GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

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This guide offers two sets of worksheets to help you get started. The worksheets include self-assessments to help you think about your abilities, skills, strengths, and areas for development. They may also be useful to help you consider possible career paths and career opportunities.

The worksheets also prompt you to consider your goals and the path you need to take toward achieving those goals.

The goals you include in your IDP should be based on the strengths and weakness you identified while completing the earlier worksheets. The goals should also consider the milestone activities that mark successful progress through your academic program (e.g., completing research coursework, writing research papers, internships/practicums, etc.) or postdoc training, plus any other specific skills and knowledge needed to be professionally ready for your career.

Be sure to identify **specific and achievable objectives or skills**, and write these in a way that makes very clear what you are going to do. Use a "S.M.A.R.T. Goals" format: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-bound.

Specific:
- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal
- Who: Who is involved?
- Where: Identify a location
- Which: Identify requirements and constraints

Measurable:
- How much? / How many? / How will I know when it is accomplished?
- An attainable goal will usually answer the question:
- How: How can the goal be accomplished?

Relevant:
- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does this match my/our other efforts/needs?

Time-bound:
- When?
- What can I do 6 months from now?
- What can I do 6 weeks from now?
- What can I do today?

The first set of worksheets come from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's document 'The Individual Development Plan for Mapping Your Academic and Professional Development.' The self-assessment focuses on nine areas of professional development:

- Inquiry, discovery, and creation
- Disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary connections
- Leadership
- Career development
- Managing projects and people
- Communication
- Value for diversity and inclusion
- Interpersonal effectiveness
- Personal effectiveness

The worksheet also offers self-assessment questions related to your current responsibilities and requirements, in addition to your career aspirations.

Self-assessment

Optional: Use the interactive self-assessment at my.grad.wisc.edu/DiscoverPD (requires UW-Madison netID).

Rate your confidence in your ability to do the following activities.

1 = very unconfident; 2 = somewhat unconfident; 3 = neither unconfident nor confident; 4 = somewhat confident; 5 = very confident

Inquiry, discovery, and creation

Inquiry, discovery, and creation describe characteristics of higher order thinking embodied by graduate students, including analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

	1	2	3	4	5
Create, invent, or produce new and innovative concepts or products	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluate information, critique, and make judgments based on internal or external evidence	○	○	○	○	○
Pursue answers to complex questions	○	○	○	○	○
Think and act innovatively to create opportunity	○	○	○	○	○
Challenge conventional thinking	○	○	○	○	○

Disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary connections

Core to graduate education, disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary connections inform solutions to complex problems and creating new knowledge.

	1	2	3	4	5
Achieve the learning outcomes of my academic program, as well as those defined for all UW-Madison graduate students	○	○	○	○	○
Acquire depth and breadth of knowledge in my subject area	○	○	○	○	○
Develop advanced skills in my subject area	○	○	○	○	○
Work with peers and colleagues across disciplines	○	○	○	○	○
Embrace the values of my profession	○	○	○	○	○
Employ critical and analytical thinking and problem solving	○	○	○	○	○
Obtain funding for my research or project	○	○	○	○	○
Conduct myself ethically and professionally	○	○	○	○	○
Seek and utilize information and technology resources appropriate to my discipline	○	○	○	○	○

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Leadership
Leadership occurs at all levels of successful organizations, regardless of formal authority or management role.

	1	2	3	4	5
Guide strategy and vision (e.g., on team projects)	○	○	○	○	○
Move ideas into action	○	○	○	○	○
Inspire others to new ways of thinking or acting	○	○	○	○	○
Foster creativity and innovation in people around me	○	○	○	○	○
Understand the dynamics of organizations	○	○	○	○	○
Be proactive and take risks	○	○	○	○	○
Acquire resources (e.g., get financial support from leadership, or collaborative support from others)	○	○	○	○	○

Career development
Career development is a lifelong, proactive process of planning and implementation toward evolving, personally-defined career goals.

	1	2	3	4	5
Assess my skills, values, and interests	○	○	○	○	○
Obtain mentorship	○	○	○	○	○
Explore careers (e.g., conduct informational interviews)	○	○	○	○	○
Market myself (e.g., utilize LinkedIn or other online platforms)	○	○	○	○	○
Interview for jobs successfully	○	○	○	○	○
Apply for job openings (e.g., writing a cover letter, resume, and/or CV)	○	○	○	○	○
Participate in professional service	○	○	○	○	○
Build and communicate my transferable skills to potential employers	○	○	○	○	○
Take a lifelong approach to managing my career (e.g., utilizing an IDP, implementing both short- and long-term professional goals)	○	○	○	○	○

Self-assessment

Managing projects and people
Managing projects and developing people's potential requires an understanding of systematic approach methods, evaluation, and effective use of resources.

	1	2	3	4	5
Manage projects effectively by setting goals and monitoring results	○	○	○	○	○
Supervise and/or mentor others	○	○	○	○	○
Provide constructive feedback to others	○	○	○	○	○
Manage financial resources (e.g., reading financial statements or budgeting)	○	○	○	○	○
Employ systems and technology for productivity	○	○	○	○	○

Communication
Communication is a bidirectional exchange of information, effective through understanding the intersection of media, audience, and message.

	1	2	3	4	5
Select and utilize optimal media for a particular message (e.g., when to use written, oral, visual, digital, smart media)	○	○	○	○	○
Write for experts in my discipline	○	○	○	○	○
Write for a lay audience (i.e., those who are not experts in my discipline)	○	○	○	○	○
Creatively engage with the public about my scholarship or research	○	○	○	○	○
Write effective grant proposals	○	○	○	○	○
Utilize effective technical writing skills for my discipline	○	○	○	○	○
Navigate the academic publishing landscape in my discipline	○	○	○	○	○
Consult and listen well	○	○	○	○	○

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Value for diversity and inclusion

True learning calls for free and open debate, requires respect of all individuals and ideas, and prepares students to live and work in a world that speaks with many voices and from many backgrounds and experiences.

	1	2	3	4	5
Learn from and work effectively with people from cultural backgrounds different from my own (i.e., demonstrate cultural competence)	○	○	○	○	○
Learn from and work effectively with people from international backgrounds (i.e., demonstrate global competence)	○	○	○	○	○
Demonstrate equitable and inclusive leadership skills	○	○	○	○	○
Promote equitable, inclusive, and respectful workplaces and/or classrooms	○	○	○	○	○
Cultivate relationships with people from different backgrounds, experiences, and cultures	○	○	○	○	○
Recognize differences and similarities as they enhance and enrich experiences for all	○	○	○	○	○

Interpersonal effectiveness

Interpersonal effectiveness entails recognizing and assessing the impact of one's behavior on others, as well as understanding and cultivating positive relationships - e.g., with peers, coworkers, and advisors.

	1	2	3	4	5
Form teams and collaborate	○	○	○	○	○
Appreciate, embrace, and/or foster the diverse perspectives of people around me	○	○	○	○	○
Network effectively with others in a professional setting	○	○	○	○	○
Negotiate (e.g., among people with conflicting ideas, salary negotiation)	○	○	○	○	○
Resolve conflict between people or groups of people	○	○	○	○	○
Mentor others (e.g., help to train undergraduates in my discipline)	○	○	○	○	○
Help create a positive climate (i.e., a classroom or workplace where everyone feels comfortable and appreciated)	○	○	○	○	○
Work effectively with my faculty advisor, mentor, and/or supervisor	○	○	○	○	○

Self-assessment

Personal effectiveness

Personal effectiveness describes a set of attitudes and attributes that are needed for lifelong career success.

	1	2	3	4	5
Maintain an openness to new ideas and perspectives	○	○	○	○	○
Cultivate an attitude of curiosity and joy of discovery	○	○	○	○	○
Stay motivated	○	○	○	○	○
Demonstrate resilience	○	○	○	○	○
Demonstrate integrity	○	○	○	○	○
Think introspectively	○	○	○	○	○
Engage in activities that improve conditions for others or help shape the future of my community (i.e., civic engagement)	○	○	○	○	○
Be healthy physically, emotionally, and financially	○	○	○	○	○
Manage my time effectively	○	○	○	○	○
Stay organized in my academic, employment, and personal responsibilities	○	○	○	○	○

Interpreting your responses to the self-assessment

If you chose to complete the static self-assessment in this document, you'll need to now review your responses. Take a moment to consider your responses on pages 4 through 8. Note subareas where you feel most confident (rated 4 or 5) and least confident (rated 1 or 2). Circle any to which you feel committed to developing; these will be used in the goal-setting exercises on pages 11, 12, and 13.

Self-assessment

What are your current responsibilities and requirements?

As part of the self-assessment process, ask yourself some questions related to your current responsibilities and requirements. Doing so will lead you to actions or goals to incorporate into your plan. Your aim is to develop skills that will lead to your success in your current position.

What are the requirements and responsibilities you must meet during the next year? Two years?

Are there particular technical skills or discipline-specific knowledge that you need to develop?

Are there scholarly activities you would like to accomplish or work toward during the next year? Two years? (Examples: join a professional organization, present at a conference, co-author a paper…)

Other?

Comments:

Self-assessment

What are your career aspirations?

In preparation for creating a truly individualized IDP, ask yourself some questions related to your career goals. Consider using various resources to see how your values and interests align with potential career goals. Some of these resources include: myIDP (myidp.sciencecareers.org) for STEM fields, Imagine PhD for arts and humanities (coming soon), and the Graduate School's Alumni Career Paths (grad.wisc.edu/alumnicareers).

What type of work would you like to do? What is important to you in your future career?

What competencies are required for your chosen career?

How well do your current skills match the competencies required for your chosen career?

What are your short-term goals related to career exploration? (Examples: learn about science writing, conduct informational interviews, find out where graduates in my field are working/finding careers…)

How will you develop contacts--a network--related to your career exploration goals?

Other?

Comments:

Self-assessment summary

Confident (4's and 5's on pages 4-8)	Unconfident (1's and 2's on pages 4-8)

Goals: current responsibilities

Define **approaches and strategies** below, and include a **timeframe** for beginning and completing these actions. Make sure to have an **outcome** statement that is clear enough to allow someone (including you!) to know if you've met your **objective**.

Objectives or skills to be learned	Approaches and strategies	Timeframe	Outcomes

Goals: career aspirations

Define **approaches and strategies** below, and include a **timeframe** for beginning and completing these actions. Make sure to have an **outcome** statement that is clear enough to allow someone (including you!) to know if you've met your **objective**.

Objectives or skills to be learned	Approaches and strategies	Timeframe	Outcomes

Goal prioritization

	Near term (within the next 6 months)	Long term (more than 6 months away)
High priority		
Low priority		

NOTES

The second set of self-assessment worksheets come from a document by Jennifer A. Hobin (Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology) and Philip S. Clifford (Medical College of Wisconsin).
These worksheets assess your skills, values, and interests, and help to identify possible scientific career paths that align with the combination of your skills, values, and interests.

The full document is available here:
https://www.lifescitrc.org/resource.cfm?submissionID=7365

SCIENTIFIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Assess your strengths and weaknesses on a scale of 1-5 where
1 = drastic improvement needed and 5 = highly proficient.

Scientific Knowledge

Broad based knowledge of science	1 2 3 4 5
Knowledge of specific research area _____	1 2 3 4 5
Critical evaluation of scientific literature	1 2 3 4 5

Research Skills

Specific research technique_____	1 2 3 4 5
Specific research technique_____	1 2 3 4 5
Specific research technique_____	1 2 3 4 5
Experimental design	1 2 3 4 5
Statistical analysis	1 2 3 4 5
Interpretation of data	1 2 3 4 5
Creativity/innovative thinking	1 2 3 4 5
Navigating the peer review process	1 2 3 4 5

Communication

Basic writing and editing	1 2 3 4 5
Writing scientific publications	1 2 3 4 5
Writing grant proposals	1 2 3 4 5
Writing for nonscientists	1 2 3 4 5
Speaking clearly and effectively	1 2 3 4 5
Presenting research to scientists	1 2 3 4 5
Presenting to nonscientists	1 2 3 4 5
Teaching in a classroom setting	1 2 3 4 5
Training and mentoring individuals	1 2 3 4 5
Seeking advice from advisors and mentors	1 2 3 4 5
Negotiating difficult conversations	1 2 3 4 5

Professionalism

Demonstrating workplace etiquette	1 2 3 4 5
Complying with rules and regulations	1 2 3 4 5
Upholding commitments and meet deadlines	1 2 3 4 5
Maintaining positive relationships with colleagues	1 2 3 4 5
Contributing to discipline (e.g. member of professional society)	1 2 3 4 5
Contributing to institution (e.g. participate on committees)	1 2 3 4 5

Management and Leadership Skills

Providing instruction and guidance	1 2 3 4 5
Providing constructive feedback	1 2 3 4 5
Dealing with conflict	1 2 3 4 5
Planning and organizing projects	1 2 3 4 5
Time management	1 2 3 4 5
Developing/managing budgets	1 2 3 4 5
Managing data and resources	1 2 3 4 5
Delegating responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5
Leading and motivating others	1 2 3 4 5
Creating vision and goals	1 2 3 4 5
Serving as a role model	1 2 3 4 5

Responsible Conduct of Research

Careful recordkeeping practices	1 2 3 4 5
Understanding of data ownership/sharing issues	1 2 3 4 5
Demonstrating responsible authorship and publication practices	1 2 3 4 5
Demonstrating responsible conduct in human research	1 2 3 4 5
Demonstrating responsible conduct in animal research	1 2 3 4 5
Can identify and address research misconduct	1 2 3 4 5
Can identify and manage conflict of interest	1 2 3 4 5

Career Advancement

Maintaining a professional network	1 2 3 4 5
Identifying career options	1 2 3 4 5
Preparing application materials	1 2 3 4 5
Interviewing	1 2 3 4 5
Negotiating	1 2 3 4 5

VALUES CLARIFICATION

Grade the importance of the following items in your career by giving each a value ranging from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (essential).

A. High Earnings Potential
(be able to purchase luxuries of life you want)   1 2 3 4 5

B. Job Security
(be assured of keeping your job and salary)   1 2 3 4 5

C. Benefits Available
(health, tuition, reimbursements, discount services)   1 2 3 4 5

D. Rapid Advancement
(opportunities for growth / promotions from work well done)   1 2 3 4 5

E. Creativity
(artistic or intellectual expression)   1 2 3 4 5

F. Public Contact
(day-to-day contact with clients or colleagues)   1 2 3 4 5

G. Status and Prestige
(derive status and prestige from work)   1 2 3 4 5

H. Teamwork
(collaborate with others)   1 2 3 4 5

I. Friendships
(develop close personal relationships with people from work)   1 2 3 4 5

J. Regular Work
(establish a routine with structured assignments)   1 2 3 4 5

K. Predictable Hours
(maintain same daily work schedule)   1 2 3 4 5

L. Time Freedom
(free time in your daily or weekly schedule)   1 2 3 4 5

M. Job Tranquility
(avoid pressures and "the rat race")   1 2 3 4 5

N. Family Friendly
(balance family and work without threatening advancement)   1 2 3 4 5

O. Autonomy/Independence
(work with little direction from others)   1 2 3 4 5

P. Self-Employment
(own / run a business)   1 2 3 4 5

Q. Variety
(change work responsibilities frequently)   1 2 3 4 5

R. Travel
(travel 20 percent or more each week or month)   1 2 3 4 5

S. Congenial Atmosphere
(have pleasant, relaxed environment with friendly colleagues)   1 2 3 4 5

T. Aesthetics
(work in a visually pleasing environment)   1 2 3 4 5

U. Intellectual Challenge
(perform work that is intellectually stimulating)   1 2 3 4 5

V. Work on Frontiers of Knowledge
(generating information and new ideas in the academic, scientific, or business communities)   1 2 3 4 5

W. Fast Pace and Pressure
(work in a busy atmosphere with frequent deadlines)   1 2 3 4 5

X. Competition
(engage in activities that test your abilities against others' abilities)   1 2 3 4 5

Y. Risk Taking
(work in an environment of adventure, excitement, or high stakes)   1 2 3 4 5

Z. Geographic Preference
(be able to live in the city or region of your choice)   1 2 3 4 5

AA. Location
(work close to your home to keep daily commute short)   1 2 3 4 5

BB. Supervision
(be directly responsible for work done by others)   1 2 3 4 5

CC. Making Decisions
(use judgment, have power to decide courses of action, policies)   1 2 3 4 5

DD. Influence People
(be in a position to change attitudes or opinions of others)   1 2 3 4 5

EE. Socially Useful Work
(contribute to betterment of world)   1 2 3 4 5

FF. Help Others
(be involved directly with helping individuals or small groups)   1 2 3 4 5

GG. Affiliation
(be recognized as a member of a particular organization)   1 2 3 4 5

HH. Moral Fulfillment
(feel that your work is contributing to ideals you feel are important)   1 2 3 4 5

II. Other Values
(add anything you wish)   1 2 3 4 5

LIST THE TOP 3 VALUES THAT YOU RANKED AS ESSENTIAL:

INTERESTS INVENTORY

If you had the **ideal job**, rate how frequently you would be engaged in the following activities where 1= never and 5 = often.

Activity	Rating
Designing experiments	1 2 3 4 5
Performing experiments	1 2 3 4 5
Analyzing experimental results	1 2 3 4 5
Planning new scientific projects or developing new research directions	1 2 3 4 5
Writing grant proposals	1 2 3 4 5
Writing scientific manuscripts	1 2 3 4 5
Writing project reports or other business-related correspondence	1 2 3 4 5
Writing position papers or policy papers	1 2 3 4 5
Creating presentations	1 2 3 4 5
Representing data in figures/illustrations	1 2 3 4 5
Giving presentations about science	1 2 3 4 5
Reading papers in your field	1 2 3 4 5
Learning about other fields	1 2 3 4 5
Thinking about science	1 2 3 4 5
Keeping up with current events in science	1 2 3 4 5
Discussing science with others	1 2 3 4 5
Attending conferences or scientific meetings	1 2 3 4 5
Learning how to use new equipment or techniques	1 2 3 4 5
Building new devices or developing/refining techniques	1 2 3 4 5
Using mathematical modelling in understanding science	1 2 3 4 5
Using qualitative approaches in understanding science	1 2 3 4 5
Performing research with animal subjects	1 2 3 4 5
Performing research with human subjects	1 2 3 4 5
Teaching in a classroom setting	1 2 3 4 5
Developing curricula	1 2 3 4 5
Writing about science to non-scientists	1 2 3 4 5
Speaking about science to non-scientists	1 2 3 4 5
Mentoring or teaching one-on-one	1 2 3 4 5
Responding to work-related email	1 2 3 4 5
Developing collaborations	1 2 3 4 5
Negotiating agreements	1 2 3 4 5
Analyzing financial data or budgets	1 2 3 4 5
Assessing business trends and strategies, entrepreneurial ideas	1 2 3 4 5
Serving on committees	1 2 3 4 5
Working in a team	1 2 3 4 5
Networking with others	1 2 3 4 5
Work-related travel	1 2 3 4 5
Organizing things, creating systems in the workplace	1 2 3 4 5
Programming/scripting, working with computers	1 2 3 4 5
Planning or organizing events	1 2 3 4 5
Leading or supervising others	1 2 3 4 5
Volunteering in the community	1 2 3 4 5

Other professional interests (describe)

LIST YOUR TOP 3 INTERESTS:

LIST 3 ACTIVITIES YOU WANT TO AVOID:

MATCHING SKILLS, VALUES, AND INTERESTS

For each career path category, score how well the path matches your skills, values, and interests on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = this category matches poorly with my skills, values, and interests and 5 = this category matches very well with my skills, values, and interests. If you don't know enough about a category, insert a ?

Skills	Values	Interests	Scientific Career Paths
			Principal investigator of a lab in a major research-intensive institution
			Other research-intensive careers in academia: staff scientist or lab manager in a larger lab, director of a multi-user research facility in an academic institution
			Careers in academia with heavy emphasis on teaching along with research: faculty at a selective 4-year college, masters-granting university, or doctoral-granting university whose job includes both research and major teaching responsibilities.
			Teaching-intensive careers in academia: faculty in liberal arts college, community college, university lecturer, course director
			Science education for the general public: working at a science museum, public outreach for science-based organizations, training and development with groups in business or industry settings
			Science education for schools/universities: curriculum development, science education researcher, K-12 teacher or science specialist, education program administration or leadership
			Healthcare-related careers: public health agency, genetics counseling, medical informatics/biostatistics
			Writing careers: science writing, medical writing, technical writing, editing, science journalism, publishing, other communications
			Careers in government: research administration (e.g., at NIH, EPA, DOE, USDA), or forensic science (intelligence agencies, federal/state dept. of justice)
			Policy careers: science policy in public sector, science policy in private sector (think tanks, etc.), educational policy, management of science services or societies, working at a foundation or research-funding agency
			Intellectual property careers: patent agent, patent attorney, technology transfer
			Careers related to the business of science: management consulting, business development in a biotech company, venture capital, biotech entrepreneurship, market research, investment banking, technical sales, technical support
			Careers in sales, marketing and support of science-related products: medical science liaison, technical sales, technical support
			Research-intensive career paths in biotech/pharma: bench researcher, managing research teams or research facilities
			Administrative careers in biotech/pharma: regulatory, clinical research/trials management, quality control
			Other career:_____

Are there one or more career path categories that provide an excellent match for your skills **and** your values **and** your interests? If so, circle or highlight these career categories on the table. These are the career path categories that you need to learn more about.

Are there any career paths where you have a high score for two areas (skills or interests or values), but a moderate or low score in one of the other areas? If so, you may want to learn more about these career paths before discounting them.

SETTING PERSONAL GOALS

Looking back at your summary worksheet, identify the skills that need your attention. Then indicate what approach would be best for acquiring that skill. Finally, commit to a time that you will devote to working on it.

SKILL   APPROACH   TIMELINE
Scientific Knowledge

Research Skills

Communication

Professionalism

Management/Leadership

Career Advancement

☞ **Post this list** next to your desk as a reminder of your goals and timeline.

☞ **Put these deadlines on your calendar** to integrate these goals with your deadlines for abstracts, grants, meetings, vacation.

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