

Jefferson College of Life Sciences Predoctoral Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Students in Thesis Labs (Year 2 PhD, Year 3 MD/PhD, and beyond)

The College of Life Sciences requires an annual IDP for all predoctoral students (both PhD and MD/PhD). These IDPs should be reviewed and discussed with your thesis advisor and your thesis committee on an annual basis or more frequently and/or with others as warranted. This will ensure open bi-directional communication between trainees and faculty mentors to mutually assess short-term and long-term professional goals and achievements. The purpose is to ensure that periodic review and assessment of a student's current stage of professional development, and plans, address both the general competencies and proficiencies established by the College and its component programs, as well as each trainee's individual professional development needs and goals. The IDP for students in thesis labs involves three sections, including Part A: Self-assessment of Skills, Motivation, and Career Planning; Part B: Assessment of Achievements and Goals; and Part C: Skills to Improve.

Step 1. Self-Assessment of Skills, Achievements, and Goals

For the student, you should take time to reflect and realistically look at your current skills, achievements, and goals. Then fill out Parts A, B, and C of this document and give them to your thesis advisor. Part A is private between you and your thesis advisor, while Parts B and C will become part of your graduate college file and will be shared with your Thesis Committee.

Your thesis advisor should independently fill out a copy of the Assessment in Part A1 prior to your mutual review and discussion.

Step 2. Discuss Assessment and Goals with Thesis Advisor, and Refine your IDP

Students should schedule a dedicated discussion time with their thesis advisor to discuss their academic progress and professional development separate from their research discussions. Together you should identify and prioritize your training needs, and discuss how these should be addressed in the coming period.

Based on your discussion, you should then refine Parts B and C of the IDP together. The objectives of the IDP and its discussion are to:

- Identify specific research and/or career goals and the skills and strengths that you need to develop in order to achieve these goals
- Define concrete actions to help develop these specific skills and strengths

Step 3. Submit the completed and signed IDP and Implement Your Plan.

You and your thesis advisor should retain copies of Parts B and C of your IDP. In addition, send a copy to your program director and to the JCLS Program Coordinator, Danielle Park at Danielle.Park@jefferson.edu.

Keep your IDP accessible and refer to it on a regular basis. Ask yourself if you are following the plan and making progress toward your goals. You should review, revise and update the plan as necessary, in consultation with your thesis advisor and thesis committee.

Student's name _____ Program _____

A. Assessment of Skills, Motivations and Career Planning

Part A is a PRIVATE DOCUMENT to be discussed between student and thesis advisor only, who should both independently fill out Part A1 and then compare and discuss together. Use this section to assess training needs and guide your preparation of the IDP in Parts B and C.

A1.

ASSESSMENT SCALE

At the bench	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement
Designing experiments			
Prioritizing and completing experiments			
Troubleshooting and problem solving			
Quality of data			
Notebook maintenance			
Interpreting data			
Organizational skills			
Time management			
Working with others	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement
Lab citizenship			
Collaborative interactions			
Conflict resolution			
Willingness & ability to seek out help			
Serving as a mentor			
Mentoring relationship between student and thesis advisor			
Networking and meeting new colleagues			
Communication	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement
Informal interactions/communicating clearly			
Oral presentations			
Writing skills/research proposals/ grants			
Writing skills/abstracts and manuscripts			
Teaching, if applicable			
Learning	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement
Seminar attendance			
Journal club attendance			
Active participation in group discussions (in class, lab meeting, journal club, etc.)			
Mastery of the literature (general)			
Mastery of the literature (specific topic)			
Independent and creative thinking and developing new research directions			
Motivation	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement
Enjoy and look forward to work in the lab			
Creativity in work			
Confident in scientific capabilities			
Appropriate level of effort given to work			

I'm most excited or proud about:
I'm most concerned about and would like to discuss:

Student's name _____ Program _____

A2. Career planning	
When do I expect to defend my thesis and complete my PhD? (Or for MD/PhD students, when do I aim to defend my thesis and return to complete medical school?)	
What are my plans immediately after completing my PhD? (For example, postdoctoral training or other career or professional plans.)	
In the long-term, what types of career paths interest me?	
What is important to me in a career?	
What skills are most important for me to acquire for my desired career?	
Who are my best role models or networking contacts for that career?	
How can my thesis advisor best help me to further my career?	

Useful resources for post-PhD career planning can be found at these links:
<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/careers/career-planning-resources>
<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

MD/PhD students are referred to the MD/PhD Steering Committee for advice on career planning.

Student's name _____ Program _____

B. Achievements and Plans/Goals

Achievements/Plans	Last period (accomplished)	Next period (planned)
Courses		
Research/Thesis project		
Publications		
Journal Club Presentations		
Seminar/Research Presentations		
Fellowships (applied for or awarded)		
Conferences attended (local/national/ international)		
Oral presentations		
Poster presentations		
Mentoring		

Teaching		
Leadership experience		
Community service		
Honors and awards received		
Responsible Conduct of Research Training (RCR) (Required in first and fourth years)		
Attendance at career development seminars and workshops		
Networking to promote your goals		
Career exploration including informational interviews, career counseling and mentoring, shadowing and internships		
PhD defense plans		
Job search activities, including CV and resume writing, and applications		
Other		

Some categories may not be applicable to you – if so, simply write “N/A”

Student's name _____ **Program** _____

C. Skills to improve

- Identify specific skills and strengths that you need to develop
- Define concrete actions to help develop these specific skills and strengths

Skills to improve	Action(s)	Time frame
Technical skills at the bench		
Motivation, organizational skills and prioritization		
Working with others		
Creativity & independence in designing research project		
Grasp of literature and continued learning		
Written and oral communication skills		

Add or remove specific "Skills to improve" in these categories, as appropriate, based on discussion of IDP Parts A and B.

In what ways has your graduate program assisted you so far to achieve your educational and career goals?

In what ways could your graduate program help you going forward to better reach your educational and career goals?

Names and Signatures:

Student Name (please print) and Signature

Date

Thesis Advisor Name (please print) and Signature

Date

Thesis Committee Chair Name (please print) and Signature

Date

A copy should be kept by the student, the thesis advisor, and the thesis committee chair. Please send a copy to the Danielle Park via Danielle.Park@jefferson.edu and to your program director(s).

Examples of responses to IDP Part B

B. Achievements and Plans/Goals

Achievements	Last period (accomplished)	This period (planned)
Courses	List course numbers	List course numbers
Publications	Citation for papers submitted, in press, or published	Me et al, Title, to submit when?
Fellowships (applied for or awarded)	List submissions and dates Or awards	Planned submissions and dates
Conferences or seminar series	Conference, date Seminar series X, weekly	Conference, date Seminar series X, weekly
Oral presentations	Forum, date	Forum, date
Poster presentations	Forum, date	Forum, date
Teaching experience	TA, course number Mentee supervised	Planned TA, course number Mentee to be supervised
Community service/ leadership experience	Event, date Committee	Event, date Committee
Responsible Conduct of Research Training (RCR)	RCR course--date	Planned RCR event
Job applications/ PhD defense	Career event attended? Postdoc/job applications?	Postdoc/job applications? Thesis defense?
Other		

Examples of responses to IDP Part C

C. Skills to improve

- Identify specific skills and strengths that you need to develop
- Define concrete actions to help develop these specific skills and strengths

Skills to improve	Example Action(s)	Time frame
Technical skills at the bench	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn technique x from (colleague) • Take technical training course/workshop 	
Motivation, organizational skills and prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet weekly with mentor and generate weekly to-do-lists • Prepare figures for a manuscript • Set timelines for completion of experiments 	
Working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a collaboration 	
Creativity & independence in designing research project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write prelim proposal or predoctoral grant proposal • Write a specific aims page for potential upcoming experiments 	
Grasp of literature and continued learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start/join a journal club • Work with mentor on a list of key papers to read and discuss • Write review article with mentor 	
Written and oral communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a writing course • Write conference abstract • Write review article with mentor • Write predoctoral grant proposal • Write first draft of research manuscript • Start/join peer-editing group • Lab meeting, grad group, dept and/or conference presentations • Give a practice talk to (lab, peers) before your next big presentation, and get feedback • Videotape your presentation and then watch it to identify potential improvements 	