

PhD Student: 2nd 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, thesis committee, 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.

PRE-THESIS
RESEARCHRESEARCH
SKILLSPROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

ACHIEVEMENTS

ACTION PLAN

PhD Student: 2nd Year*Student: [Student Name]
Advisor: [Advisor Name]
Date:*

This section of the IDP focuses on the objectives and challenges of your proposed thesis research. Its primary intent is to encourage you to define the details and scope of what will be needed for beginning a successful thesis project.

OBJECTIVES RELEVANT TO PROPOSED THESIS RESEARCH

What specific question is your proposed thesis work attempting to address, and in what way – in your estimation – will the anticipated answer advance your field?

What is the starting point for your thesis project, and are you sufficiently comfortable with it?

What challenges/setbacks do you foresee during the first-year of your thesis work? How will you attempt to address them?

Have you identified resources in addition to scientific literature that might help you in thesis work and/or general development as a scientist, for example journal clubs, other groups, or mentors?

What thoughts have you and your thesis advisor given to the composition of a thesis committee?

Is there anything your advisor, advisory committee, and/or other mentors can do differently to help you plan and achieve your objectives in thesis work?

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 Advisor: [Advisor Name]
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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.

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"/>					

PhD Student: 2nd Year

Student: [Student Name]

Advisor: [Advisor Name]

Date:

Graduate training provides preparation for a range of career paths in science, technology, and innovation. As professions value the skills and traits cultivated in PhD training, the ability to identify and explore interests during this period of time is especially worthwhile.

You should know that BGS provides a variety of resources relating to careers and professional development in and apart from academia as does [Penn's Career Services](#).

What are your long-term goals, in the sense of what kinds of activities you might want to be engaged in after you complete PhD training?

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

Are you currently most interested in a specific career or set of careers, whether in or apart from academic research? If so, which?

For each of the long-term goals or, if listed, careers above, identify one or two short-term objectives that may be important to their exploration and/or achievement.

Are you getting the support and resources you require to satisfactorily explore career options?

Has anything negatively affected your progress in development?

PhD Student: 2nd YearStudent: [Student Name]
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List your involvement or achievements in the following areas over the past year and discuss any current plans. **Please note** that several areas may not be applicable to you as a 2nd-year student. They are included nonetheless for the purposes of complete reporting and consistency with IDPs in subsequent years of predoctoral training.

This section of your IDP will be available to the staff/directors of your graduate group and BGS.

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.

PhD Student: 2nd YearStudent: [Student Name]
Advisor: [Advisor Name]
Date:

The action plan will help you set goals and plan as you enter your thesis work. Take this time to set reasonable goals for your thesis work and discuss with your thesis advisor. It is to be developed jointly by the student and the advising committee during or after the discussion.

PROJECTED TIMELINE

Where do you expect or would like to be in a year in your thesis project?

TARGET SKILLS

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

ACTIVITIES

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

ADDITIONAL ACTIONSWhat additional actions that should be initiated by *i)* you, *ii)* your advisor, and *iii)* other mentors in order to facilitate your success?**FOLLOWING UP**

Future IDPs will be completed with your thesis advisor. Have you considered a meeting schedule that will work for both you and your advisor; an annual meeting is only the minimum required.

OTHER

Are there any items you would like to discuss with your advisor or other mentors at this time?

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

Thank you!