths of interest*

<b>Career path</b>	<b>Percent Interest Match</b>	<b>Percent Skills Match</b>

### Step 3: Set goals

In the Consider Career Fit -> My Career Path Matches section, take a look at the Skills Match percentages for your chosen career paths. How do your skills, training, and experience match those required (compare your rating to the expert rating)? Identify 5 skills that you could cultivate and list them in the table below. Most importantly, list short-term goals that would help you acquire those skills. When you are creating a list of goals, make them SMART! This means they should be *specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-bound*. You can learn more about setting SMART goals on the myIDP website under Skill Goals -> Quick tips.

Finally, identify mentors who may be able to help you achieve your goals. Mentors can be faculty members, labmates, colleagues, or alumni familiar with the training you seek. Your primary research advisor may or may not be the best mentor for these career-oriented goals.

*Table 2: Make SMART goals to enhance skills*

<b>Skill to improve</b>	<b>Short-term goal</b>	<b>Potential mentor</b>

Skill to improve	Short-term goal	Potential mentor

Examples of short-term goals:

**Scientific knowledge**

- Read more of the literature
- Attend a scientific meeting
- Participate in journal clubs
- Attend scientific seminars

**Research skills**

- Learn new lab techniques
- Didactic coursework in research skills (e.g., statistics, computer programming, etc.)
- Consult with your advisor to identify current strengths and weaknesses
- Write and submit a scientific paper
- Gain more experience in the peer review process

**Communication**

- Write scientific communications (commentary, original article, review, blog)
- Establish collaborations
- Join writing group / workshop
- Present your work at a seminar and/or a poster at a meeting
- Volunteer at a museum (Science Museum of Minnesota, Bakken Museum or The Works)

- Participate in the Three Minute Thesis Competition
- Join Toastmasters (<http://www.meetup.com/The-Minneapolis-Toastmasters-Club/>)

### **Professionalism**

- Networking at local and national conferences
- Conduct informal interviews with the intention of establishing network contacts
- Create / update online profile and CV (i.e. LinkedIn) and join groups relevant to career goals

### **Management and leadership skills**

- Volunteer to head a committee within your graduate program or school / college
- Supervise or train another student in your lab
- Coordinate a collaborative research project
- TA a course

### Step 4: Meet with a mentor

Discuss the plans outlined above with your advisor or another trusted mentor who can help you gain insight into your short term goals and your desired career path. Potential discussion questions include:

- Do any of your selected career paths involve additional schooling?
- How much of the needed schooling/training takes place outside of the academic setting?
- How will your employment background and existing skill set influence your entry into and success in your chosen career path?
- What will be the major challenges in achieving success in your chosen career?
- Are you acquiring the skill set(s) that you need to be successful in completing your goals?
- What is the best thing you could do in the next year to help you along your chosen career path?

### Step 5: Implement your plan

The myIPD website provides tools designed to help you create a timeline for achieving your goals (<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>, explore the Set Goals section). Utilize this link to prioritize and schedule your goals. Continue to revisit these questions in the months and years to come; your goals will evolve as you progress.