

Biology Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP)

This document is part of the Biology Professional Skills package, which also includes **Professional Skills Requested from Employers** and the **Professional Skills Checklist**. The purpose of this document is to guide you in identifying the skills that you need to better develop for a career in Biology, and to help you set specific short-term goals to attain these professional skills.

Once you have completed your self-assessment and IDP, see the **Professional Skills Checklist** for ideas on how/where to develop your professional skills.

What is an IDP?

An IDP (Individual Development Plan) is a tool that provides you with the opportunity to assess your short terms and long-term goals. The development of an IDP is an ongoing process, which you should revisit over the course of your graduate program as your interests and goals evolve.

You can also think of your IDP as a partnership, led by you the graduate student and supported by your mentor (e.g. supervisor, post-doc, senior PhD student, collaborator) to encourage open dialogue regarding professional and academic development and opportunities. Ideally, your IDP, self-assessment of skills, and specific goals should be discussed with your mentor(s)

There are 3 steps to the Biology IDP:

- 1) What are your short- and long-term goals?
- 2) Self-Assessment of your current Professional Skills
- 3) Set specific goals for developing 3 Professional Skills over the next 12 months

Name:		Mentor:	
E-mail Address		Date:	

For Your Mentor:

1. What are your experiences in my field of study?

2. In what ways, would you be willing to contribute to my growth?

Short-term goals:

1. Briefly outline your specific research project goals for your thesis/dissertation in the next year? (i.e. data collection, literature review, statistical analysis, thesis chapter completion, publications, applications for funding, etc.)

2. What specific skills or knowledge (i.e., methods, techniques, specific topics) do you want to improve on this year that will help you with your research project?

3. What resources will you need to accomplish these short-term goals? (i.e., mentorship/training, learn new software, online course, etc.)

4. What conferences, workshops, or professional skills courses you are planning to attend this year?

5. What awards might you be eligible to apply for this year (i.e., York U awards, OGS, NSERC, CHIR)? What could you do this year to boost your application success (e.g. improve grades, present at conferences, submit publications, develop mentors for letters of reference)?

6. What do you think you want to accomplish career-wise in the next year? Be specific (e.g. complete degree, apply for or begin subsequent degree, postdoc or professional school, apply for jobs).

Long Term Goals (e.g. after degree completion)

1. What is your future potential career (s) &/or professional aspirations? List at least two.

2. What do you want to be doing after you graduate?

Self-Assessment of Skills:

Adapted from the Science Careers my IDP, and Brown University Biomedical Graduate IDP. For each skill, put an "X" in the column that most accurately describes your current level of expertise.

Core competencies	No basis to evaluate	Needs development	Appropriate to career stage	Strength
1. Scientific Knowledge				
a. Critical evaluation of scientific literature				

Core competencies	No basis to evaluate	Needs development	Appropriate to career stage	Strength
b. Deep knowledge of specific research area				
2. Research Skills				
a. Careful recordkeeping practices				
b. Demonstrating responsible conduct in research (i.e.. animal ethics, conflict of interest, data ethics, publication ethics...)				
c. Interpretation of data				
d. Statistical Analysis				
3. Communication				
a. Negotiating difficult conversations				
b. Presenting to varied audiences				
c. Training and mentoring individuals				
d. Writing and editing for varied mediums (i.e. scientific publications, grant proposals, non-scientific audiences...)				
4. Professionalism				
a. Contributing to the discipline (i.e. professional society member)				
b. Demonstrating workplace etiquette				
c. Maintaining positive relationships with colleagues				
d. Upholding commitments and meeting deadlines				
5. Management and Leadership Skills				
a. Dealing with conflict				
b. Managing research resources responsibly				

Core competencies	No basis to evaluate	Needs development	Appropriate to career stage	Strength
c. Planning and organizing projects				
d. Serving as a role model				
e. Time management				
6. Career Advancement				
a. Creating and maintaining a professional network				
b. Tracking professional development and accomplishments (e.g. writing and maintaining CV or resume)				

Set Short-Term Professional Skill Goals

Outline the specific skills/qualifications you need to develop to better achieve your long-term career goals. Pay close attention to your self-assessment and review the **Professional Skills Requested from Employers in Biology**. Identify 2-3 skills that you plan to develop this year.

Review the **Professional Skills Checklist for Biology** and identify how & when you will develop these skills.

Skill/Qualification	Development Plan	Time Frame
1.		
2.		
3.		

Sources:

The following sources were used in developing the YorkU Biology Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP):

- Brown University Biomedical Graduate Individual Development Plan (IDP):
https://www.brown.edu/academics/biomed/graduate-postdoctoral-studies/sites/academics-biomed-graduate-postdoctoral-studies/files/OGPSIDP_Template_August2019.pdf
- University of Alberta Department of Biological Science Individual Development Plan Summary: <https://www.ualberta.ca/biological-sciences/media-library/graduate/revised-form1.pdf>
- University of Berkeley QB3 Individual Development Plan (IDP):
<https://qb3.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/QB3-postqualIDP.pdf>
- York University Faculty of Graduate Studies Individual Development Plan (IDP)