



Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
Faculty of Arts and 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 meant 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 a **healthy relationship and clear, open communication with your PI** will be key to **optimizing your training and research experience**.

The following provides some guiding questions that can facilitate an initial discussion of goals and objectives and assess the immediate training needs for a postdoctoral scholar.

Postdoc: complete **Parts I to III** and attach your updated CV. Provide both documents to your PI at least 3 days in advance of scheduling your initial mentoring meeting.

Faculty Mentor and Postdoc: discuss Parts I to III and develop action steps towards progress. List agreed-upon action steps in Part IV.

PART I: SELF-APPRAISAL

Describe your greatest **accomplishments** (papers, presentations) that you feel contribute to a successful start of your postdoc appointment. What skills do you think you are bringing to the lab/research group/department (Communication, teamwork, techniques, management, leadership, etc.)? If you are changing fields, consider how your prior experience might be applied.)

What new areas of learning and growth would you like to develop in the six months/year (e.g., learning a new technique, grant writing, developing presentation skills, etc.)? 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 III: OBJECTIVES

For each goal above, specify 2 to 5 **shorter-term objectives** that are important to achieving that goal. These objectives may include mastery and application of technique that is applied to the condition of interest. For example, one objective could be "To apply protein arrays to study human SLE." Other objectives could include: to participate in a University committee, or apply for a policy internship, or take specific courses/professional development opportunities by a certain date.

- a. **Research objectives related to your Research Goals:** 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?)

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- b. **Career/Professional Development Objectives Related to Career Goals :**

For example, courses, meeting or workshop attendance. (Specify if possible); teaching/mentoring; service opportunities; etc. Note that the FAS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs regularly provides information about these types of programs.

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Part IV. Agreed Upon Action Plan for Next Year

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

Consider the following questions as you develop an action plan with your mentor. Make the objectives specific, measurable, behavior focused, and within a specific time frame (e.g., I will attend my professional society's preconference workshop on grant writing this year).

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?

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