Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Scholars

1   Definition

A postdoctoral scholar is defined as "an individual who has received a doctoral degree and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path".

The purpose of a postdoctoral position is four-fold:

1. To develop creativity and independence as a scientific researcher

2. To obtain new skills and develop new methodologies

3. To provide networking opportunities with other researchers within and outside the field

4. To receive career development training for future career goals

2   How to use this document

The **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** provides a planning process that identifies annual progress, professional development needs, and career objectives for postdoctoral Scholars. The IDP serves as a communication tool between postdoctoral Scholars and their mentors and offers a platform for broader discussion. Identifying short-term goals will give postdoctoral Scholars a clearer sense of expectations and help identify milestones along the way to achieving specific objectives. Postdoctoral Scholars will have a process that assists in developing and achieving long-term career goals. The IDP provides a tool for communication between the postdoctoral fellow and the mentor (PI).

Goals of the IDP

Help the postdoctoral fellow identify:

- Short-term needs for improving current performance
- Long-term career goals and options and the necessary tools to meet these

Outline of the IDP process

The development, implementation and revision of the IDP requires a series of steps to be conducted by the postdoctoral fellow and the mentor. These steps are an interactive effort. Thus, both the postdoctoral fellow and the mentor must participate fully in the process. Best results are to be expected in a context of honesty and openness. In such a case, the IDP will likely function as a starter for broader discussion on the involvement at Purdue and future career and goals of the postdoc. Proper use may also reveal or prevent misconceptions about tasks, involvement in research group activities and objectives.

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Duration and Revision

It is up to the postdoc and mentor to use the IDP as felt appropriate. To this end, they may adjust the IDP according to personal needs and/or particularities of their research field.

The suggested frequency of revision is set at every 6 months to every year. This frequency should be defined before the first time use. At each iteration, the postdoctoral fellow completes the IDP and submits at the given time, following discussion and revision with the mentor. It is suggested that the completed IDP is kept on file at the business office of the department to which the postdoc is appointed.

How to complete the IDP

Basic Steps	…For Postdoctoral Fellow	…For Mentor
Step 1	Complete the IDP Share IDP with mentor and revise Survey opportunities with mentor	Complete mentor portion of the IDP Review IDP with postdoc and help revise Survey opportunities with postdoc
Step 2	Submit IDP to Business Office (or Department head??)	Establish regular process for review
Step 3	Implement IDP Communicate with mentor during the next academic year with regards to these goals	Implement IDP Communicate with postdoc regarding research and career development during the next year

3   A. Information/Signatures

Name of Postdoctoral Fellow: _____

Department:_____

Signature:_____Date:_____

PI:_____

PI signature: Date:

Departmental Head Signature: Date:

4   B. Rationale for Postdoctoral Education

1. Please describe your reasoning for pursuing postdoctoral training? What goals do you have, skills do you hope to obtain?

2. Detail why you chose a position in this laboratory? How does this training interface with your current skill set, what are the intended outcomes for training in this laboratory/department/university?

C. Research Project(s)

1. Describe the aims of your current project(s).

2. Detail the techniques and methodologies for these aims.

3. How do these aims interface with the current goals of the laboratory?

4. What intellectual contribution did you make in designing these aims or methodologies?

5. What is the significance (broader impact) of your research and/or application domain of your project?

D. Annual Progress Report (revise as necessary)

1. List and briefly describe your research accomplishments this year (do not include publications or manuscript submissions).

2. List new techniques/skills acquired this year.

3. List publications submitted or published this year as well as abstracts for meeting presentations. For each entry, underline your name and describe your contribution. For meetings, indicate if this was a poster or oral presentation and who presented the work.

4. List your funding sources, projected duration of funding, and proposals submitted this year.

5. List honors/awards received this year.

6. List intellectual and/or technical collaborations established or continued this year along with the purpose of these collaborations and projected outcome(s). (Collaborations can be within the laboratory itself, with other labs at Purdue or outside of the university).

7. Describe your level of satisfaction with your research progress to date.

E. Career Development and Training

1. List accomplishments this year in other aspects of career development (e.g., teaching, service, coursework development, mentoring). Include teaching and mentoring of other individuals within the laboratory/department/university.

2. Describe your level of satisfaction with your career development to date.

3. Name one thing that occurred this year that you did not foresee and describe how this effected you and your future career outlook.

F. Plans for Upcoming Year

Research Goals

1. Research project goals for the upcoming year (be brief):

2. List anticipated research techniques to learn this year.

3. List anticipated publication submissions this year (indicate projected titles).

4. List meeting and/or workshop attendance for this year.

5. Detail anticipated fellowship or other funding application submissions this year.

6. Describe anticipated collaborations this year that will be newly established or continued with projected goals.

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Career Development Training Goals

1. What are your plans for improving your scientific writing and oral presentation skills in the upcoming year?

2. What other professional training do you anticipate this year (teaching, course work, service, mentoring)?

3. How can your PI/mentor help you achieve your goals for the upcoming year?

4. What do you want and/or need from your PI/mentor?

5. What do you want/need from your department/Purdue University?

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MENTOR SECTION (PI should complete this section and discuss with postdoctoral scholar prior to submission of final document.)

1. How can the postdoctoral fellow improve his/her performance and achieve his/her goals this year?

2. What additional training/activity is needed before he/she begins the job search?

3. What can the department and/or Purdue University do to assist this postdoctoral scholar?