

Date:

Year in Program:

Supervisor:

Student:

Institute of Medical Science

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Graduate school is about developing a plan to achieve your personal and professional goals. You will be trained to identify gaps in knowledge and to develop approaches and skills to answer key research questions in your field. Your degree is a professional qualification for further study and employment. Having honest and open discussions with your supervisor is an important part of your training!

As a grad student, you own your education. That means not only being responsible for your thesis project, but also actively getting the training you need and seeking guidance from your mentors (your Supervisor, Program Advisory Committee (PAC), and others), who will support you as partners in your training to develop your own skill set. Fill out this form and share it with your supervisor ahead of your first Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, using the questions to clarify approaches to your student/mentor relationship.

A good place to start your career exploration is a self-assessment of your values, interests and skills using the on-line MyIDP Science Careers (<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>).

Complete an IDP each year thereafter to continue to develop and maintain your mentor/mentee relationship. Keep in mind that this is not a rigid action plan, but rather a way to assess where you are and where you wish to go in your graduate career and beyond. If you find you are having a difficult time filling this form in for any reason, please contact the IMS graduate coordinators (<https://ims.utoronto.ca/core-team>), they are there to help!

KEYS TO A GOOD MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

Establish clear expectations and steps

The IDP covers topics that students have found essential to discuss with their mentors. If you have additional questions or objectives related to your training, these meetings are a great time to bring them up and set action steps.

Have open and direct dialogue

Starting off with strong, supportive communication is a fundamental part of getting continual advice that will help guide you throughout your life and career.

Think intentionally about your training

You will find it helpful to think through what you want to get out of your training and how your supervisors and other sources of support can help you achieve your goals.

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HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR IDP

Step back and self-assess!

It's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture.

Fill out this form, using the questions as a starting point for your mentor relationship with your supervisor.

Set your first meeting with your supervisor.

You are responsible for scheduling and meeting with your supervisor prior to your first PAC meeting to complete your IDP.
(It's best to share your completed IDP form with your supervisor before the meeting)

Lead the discussion.

The IDP covers topics students have found helpful.

If you have questions or objectives related to your training, these meetings are a great time to bring them up.

Complete the "Action Plan" and follow up.

The last page of the IDP encourages you to establish concrete steps in the meeting with your supervisor.

Keep your Action Plan accessible and review it every couple of months.

Keep in mind that plans can change over time, and this is ok! Don't let perfection be a barrier to your success.

Submit the required documentation.

Record the date the meeting occurred on your PAC form.

(The IDP itself remains private between you and your supervisor; you should each keep a file of your action plan.)

STUDENTS: Read the following responsibilities in advance of your meeting, and discuss with your supervisor any questions you may have. This list is intended to help you understand where you should take ownership over your graduate training and how your supervisor can support you with your goals.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Take primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree, take ownership over my thesis project.
- Meet regularly with my supervisor and provide them with updates on the progress and results of my activities and experiments, and communicate in a timely manner.
- Work with my research supervisor to develop a thesis project and select a Program Advisory Committee.
- Initiate requests for feedback and seek advice from my supervisor, PAC, and other mentors.
- Be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of IMS, the School of Graduate Studies and U of T.
- Attend and *actively* participate in lab meetings, seminars, and journal clubs. Ask questions, be engaged.
- Keep up with original literature in my field.
- Be a good lab citizen, maintain a safe and clean space and work collegially with everyone.
- Maintain a detailed, organized, and accurate lab notebook.
- Discuss policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with my supervisor early.
- Discuss policies on authorship and attendance, including funding sources, at professional meetings/conferences with my supervisor.
- Always remember that I am here to learn, and am not expected to know everything already.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be committed to your education and training as a member of the scientific community.
- Be committed to helping plan and direct your research project, allowing you to take ownership of your research while setting reasonable goals and establishing a timeline for completion.
- Be committed to improving as a mentor and making time to meet regularly.
- Clearly communicate in a timely manner.
- Be open, encourage concerns and help to find acceptable solutions to problems as they arise together.
- Be knowledgeable of, and guide you through, IMS' requirements and deadlines.
- Advise and assist with your PAC membership and course selections.
- Help you integrate into the lab environment.
- Lead by example and facilitate your training in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as communication, writing, management, and ethical and professional behaviour.
- Discuss authorship policies, acknowledge your scientific contributions to the lab, and work with you to publish your work in a timely manner prior to your graduation.

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TRAINING/MENTORING

1. What IMS requirements do you need to complete this year?

What is your plan to fulfill them?

2. What fellowships/scholarships are you applying for?

When are their deadlines and what is your action plan for completing them?

How will you get the assistance and guidance you need?

3. What are your primary goals in your academic training this year?

And over the course of your degree?

4. What is important to you in a mentoring relationship right now?

5. Your success as a student is tightly linked to your wellness. What strategies are you employing to ensure your personal wellbeing?

6. Are there any factors that you think are currently affecting your progress in a negative way?

7. What graduate professional development (GPD) activities are you currently taking part in (i.e. MS Career Mentorship Program, GPD Modular Course, etc.) and what help can your supervisor or other faculty/staff provide regarding professional development and training?

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SELF-ASSESSMENT

This section should be completed independently by the student and the supervisor.

Both should mark the student's perceived current ability level according to the scale: **NI (Needs Significant Improvement); A (Average); G (Good); VG (Very Good); E (Exceptional)**.

You and your supervisor should then discuss your assessments together, using this table to check the boxes for skills that you would like to work on in the coming year. This exercise is intended to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses relative to the where you think a student at your stage should be. An honest self-assessment and discussion will help you set goals for your training. Keep in mind that these evaluations are not marks in a course - they are intended to help you improve as a student and scientist. We are all here to learn and grow!

RESEARCH SKILLS & SCIENTIFIC THINKING	CURRENT PERCEIVED ABILITY:	TARGET SKILL FOR THIS YEAR:
Broad-based knowledge of science		
Technical research skills (at the bench or computer for computational projects)		
Critical reading of scientific literature		
Experimental design		
Statistical analysis and interpretation of data		
Creativity and innovative thinking		
Understanding of submission/peer review process		
Identifying and seeking advice		
Time management		
Graphically or pictorially representing data (making effective figures and models)		

COMMUNICATIONS		
Writing for a research proposal or publication		
Writing with appropriate grammar and structure		
Speaking to a specific audience		
Communicating one-on-one		
English fluency		
Working with constructive criticism		
Effectively communicating with supervisor (spoken, written, emails, etc.)		
Effectively communicating with others in the lab and being a good lab citizen		
Teaching, mentoring at the bench (or otherwise)		

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, NETWORKING		
Attending research conferences, and presenting your work (poster, talk)		
Attending professional/career development workshops		

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Networking within the IMS		
Networking outside of the IMS (social media, events, non-research forums)		

OTHER TRANSFERABLE SKILLS		
Taking on leadership roles		
Team building, relationship management		
Decision making, judgment, informed risk taking		
Managing shifting goals		
Prioritization of goals		
Big picture planning events, projects, goals		
CV, Cover letter writing		
Job searching, interviewing		

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ACTION PLAN

This action plan is to be developed by the supervisor and student during or after the discussion. Keep it accessible for your annual IDP meetings and regular check-ins to help guide discussions (monthly, every other month, every 6 months, as determined jointly). At a minimum, ensure that you are discussing your IDP at least once annually and document this at your PAC meeting.

1. Communication

What is the best way to set meetings and communicate regularly?

2. Target skills

What skills (~1-3) did you identify as important development targets for the coming year?

3. Activities

List any activities in which you and your supervisor agree you should participate to achieve your academic objectives in the coming year (ex. career workshops, TAing, coursework, journal clubs, etc.).

4. Financial support

What will be your financial support for the next year (ex. grants, your own fellowships, etc.)?

5. Additional actions

In order to aid your success, are there any additional actions that can be initiated or continued by you?

6. Following up

How often do you and your supervisor plan to meet?

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7. Supervisor's role

How will you, the supervisor, contribute to and support this action plan?

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8. Other

Is there anything else you would like to discuss with your supervisor at this time?

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CAREER EXPLORATION

Take some time to search for career paths that interest you, and list 2-3 below. To get a better assessment of your goals, values, and interests, you may want to try out <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>. Consider including at least one career path outside academia (industry, government, etc.).

	CAREER PATH 1	CAREER PATH 2	CAREER PATH 3
POSITION/TITLE AND DESCRIPTION			
KEY SKILLS REQUIRED			
EXPERIENCE REQUIRED			
ANY CONTACTS IN YOUR NETWORK?			