HARVARDBBS
PHD PROGRAM IN BIOLOGICAL AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

# INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## 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

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| 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. |

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# Individual Development Plan (IDP) for G1 BBS students

Complete this form and share desired portion(s) with your BBS Program Advisor prior to and in preparation for your first spring-semester meeting to be held end of January. This IDP is designed to help you think about your goals for the year and provide a useful framework for maximizing discussions with and mentorship by your BBS Program Advisor. We also encourage you to visit http://myidp.sciencecareers.org where additional IDP resources are provided as well as excellent articles related to mentorship and science careers.

## QUESTIONS

1 What BBS Program requirements have you completed thus far? What requirements will you complete this year? Include Fall G1, Spring G1, and Fall G2 courses.

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 BBS program office, your program advisor and/or program heads, as this feedback can be used to improve the program.)

5 What qualities are you looking for in a potential thesis advisor/mentor? Have you found these qualities in any of your rotations thus far?

6 What qualities are you looking for in a thesis laboratory (size, other students, specific research topics, expertise in specific techniques...)? Have you found these qualities in any of your rotations thus far?

7 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, in the DMS office for more information)

8 Do you have any concerns about the first year of graduate school and beyond? What would help to alleviate these concerns?

**Student Name:** **Advisor Name:** **Date:**

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# Individual Development Plan (IDP) for G1 BBS students

## 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) What skills will you work on improving this year that are important to your development? What is your plan for improving these skills?

2) What activities/resources have you identified that will help you achieve your academic objectives this year? (Be sure to ask your program advisor about additional resources)

3) 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.

## NOTES/ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

**Student Name:** **Advisor Name:** **Date:**