

NCAR/UCP Postdoctoral Fellows Individual Development Plan

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) provide a planning tool that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. IDPs serve as a communication tool between the postdoc and the mentor or host. IDPs should be established at the beginning of each postdoctoral appointment, and do not replace performance appraisal or annual report processes at UCAR. Postdocs should take the lead in completing and updating the IDP and should discuss progress regularly with their mentor.

What is the purpose of the IDP?

As a postdoc, you own your career. That means not only being responsible for your research, but also actively getting the training you need and seeking guidance from your mentors and hosts. If you have questions or additional objectives related to your postdoctoral position, these IDP meetings are a great time to bring them up.

Overview of the steps in creating and using an IDP

- Step back and self-assess
- Plan a meeting with your mentor/host
- Lead the discussion
- Complete the “Action Plan” and follow up
- Meet at regular intervals to revisit your IDP

Details:

- Postdocs should have at least one mentor or host who will guide them on their research, career opportunities, and support their networking by introducing them to colleagues and including them in group meetings.
- The IDP includes a self-assessment for the postdoc in which they will identify strengths and areas of improvement for different skills and areas of knowledge.
- The Action Plan of the IDP encourages the postdoc to establish concrete steps in the meeting with the mentor. The Action Plan should be kept accessible and checked on it every couple of months.

Postdoctoral Fellow responsibilities related to the IDP

1. Meet regularly with your host or mentor.
2. Provide them with updates on progress.
3. Initiate requests for feedback and seek advice from your mentors and others.

Mentor/host responsibilities in supporting the postdoc

1. Assist the postdoctoral fellow in clarifying their career objectives. Use the self-assessment and action plan to discuss ideas.
2. Assist the postdoc with setting goals as they develop the IDP. These could include research milestones, publishing, conference presentations, grant writing, and service.

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Postdoctoral Fellow name: _____

Postdoctoral Fellow host lab or program: _____

Postdoctoral Fellow host or mentor name(s): _____

Postdoctoral appointment start date: _____

End date of Postdoctoral appointment: _____

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW - SELF ASSESSMENT

1. Write about your short-term and long-term career objectives (e.g. a career in research, teaching, the private sector, etc.).

2. Fill out this self-assessment, and then review it with the mentor/ host. Identify areas for improvement by comparing current skills and strengths with those still needed. Mentors may have feedback on why these skills are valuable in a certain career.

Skills/knowledge	Strengths	Areas for improvement
Discipline specific knowledge		
Research skills (synthesize existing work, data analysis, writing, etc.)		

<p>Research tools (statistics, lab skills, software, etc.)</p>		
<p>Research collaborations (how to find collaborators, develop those relationships, etc.)</p>		
<p>Grant writing (experience being involved a writing grant, etc.)</p>		
<p>Understanding publishing process (where to publish, authorship, responding to reviews, etc.)</p>		
<p>Communication (skill with presenting or writing work, being heard in meetings, etc.)</p>		
<p>Leadership (how to take initiative, organize events, lead committees, serve on panels, etc.)</p>		

Project Management (planning the components of a project, meeting deadlines, etc.)		
Time management (block out work time on calendar, define milestones with mentor, etc.)		
Service (be a mentor, serve on a committee, etc.)		

3. Action Plan: Outline specific goals for the duration of your appointment at NCAR/UCP

Goal	Description & timeline	Resources and support needed

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Agreement for meetings between postdoctoral fellow and the mentor/ host

The postdoc and mentor should identify approximate meeting dates for IDP review, with reviews at least every six months. Use the space below to note future times for reviewing the postdoc's IDP.

1. _____ (first meeting)
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Postdoc Signature

Date

Host/Mentor Signature

Date