**Effectively planning Your Grad Studies using an Individual Development plan**

***What is an IDP?***

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a useful tool to help grad students self-assess their skills, explore possible career paths, develop short and long term goals, and create action plans to achieve those goals. There are many different types of IDPs available, but we will use My IDP Science Careers, as it focuses on science careers and appropriate skills.

***How do I use an IDP with my supervisor?***

Communication with your supervisor is very important for your graduate success. You should discuss all aspects of your research, in addition to talking about your course load, funding, time to completion, short term goals and career goals, barriers that could impact your academic growth and wellbeing, and other things you may feel are relevant during your grad studies degree. The IDP provides a great tool for you to reflect on all these topics but may be too detailed to share with your supervisor. Here we provide a “trainee driven action plan” form that distills the key content from your IDP into a concise format to share with your supervisor. T**his document is not the IDP.** This Trainee-Driven Action Plan should be filled out for your IDP review meetings (which should be scheduled separately from your regular research meetings), every 6-12 months or as established with your supervisor.

***Why should I keep updating my IDP?***

An IDP is a living document that evolves. Your skills, smart goals, ideas, priorities, etc., will change throughout your graduate degree. Therefore, you should return to your online IDP every 6-12 months to update your information, which will help you stay focused on your path to successful transitions throughout your grad studies and later into a job.

**Step 1: COMPLETE an individual development plan (IDP)**

* Guide on how to complete an individual development plan. 20 min. <https://youtu.be/OoZKnm2er_U>
* Step back and self-assess! This will take 30-40 min. <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>
* Talk with others about your various types of smart goals (e.g. peers, mentors, advisors)

**Step 2: COMPLETE the trainee-driven action plan below to summarize your IDP.**

**Step 3: ESTABLISH TIME with your supervisor to discuss your action plan and bring the completed form to your meeting.**

**Trainee-Driven Action Plan**

**Graduate Program Course Requirements & Other Milestones Still to be Completed:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Grad Program Requirements still to be completed? | When is this offered? | Proof or deadline of registration (date) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Financial Analysis and Plan (think current funds and double check if your funding will last until your Time To Completion):**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CURRENT CHECK-IN:**  Fellowships/scholarships, travel awards to apply for? | Application deadlines? | Timeline for filling out application (dates) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

***How much time of guaranteed funding do you have left?*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

***Steps that will be taken to help ensure “Time To Completion” or funding beyond the guaranteed funding period:***

***Can you complete your degree in this time while maintaining a healthy work-life balance?*** *(optional)*

***What other responsibilities outside of the lab do you have?*** *(optional)*

**Reflection & Request for Support:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What barriers exist that could impact your academic growth & wellbeing? | How can your advisor help? | Timeline for following up with advisor (dates) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**FORMULATE your smart goals**

S – Specific – Is it focused and unambiguous?

M – Measurable – Could someone determine whether or not you achieved this goal?

A – Action-oriented – Did you specify the action you will take?

R – Realistic – Considering difficulty and timeframe, is this goal attainable?

T – Time-bound – Did you specify a deadline?

Use your completed My IDP Science Careers information as a guide, and list your top-2 smart goals for each category in the table below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What are your top priority smart goals for the next 6-12 months? | What activity, workshop, course, networking event, can help you achieve this? | Date of activity in your calendar |
| Academic/Project Goals? |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Technical Skills Goals? |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Professional Skills Goals? |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Wellness Goals? *(optional)* |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Eg: experiments, protocols, workshops, TAing, courses, journal clubs, conferences/networking, presentations, organizational/leadership roles, within the context of your research.

**\*Wellness goals are optional for discussion as they may contain private information. If you are comfortable with discussing your wellness goals, we encourage these discussions with various people including your peers, mentors, supervisors.**

***Would you like to discuss anything else?*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**YOUR NEXT IDP follow up meeting with your supervisor? Next date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Student Initials: Supervisor Initials: Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Some additional tips**

**PLAN an effective research or IDP meeting with your supervisor**

1. Lead the agenda.
2. Provide your advisor with a meeting agenda (24hrs+) before the meeting with succinct points, prepare questions.
3. Take notes during the meeting.
4. Summarize the keys points and next action items for the next meeting for both you and your supervisor succinctly at end of meeting. Receive confirmation.
5. Within 24 hours after your meeting, summarize or highlight your meeting notes and advisor suggestions in an email. Suggested Subject: Action items from (Date) Meeting (Your name).
6. Make a list of your next action items and build on these for your next meeting.

**EXPLORE these helpful resources on graduate supervision**

* Do you know what’s expected of you and your graduate supervisor?
* Do you understand your graduate student responsibilities?
* Don’t hesitate to ask your supervisor if you have questions!
* Essential Guide for Grad Students: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/253/2019/07/EssentialGuideforGrads.pdf>
* Graduate Supervision Guidelines: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/supervision-guidelines/>
* Supervision Tip Sheet: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/253/2019/10/Graduate-Supervision-fact-sheet-2017REV.pdf>

**COURSES that might be of interest**

* Research Methods & Project Execution course (APS5500) <https://gradstudies.engineering.utoronto.ca/aps5500/>
* Troost ILead Options Program <https://ilead.engineering.utoronto.ca/student-programs/events-programs/options/>