

## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

### What is an IDP?

Simply put, an IDP is a tool to assist in career and personal development no matter what your career choice is. Its purpose is to help you PLAN your career and it includes planning for both short and long-term goals. Importantly, it is a *dynamic* method of career planning and not a performance evaluation tool or a map that you only look at once a year. But every career has its unique challenges, and careers in science are no exception.

### Challenges facing academics

Once upon a time (and probably a very short time at that) “everyone” knew that an academic career was clear: get that PhD, complete a postdoc to improve skills, take your first faculty position and move up the ranks. That is certainly no longer the case – in fact, the number of PhD level scientists and engineers working in academe has dropped from 55% in 1973 to 44% in 2008 and most of us recognize the increasing difficulty of finding and succeeding in an academic career. Further, there is increasing recognition that in science, as in business, there is a significant advantage to those receiving career mentoring. Studies have shown that mentoring is associated with improved career outcomes from higher compensation and greater job satisfaction to a more positive view of career trajectory and a stronger commitment to that career. This has been recognized by the federal funding agencies who now have multiple mentored grant award mechanisms, ALL of which require (and score on) clear and comprehensive mentoring plans. While a mentoring plan differs from an IDP, having an IDP is a big boost in creating a mentoring plan that will both benefit the mentee and lead to greater success in terms of a scored section in a grant proposal.

### How do I create an IDP?

- It starts with honest self-assessment (and often ends there because this is hard)
  - What are your strengths? Not just scientific, but also interpersonal skills, decisional methods, personal style
  - What are your skills? Scientific (e.g. programming languages), academic (writing ability)
  - What are your accomplishments? (hint: think about the new NIH bio!)
    - This MUST include publications because this is going to be important in T&P decisions as well as in funding
    - Depending on your field, patents or inventions go here
  - What are your weaknesses?
    - Start with where you are – what do you need to be the BEST at what you are currently doing?
    - What areas need to be strengthened? Do you need more publications, more first authored publications, more grants,

more time at the bench . . . . what is needed to make you feel even more successful?

- This is not a focus on the negative – and the goal is not to plan to become an expert in everything – this is more of a prioritized list of things you WANT to improve or learn
- Keep in mind that you are working towards a goal, and prioritize accordingly
- Where do you want to go?
  - Generally formulated as a “5-year plan” but that doesn’t really work for everyone
  - A good idea is to think about the path you are on
    - Are you happy with this path?
    - Are there alternatives?
    - Do you have another path you might be equally happy with?
    - What if this just doesn’t go as expected – what would you do then?
- Then ask what the next step is
  - E.g. you are currently an Asst Professor and want to move to Assoc
    - In what time frame? Keep in mind that the institution makes one for you – there is a 7 year tenure clock at UAMS, so that is the MAXIMUM amount of time you have
    - Know what you need to accomplish your goal
      - How many pubs
      - How much grant money
      - Do you have to be PI on two consecutive grants, or can you be co-I
      - What kind of service and how much does it count?
    - To accomplish your goal, what new skills do you need to add? How can you do that?
  - Set up a time frame – small goals in short times (milestones)
  - Re-visit regularly!! This is your game plan, be sure it stays on track and correct as necessary
- Having an IDP is a good start, but it is more useful if you have someone to bounce your ideas off of
  - Look for mentors and keep in mind they do not have to be colleagues, at your level or above it, or even in academia to be helpful
    - Knowing the “rules” – especially the ones that no one writes down – is critical for success
    - Networking is hard work and mentors can help – but you can and should also make your own opportunities!

- If you have the opportunity to sit down with others who are also working on an IDP, get together and brain storm your approaches to the problem
- There is help out there in formulating an IDP. Science has set up a web portal to help academics create an IDP that comes complete with articles and a step-by-step process: <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>
- Here's a template created for business that gives an idea of how to organize your IDP but there are many others

| <u>Career/Future Plan</u>   |   |                            |                   |                           |                           |  |                            |                            |  |  |                          |
|---|---|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| <p><b>Who you are?</b></p> <p>Analytical, driven, ambitious, perceptive, creative, enjoy working with numbers / money, inquisitive, systematic, disciplined</p> <p><b>Education</b></p> <p>A Levels – Maths, Chemistry, Physics<br/>Masters – MChem<br/>PhD – Computational Chemistry<br/>MBA - Warwick</p> <p><b>Employment etc</b></p> <p>Sun Valley – factory operative<br/>Exe Computers – owner/manager<br/>Severn Trent Laboratories<br/>- Analyst<br/>- Team Leader<br/>- Logistics Manager<br/>E-Local Trading – Futures Trader</p> <p><b>Personal preferences</b></p> <p>Being involved in a competitive environment with opportunities for performance</p> <p><b>Values</b></p> <p>Maximise return on time, create efficiency, contribute to team objectives or perform as individual</p> <p><b>Limitations</b></p> <p>International experience, foreign language</p> | <p><b>My Goals:</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Short Term</u></th> <th><u>Mid Term (2-5 yrs)</u></th> <th><u>Long Term &gt;5yrs</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Work</b> – Secure a position with opportunity for progression on demonstration of ability</td> <td>Develop into a senior role</td> <td>Head business unit/venture</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Home</b> – Visit brother in Canada. Support younger brother in developing surgery plans</td> <td>Confirm commitment to long term relationship</td> <td>Support family situation</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> |                            | <u>Short Term</u> | <u>Mid Term (2-5 yrs)</u> | <u>Long Term &gt;5yrs</u> | <b>Work</b> – Secure a position with opportunity for progression on demonstration of ability | Develop into a senior role | Head business unit/venture | <b>Home</b> – Visit brother in Canada. Support younger brother in developing surgery plans | Confirm commitment to long term relationship | Support family situation |
| <u>Short Term</u>   | <u>Mid Term (2-5 yrs)</u>   | <u>Long Term &gt;5yrs</u>  |                   |                           |                           |  |                            |                            |  |  |                          |
| <b>Work</b> – Secure a position with opportunity for progression on demonstration of ability  | Develop into a senior role  | Head business unit/venture |                   |                           |                           |  |                            |                            |  |  |                          |
| <b>Home</b> – Visit brother in Canada. Support younger brother in developing surgery plans  | Confirm commitment to long term relationship  | Support family situation   |                   |                           |                           |  |                            |                            |  |  |                          |
| <p><b>Current competencies, skills, knowledge, experience</b></p> <p>Analytical, modelling, chemistry, logistics, systems, processes, project management, innovation<br/>Interest rate futures markets, technical, fundamental, psychological<br/>Management, property, trading, research, business improvement</p>   |   |                            |                   |                           |                           |  |                            |                            |  |  |                          |
| <p><b>Development needs and skills required for current job and future goals</b></p> <p>Understanding of other investment techniques – to be satisfied by majoring in Finance during the MBA<br/>Gain exposure to company strategy to add to day to day performance management experience and to lay foundation for more senior position<br/>Participate in opportunities to create and develop new business units or entry into new markets.</p>   |   |                            |                   |                           |                           |  |                            |                            |  |  |                          |
| <p><b>Action Plan</b></p> <p>Develop plan to utilise MBA placement as an opportunity to experience and demonstrate ability to potential future employers. Investigate trading availability in sectors other than banking e.g. EON, BP</p>   |   |                            |                   |                           |                           |  |                            |                            |  |  |                          |