

### WHAT IS AN IDP?

An IDP provides you with the opportunity to think about your training objectives, your progress towards them, and to set and/or refine goals for the future. In the pages that follow, you will find a blank IDP for completion. It includes a series of questions covering topics of importance for your stage of training (G1, G2, or G3 and above), a skill self-assessment, and a final section to help you develop an action plan for the coming year. Also included is a *Molecular Cell* article written by BBS students that describes the benefits of IDPs and associated yearly planning meetings with your mentor. We also encourage you to visit <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org> where they provide additional IDP resources and excellent articles related to mentorship and science careers.

### BENEFITS OF AN IDP

Just as the process of writing a research article or proposal focuses your work at the bench, the IDP helps you develop an efficient training plan tailored to support your specific career ambitions. The act of completing the IDP will stimulate you to define your goals in more specific terms for both the short and long term, and will motivate you to identify resources which can help you meet them.

Another benefit of the IDP is that it can serve as a useful framework for discussing your training and career objectives with your mentor at a yearly planning meeting. Importantly, we want you to gain the most benefit from the IDP, thus we want you to think hard and frankly about the IDP. Sharing is not a requirement, nor will the IDP be kept on file by BBS. You are free to share as much or as little of the plan as you feel comfortable. Note that the IDP process will be most effective if used to guide candid discussions with a mentor/advisor.

### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Your completion of the IDP –privately or with a mentor– along with a corresponding yearly training/career-planning meeting with your mentor is a requirement of the BBS program. Because the beginning of a new year is an ideal time for self-reflection and planning, we ask that you **complete the IDP in January, and have the yearly planning meeting before the end of February each year.**

For G1 students, the first Spring semester meeting with your program advisor that takes place in January will serve as this planning meeting. For G2 students and above, documentation (IDP Reporting Page) that the IDP has been completed and planning meeting held must be submitted online to BBS before March 1st.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Complete the appropriate IDP form (G1, G2, or G3 and above) in January. For more information about the process and its benefits see *Mol Cell* (2015) 58: 718-721 and <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>
- 2 Schedule a meeting with your program advisor or mentor. The meeting should be held before March 1st. For G1s, scheduling is arranged by the BBS office.
- 3 Share the desired portion of your IDP with your program advisor or mentor.
- 4 Meet with your program advisor or mentor and discuss your goals/plans.
- 5 Refine your action plan based on the discussion.
- 6 For G2 students and above, [submit the IDP Reporting Page online](#) to BBS confirming IDP completion and advisory meeting held.

Complete the form in January of your G2 year. Share the desired portion(s) of the plan with your thesis mentor or an alternate faculty mentor of your choosing. Discuss the plan with your chosen mentor and [submit the IDP Reporting Form online](#) to the BBS office by the end of February.

The IDP will serve as a framework for discussions with your advisor/mentor to maximize the productivity of the mentoring session(s) and solidify your plans for the coming year. We also encourage you to visit <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org> where they provide additional IDP resources and articles related to mentorship and science careers.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 What BBS requirements have you completed thus far? What are the remaining requirements to satisfy and which ones will you complete in the coming year?
- 2 What are your professional goals for the coming year?
- 3 What resources or support mechanisms do you plan on using to help you accomplish these goals? (e.g. Faculty mentor, BBS office, Paths in DMS Program, Harvard Office of Career Services, Harvard Bureau of Study Counsel, other...)
- 4 Could other resources be provided that would be helpful? (please discuss this with your faculty mentor, the program heads, or the BBS program office, as this feedback can be used to make improvements to the program)

**QUESTIONS CONTINUED**

- 5 How will you prepare for meetings with your thesis advisor this year to make them as productive as possible? Is the current frequency of meetings sufficient? If not, what frequency would be ideal?
- 6 What are the goals of your thesis project? Do you feel comfortable with your knowledge of the relevant literature?
- 7 How are your preparations for the PQE progressing? Have you identified individuals other than your advisor that can help provide feedback on your thesis research? If not, who might these individuals be?
- 8 Do you plan on applying for fellowships this year? If so, what are the deadlines? (Please reach out to Alex Shimada-Brand, [ashimada@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:ashimada@hms.harvard.edu), in the DMS office for more information)
- 9 What are the different career paths open to Ph.D. scientists? Which ones appeal to you? What career resources do you plan on taking advantage of in the coming year (e.g. DMS PATHS, Office of Career Services, Networking Events...)?
- 10 Do you have any concerns? What would help to alleviate these concerns?

**SKILLS ASSESSMENT**

Rate your current skill level on a scale from 1 (weakest) to 5 (strongest).

**Research and Science:**

- \_\_\_ Broad-based knowledge of biology
- \_\_\_ Quantitative/Statistical methods
- \_\_\_ Programming skills
- \_\_\_ Critical Reading of the Literature
- \_\_\_ Experimental Design
- \_\_\_ Ability to frame scientific questions
- \_\_\_ Ability to solve technical problems
- \_\_\_ Identifying advisors and seeking advice
- \_\_\_ Time Management

**Communication:**

- \_\_\_ Writing for proposals or publications
- \_\_\_ Public speaking
- \_\_\_ Communicating one-on-one
- \_\_\_ Giving constructive criticism
- \_\_\_ Accepting constructive criticism
- \_\_\_ Networking

**ACTION PLAN**

1) If applicable, compare your current skills assessment to your previous IDP. Have you successfully addressed areas of emphasis from the previous year? If not, what will you do differently this year to improve in these areas?

2) What new skills are you designating as important for developing during the coming academic year? What is your plan for improving these skills?

**ACTION PLAN Continued**

3) What activities/resources will you take advantage of to help you achieve your academic and research objectives this year?

4) Given the fellowship deadlines, when will you start putting the application together? Plan to start early enough so that you can receive feedback from your colleagues on the initial draft of your proposal.

**THOUGHTS AND NOTES**