

PhD Student: 1st Year**Your Name:****Advisor (or 'Advisory Committee'):****Date:**

Setting goals and taking stock of your accomplishments are essential to meaningful progress in both scientific training and professional development. An important tool toward this end is the Individual Development Plan (IDP). The IDP is intended to help you *i*) design, monitor, and measure progress in training, *ii*) articulate short- and long-term goals, and *iii*) identify relevant developmental activities. Your advisor, or your advisory committee, is an invaluable resource in this process, providing feedback and helping you to generate an action plan.

HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR IDP

1. Step back and assess.

It's easy to lose sight of the big picture. An IDP is designed to provide perspective – perspective on your progress as a researcher, on your development in general, and your goals. The more thought given the IDP, the greater the return, so be sure to give sufficient time and reflection to the process.

2. Set your annual meeting with your advisor(s).

You are responsible for scheduling annual IDP meetings with your advisor or your advisory committee. Be sure to make available the IDP form, completed but for the 'Action Plan', *well before* your meeting.

3. Lead the discussion.

Discuss the IDP with your advisor or advisory committee. Taking the lead in this discussion, as with all things critical to your success, is crucial.

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

The last page of the IDP encourages you to establish concrete steps for moving forward. Please complete this page with the help of your advisor or advisory committee during or after the discussion. Refer to it frequently in the following year.

5. Certify by August 1 that the IDP has been completed and reviewed.

BGS requires certification by August 1 of each year from your graduate group coordinator that the IDP has been completed and reviewed with your advisor or advisory committee and that an action plan has been developed. Certification is achieved upon notification of your graduate group coordinator *by you* through email that these events have occurred. *Important:* Your graduate group may require you to complete the IDP well before August 1, for example to fit its own advisory timelines. Check with your graduate group.

Who sees your IDP?

- The IDP, with the exception of the 'Achievements' section (below), is a confidential document between you and your advisor or advisory committee. If you wish, you may share the IDP with others, for example your graduate group chair, other faculty, and students – this is your choice.
- Your graduate group chair and/or the BGS may ask at some point for the 'Achievements' section alone of the completed IDP. The information from this section would be used typically in de-identified form to track overall student progress and performance and to inform policy.

COURSEWORK/
ROTATIONSRESEARCH
SKILLSPROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACTION PLAN

PhD Student: 1st Year

Student: [Student Name]

Advisor: [Advisor Name]

Date:

This section of the IDP focuses on your objectives as they relate to coursework and laboratory rotations in the first year. Its primary intent is to help guide you in articulating your goals and aligning them with your training as you begin the transition into thesis work.

OBJECTIVES RELEVANT TO COURSEWORK AND LABORATORY ROTATIONS

What elective courses, if any, did you take your first year? What was your rationale in choosing them? Do you have any concerns regarding your performance?

What elective courses, if any, do you plan for your second year? Have your goals remained the same, or have they changed?

What laboratory rotations did you take your first year? What was your rationale in choosing them? Do you have any concerns regarding your performance?

What laboratory rotations or other research do you plan for the second year? Have you encountered any obstacles in choosing or arranging them?

What thoughts have you given to the choice of a laboratory for your thesis project? What are the important considerations for you in this regard?

Is there anything your advisor, advisory committee, and/or other mentors can do differently to help?

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The attainment of skills relevant to scientific inquiry is at the heart of PhD training and is central to the pursuit of career opportunities following graduation. Use this worksheet to rank your skills **from weak (1) to strong (3)** as you currently perceive them relative to those you think a student at your level should have; **leave blank if not applicable**. Mark as well any skills you wish to target for improvement over the next year.

Please note that some items in this worksheet, particularly those marked with asterisks, may not be applicable to you as a 1st-year student. They are included for consistency with IDPs you'll see in subsequent years of training.

Detailed resources for many of the skills itemized here can be found at the BGS Career Development website.

RESEARCH SKILLS & SCIENTIFIC THINKING				Target skill	PROJECT MANAGEMENT				Target skill
	1	2	3			1	2	3	
Broad-based knowledge of science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of current discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Breaking down complex tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Critical reading of scientific literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Time management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experimental design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Managing data and resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic bench skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpretation of data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Computational analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	*MENTORING/TEACHING				
Statistical analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delegating; providing instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Troubleshooting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Providing constructive feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data management (notebook)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Setting expectations for others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity and innovation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiative/independence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROFESSIONALISM				
					Identifying and seeking advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WRITING					Upholding commitments/deadlines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar/structure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Networking/collaborations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarity/precision/intent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dealing with conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*For a research proposal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lab citizenship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*For a scientific publication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work ethic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ORAL COMMUNICATION					<i>Other skills, or comments?</i>				
One-on-one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Lab meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
English fluency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

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The skills and traits cultivated in predoctoral training in the biomedical sciences are valued in a wide variety of careers. The IDP gives you a chance to begin collecting your thoughts in this regard. Note that BGS provides a variety of resources on careers and professional development relevant to PhDs in the biomedical sciences as does [Penn's Career Services](#).

What do you see as your long-term goals at this point in time, whether general or specific?

What factors inform these goals (e.g. skills, interests, values, colleagues, current activities)?

Are there short-term activities or objectives that might help in pursuing or better framing these goals?

Do you yet have interests in any specific types of careers, whether in or apart from academic research?

Is there anything additional you might need in the way of support or resources to pursue your goals or career interests?

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List your involvement or achievements in the following areas over the past year. Describe as well any current plans. Please note that several areas below may not be applicable to you as a 1st-year student. They are included nonetheless for the purposes of complete reporting and consistency with IDPs you'll see in subsequent years of training.

COURSEWORK/TRAINING (Including journal clubs, RCR training, SRR training, etc.)**PUBLICATIONS****FELLOWSHIPS** (Applied for, or awarded)**SEMINARS/CONFERENCES** (Attendance, presentations)**TEACHING/MENTORING****PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT****SERVICE OUTREACH/LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE****OTHER**



Now that you have completed the first four sections of your IDP, it's time to review them, and then to i) send the document to your advisor (or advisory committee) and ii) to confirm the time with your advisor (or committee) to discuss it. The last section of the IDP – the Action Plan – will be completed by you and your advisor(s) together.

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The action plan highlights your priorities in research and career development in the next year. It is to be developed jointly by you and your advisor or advisory committee during or after the discussion.

PROJECTED TIMELINE

When do you anticipate finalizing your choice of a thesis laboratory? Have you considered applying for a fellowship?

TARGET SKILLS

What skills did you identify for improvement over the next year?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

What are your identified objectives regarding long-term goals or careers, and how might these be pursued in the coming year?

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

What additional actions that should be initiated by *i*) you, *ii*) your advisor(s), and/or *iii*) other mentors in order to facilitate your success?

FOLLOWING UP

What is the schedule for you and your advisor(s) to meet and follow up on the action plan or other items of your IDP? (An annual meeting is only the minimum required.)

OTHER

Are there any items you would like to discuss with your advisor(s) at this time?

Now that you have completed your IDP, please submit it to your graduate group coordinator.

Thank you!