



Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
Faculty of Arts & Sciences
Harvard University

Date:

Postdoc name:

Mentor name:

Department

Your postdoctoral training is a period of growth towards your career in or outside academia. There is no single prescribed path to postdoctoral success. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is designed to help you to reflect on your goals, make plans to realize these goals, and address challenges that may arise along the way. This will require reflection on your part and collaboration with your mentor and others. In all cases, maintaining an healthy relationship and clear, open communication with your PI will be key to optimizing your training and research experience.

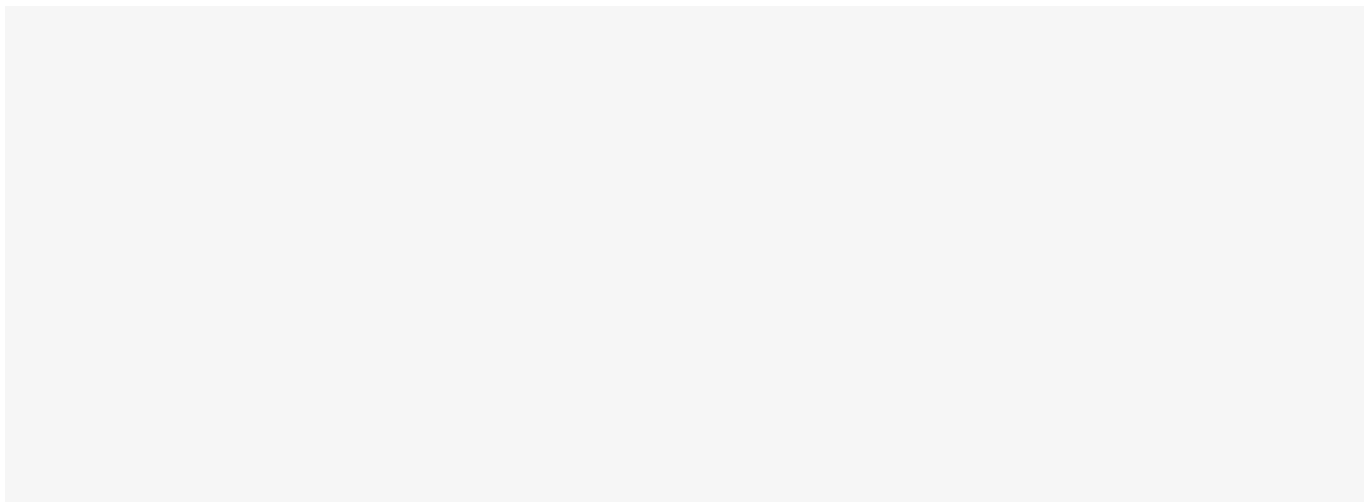
Fill out this form and ideally share it with your mentor ahead of your annual mentoring meeting.

How to Complete Your IDP

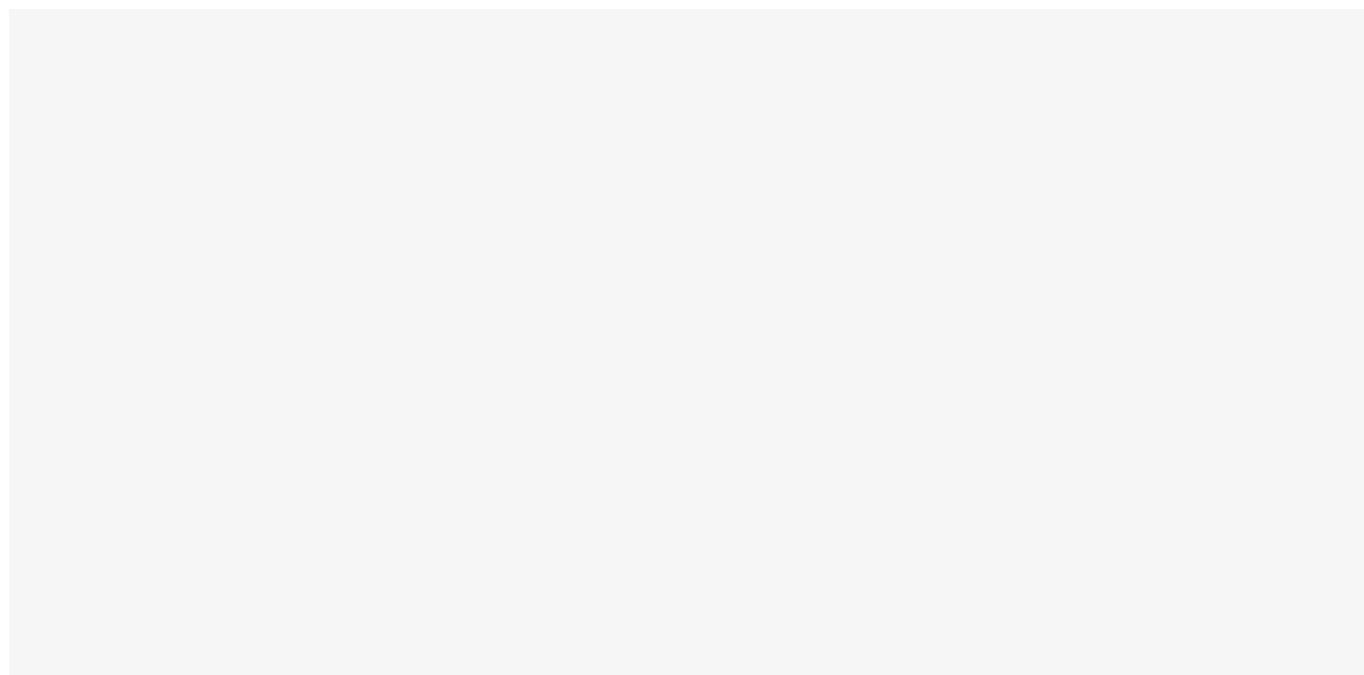
- 1. The Big Picture**
Fill out this form, using the questions as a jumping off point to understand your research progress, development, and goals.
- 2. Use the IDP Topics to Lead the discussion.**
This meeting is a great time to bring up additional questions and to set expectations about your working relationship.
- 3. Set up a meeting with your faculty mentor.**
Share your completed IDP form with your faculty mentor before your meeting.
- 4. Complete the Action Plan and make a plan for following up.**
- 5. Document your meeting.**
Please be sure to record the date and content of your IDP conversation with your faculty mentor. Both your IDP and the content of your conversation with your faculty mentor are private.

Part I. Self-Assessment

Which of your **past accomplishments** will contribute to the success of your postdoctoral training? What skills are you bringing? (Communication, teamwork, techniques, management, leadership, etc. If you are changing fields, consider how your prior experience might be applied.)



What areas of learning and growth would you like to develop in the next year? Which of these areas could be addressed in the next 3, 6 or 9 months? Be as specific as possible, including how you would like to accomplish them.



Part II. Career Goals

Describe your **long-term goals**.

Research Goals: What specific area(s) of research do you wish to explore during your postdoctoral training? With which specific methods or approaches would like to gain familiarity or gain expertise?

Professional Development Goals: What professional skills would you like to acquire during your training? Examples might include: public speaking, grant writing, manuscript preparation, teamwork, personnel management, teaching, mentoring, etc.

Career Goals: What are your first and second choices of long-term careers--i.e. what position do you hope to hold 10 years from now? Be as specific as you can, and indicate relative enthusiasm for each choice. You might also want to reflect on the primary factors driving these goals (e.g., personal interest in specific research area, teaching, business, government, writing; geographic priorities; family commitments; financial objectives; position in home country; immigrating to the US; etc.).

Part III. Objectives

What are some activities that might help you to achieve the research and professional goals you outlined on the previous page?

Research goals (list 1-3): Examples include: A course, meeting or workshop attendance (specify if possible); A fellowship or grant application; An anticipated publication (list tentative title if appropriate). Make sure to include objectives in the coming year or longer-term objectives, and a relative timeline for each objective (i.e. are these objectives dependent of each other? Do some make sense to approach immediately, while others make sense to delay?)

Professional Development Objectives (list 1-3): For example, courses, meeting or workshop attendance. (specify if possible); teaching/mentoring; service opportunities; etc. Note that the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs regularly provides information about these types of programs.

Part IV. Agreed Upon Action Plan for Next Year

To be developed jointly by the postdoc and the mentor(s) during or after the discussion.

Consider the following questions as you develop an action plan with your mentor:

- List any **activities** in which you and your mentor agree you should participate in to achieve your professional/career goals in the coming year.
- Do you have guaranteed **funding** for the next year? If not, what back-up plans are in place?
- Are there **specific actions** that you and/or your mentor can undertake that will support your success (e.g., modify working styles, meetings to discuss progress, networking opportunities)?
- This IDP is a **living document**, and the goals within should be revisited throughout the year. Are there specific goals that you and your mentor should discuss before your next annual meeting?

