



Student Name:

Advisor Name:

Date:

Setting goals and taking stock of whether you have accomplished those goals is a crucial habit to being productive, not just busy. Guided by the Individual Development Plan (IDP), formal meetings with your advisor are a chance for you to step back from your daily lab work, assess your progress, and plan for the future. Your advisor and mentors are invaluable resources to help you propose and execute next steps that will help make you a better scientist.

HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR IDP

- 1 Step back and self-assess!**
It's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. Fill out this form, using these questions as a jumping off point to understand your research progress, development, and goals.
- 2 Set your annual meeting with your advisor.**
You are responsible for scheduling annual IDP meetings with your advisor to go over your IDP, in addition to annual progress meetings with your committee. We strongly recommend you share your completed IDP form with your advisor before your meeting.
- 3 Lead the discussion.**
The IDP covers topics students have found helpful. If you have questions or additional objectives related to your training, these meetings are a great time to bring them up.
- 4 Complete the “Action Plan” and make a plan for following up.**
The last page of the IDP encourages you to establish concrete steps in the meeting with your advisor. Keep your Action Plan accessible and check it every couple months.
- 5 Submit required documentation by August 1.**
Use the form at <http://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/reporting/> to record the date the meeting occurred. (Your actual IDP and discussions remain private between you and your advisor.)

“The IDP is highly valid for assessing important skills; meeting with my mentor helped me define my goals and develop an action plan.”

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SCIENTIFIC/RESEARCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

What specific question is your thesis intended to answer? How familiar are you with the academic literature related to this topic?

Do you have a good grasp of how this project fits into your lab/field as a whole?

How do you feel your project is progressing?

What are your near-term research goals? For each goal, specify any areas where you feel you need help or additional training (e.g., the need to learn high-throughput sequencing). Include any techniques you want to learn, scientific collaborations, etc.

CHALLENGES

Describe any unusual or unanticipated challenges you experienced this year in trying to accomplish the goals you set out last year with your advisor.

What actions have you taken to meet these challenges?

How can your advisor help you?

Goal Setting Info: <https://bewell.stanford.edu/achieving-your-smart-health-goal/>

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What Home Program requirements do you need to complete, and what is your plan to fulfill them?

What fellowships are you applying to, and have you been able to get the guidance you need?

Many students find it useful to participate in additional training, teaching, conferences, outreach, and other activities. Do you need any help finding opportunities?

List any involvement you are thinking about in the following areas:

ACADEMIC COURSEWORK/TRAINING:

TEACHING/MENTORING:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

CONFERENCES:

SERVICE/OUTREACH:

Where you think further explanation might be helpful, please explain what you hope to gain from any of the activities and experiences above and how they will help you reach your goals.

Professional Info: <https://vpge.stanford.edu/professional-development/programs>

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One of the most important parts of your PhD training is to develop a skill set transferrable beyond graduation. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses below relative to where you think a student should be at the end of their PhD studies, checking the boxes for skills that you would like to target in the coming year. Ask your advisor how s/he agrees or disagrees with this assessment. An honest self-assessment and discussion will help you set goals for your training.

Mark your perceived current ability level.

RESEARCH SKILLS & SCIENTIFIC THINKING

1 (weak) (strong) 3

Target skill
for this year

Broad-based knowledge of science

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

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

Writing/Speaking Info: <https://undergrad.stanford.edu/tutoring-support/hume-center/writing/graduate-students>

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Mentoring is a distributive process, allowing you to take advantage of the talents and experiences of many people throughout your training. You may want to consider using all or some of the IDP as an impetus for conversations with each of your mentors, not just your advisor. In the space below, consider the breadth of mentoring you currently receive.

	How often are you meeting?	Is this sufficient?	Do you initiate meetings?	Need help finding or coordinating?
Lead mentor				
Thesis committee: as a group (List names)				
Thesis committee: one-on-one Additional mentors (List names)				
Collaborators (List names/ roles in your research)				

What have you found most beneficial of the mentoring you have received? Is there anything that would improve the mentoring you receive?

Mentoring Info: <https://mentoring.stanford.edu>

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PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Have you started to think about your long-term goals? (i.e., activities you want to be doing on a daily basis in 5-10 years after you graduate.)

—If so, list any early thoughts you have. If not, do you have any questions at this point?

Have you thought about what factors inform these goals?

—If so, list any early thoughts you have. If not, do you have any questions at this point?

What guidance would help you with your development and exploration of career options?

What features of the lab group and your relationships with colleagues are most helpful and supportive to your personal development?

What features of the lab group and your relationships with colleagues are most helpful and supportive to your personal development?

Are there any factors that you are concerned may negatively affect your progress?

What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide? Indicate if you need help finding professional or personal development resources.

Your success as a student is tightly linked to your wellness. What are you doing to maintain this?

Wellness Info: <https://vaden.stanford.edu/caps-and-wellness/counseling-and-psychological-services>

Career Info: <https://med.stanford.edu/bioscicareers/>

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THIS ACTION PLAN IS TO BE DEVELOPED JOINTLY BY THE GRADUATE STUDENT AND THE MENTOR DURING OR AFTER THE DISCUSSION. Keep it accessible for your yearly IDP meetings and potential monthly check-ins, as determined by the two of you.

1

Projected timeline

What is the projected timeline for completing your current projects?

2

Target skills

What skills (~1-2) did you identify as important development targets for the coming year?

3

Activities

List any activities in which you and your mentor agree you should participate to achieve your academic objectives in the coming year. For additional resources, consult the IDP section of the Biosciences website at <http://biosciences.stanford.edu/idp/>.

4

Financial support

If you know, what will be your financial support for the next year?

5

Additional actions

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

6

Following up

When are you and your mentor going to follow up on your IDP and progress? (An annual meeting is only the minimum required.)

7

Other

Is there anything else you would like to discuss with your advisor/mentors at this time?

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