

TRAINEE NAME:

ADVISOR NAME(S):

Setting goals and taking stock of whether you have accomplished those goals is a crucial habit to being productive, not just busy. Guided by the Individual Development Plan (IDP), formal meetings with your advisor are a chance for you to step back from your daily lab and field work, assess your progress, and plan for the future. Your advisor and co-mentors are invaluable resources to help you propose and execute next steps that will help make you a better, more marketable scientist. This worksheet was designed to encourage constructive dialogue between postdoctoral trainees and their mentors, identify goals for the upcoming year, and create a specific plan to help meet these goals. It is intended to cover not just scientific goals, but also career development with goals of enabling you to become more proactive in your career development.

HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR IDP

1

Step back and self-assess!

It's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. Fill out this form, using the questions as a starting point to consider your research progress, development, and goals.

2

Schedule your annual meeting with your advisor.

In addition to annual progress meetings with your committee, you are responsible for scheduling and meeting with your advisor to go over your IDP. (Don't forget to share your completed IDP form with your advisor before the meeting.)

3

Lead the discussion.

The IDP covers topics that other trainees have found helpful. If you have questions or additional objectives related to your training, these meetings are a great time to bring them up. This document is supposed to help organize the conversation. Think about the topics you want to prioritize in your meeting.

4

Complete the "Action Plan" and make a plan for following up.

The last page of the IDP encourages you to establish concrete steps in the meeting with your advisor. Keep your Action Plan accessible and check on it every couple of months.

5

Submit required documentation to your advisor.

Scientific Research Goals and Objectives

- What is your postdoctoral fellowship intended to achieve? How familiar are you with the academic literature related to this topic?
- How comfortable are you with the literature and current discussions in your primary fields of research?
- How firm a grasp do you feel you have of the field or fields in which you work? If insufficient, what help do you need identifying relevant readings or other means to deepen your understanding of those domains of inquiry?
- What resources and methodological training do you need to conduct your upcoming research (e.g. funding, fieldwork, lab equipment, archives/databases)?
 - o Do you have access to these already? If not, how can your advisor help you?
- How do you feel your project is progressing? How confident are you in your ability to complete it by the end of your second fellowship year?
- What are your near-term research goals? For each goal, specify any areas where you feel you need help or additional training (e.g. the need to learn a specific skill). Include any techniques you want to learn, scientific, social scientific, or interdisciplinary collaborations, etc.

Challenges

- Describe any unusual or unanticipated challenges you experienced this year in trying to accomplish the goals you set out last year with your advisor.
- What actions have you taken to meet these challenges?
- How can your advisor help you? How has your advisor helped you in the past? Has that been working?

- What program requirements do you still need to complete, and what is your plan to fulfill them?

- What fellowships and/or jobs are you applying to, and have you been able to get the guidance you need? If not, how can your advisor help you?

- What experience or experiences have been most valuable to you, your research, and/or your professional goals?

- What are the training, teaching, or other opportunities that you believe are important for your professional development? What strategies do you use to identify such opportunities? What additional assistance would be helpful to you?

- What are your commitments for the coming year in the following areas? Think about anticipated hours per week/month dedicated to each of these categories and which areas you would like to prioritize in the upcoming year:
 - Supplementary coursework/training

 - Teaching/mentoring

 - Professional development, including short courses or participation in side projects

 - Conferences

 - Service to department, school, or university

 - Outreach

- Please explain what you hope to gain from some of these activities and experiences and how they will help you reach your goals?

One of the most important parts of your postdoctoral fellowship training is to develop a skill set transferrable beyond your postdoc. Use this worksheet to assess and identify skills that you would like to target in the coming year, **marking your perceived current ability level from weak (1) to strong (3)** relative to where you think a trainee should be at the end of their fellowship. Ask your advisor how s/he agrees or disagrees with this assessment. Spaces have been provided after each section to allow you and your advisor to add any additional target skills. An honest self-assessment and discussion will help you set goals for your training.

Research Skills & Scientific Social Thinking

Broad-based knowledge of science

Critical reading of scientific literature

Experimental design, if relevant.

Case study/ethnographic design.

Statistical analysis

Qualitative research methods

Interpretation of data

Creativity and innovative thinking

Submission/peer review process.

Other

Writing

For scientific publication

For a research proposal

For a lay audience

Grammar/structure

Editing your own writing

Other:

Oral Communications

To a specialized audience

To a lay audience

In a classroom

One-on-one

English fluency

Leadership/Personnel Management

Delegating/providing instruction

Providing constructive feedback

Dealing with conflict

Leading and motivating others

Serving as a role model

Setting Expectations

Other:

Professionalism/Interpersonal

Identifying and seeking advice

Upholding commitments/deadlines

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Upholding commitments/deadlines

Maintaining positive relationships.

Approaching difficult conversations

Other:

Project Management

Planning projects

Breaking down complex tasks

Time management

Managing data and resources

Other:

Mentoring is a distributed process, ideally allowing you to take advantage of the talents and experiences of many people throughout your training. You may want to consider using all or some of the IDP as an impetus for conversations with your advisor to add additional mentors to your postdoctoral training. In the space below, consider the breadth of mentoring you currently receive and whether you would like to expand your access to additional mentors.

	How often are you meeting and otherwise providing updates?	Is this sufficient?	Do you initiate meetings and other modes of interacting?	Need help finding or coordinating?
Lead Mentor				XXXXXXX
Mentoring Committee (As a group)				
Mentoring Committee (One-on-one)				
Collaborators (List names/roles in your research)				
Other				

Professional and Personal Development

- What are your long-term research goals (i.e., activities you want to be doing on a daily basis in 5-10 years after you graduate)?

- What opportunities and experiences might help you obtain these goals?

- For each goal you listed above, identify one or two short-term objectives that may be important to achieving that goal.

- What guidance would help you with your development and exploration of career options?

- What features of the lab group (or most important intellectual community) and your relationships with colleagues are most helpful and supportive to your personal development?

- Are there any factors that you are concerned may negatively affect your progress?

- What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide? Indicate if you need help finding professional or personal development resources.

- Your success as a trainee is tightly linked to your wellness. What are you doing to maintain work-life balance and positive mental health?

THIS ACTION PLAN IS TO BE DEVELOPED JOINTLY BY THE POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW AND THE MENTOR DURING OR AFTER THE DISCUSSION. Keep it accessible for your yearly IDP meetings and potential monthly check-ins, as determined by the two of you.

1

Project Timeline: What is the projected timeline for completing your current projects and publishing your work?

2

Target Skills: What (~1-2) did you identify as important development targets for the coming year? What actions are you planning to take to gain experience?

3

Activities: List any activities, whether sponsored within NSoE, hosted by other Duke units, or provided by entities outside Duke in which you and your mentor agree you should participate to achieve your academic objectives in the coming year.

4

Financial Support: If you know, what will be your financial support for the next year?

5

Additional Actions: In order to aid your success, are there any additional actions that can be initiated or continued by you? By your mentor?

6

Following Up: How often do you and your advisor plan to meet and otherwise interact, as through regular email updates (reports on progress, challenges, and action items)?

7

Deadlines: Please list any known upcoming deadlines/manuscripts/projects that will require your advisor's review or feedback.

8

Other: Is there anything else you would like to discuss with your advisor/mentors at this time?