

UMass Amherst Individual Development Plan Template for Postdocs

Introduction:

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a set of research, professional and career development strategies to help postdocs achieve success at UMass Amherst and beyond. The IDP is comprised of the following sections:

Section I: Research Objectives, Plans and Expectations (required under the postdoc collective bargaining contract)

Section II: Professional and Career Development Objectives (optional)

Within 1 month of your postdoc appointment start date, Section I should be initiated. Optionally, Section II may be completed at the same time or at a future date.

The Role of the IDP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empowers postdocs to take ownership of their path through a process of self-reflection, assessment and goal setting• Facilitates conversations with supervisors, allowing postdocs to verify expectations and seek feedback and guidance for research and career progression• Creates realistic road maps for long term goals, short term deliverables, progress milestones, and career development• Helps identify resources, strategies, and mentors for targeted research and career goals	
Role of the Postdoc in the IDP	Role of the Supervisor/PI in the IDP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish short-term research objectives, action plans and timelines for research progress• Clarify and document short-term research objectives• Identify professional and career development objectives; establish goals, action plans and timelines for progress• Create a plan for establishing and engaging a Mentoring Network and Professional References	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster a positive and supportive environment for the sharing of constructive feedback• Discuss research objectives and expectations; help prioritize goals to achieve research milestones• Create an open dialogue to help postdoc align goals, skills, and interests with potential career paths• Help postdoc connect with resources and networks to advance research and career development goals

Name:		Department:
Date:	Principal Investigator (PI):	

Section I: Research Objectives, Plans and Expectations

1. Within 1 month of your postdoc start date, or after completing the Postdoc Research Progress Report (RPR), draft responses to Section I (A-C).
2. Schedule a meeting with your PI to discuss Section I.
3. Within 2 weeks of the above meeting, submit the updated draft to your PI.
4. Your PI will review the document as necessary.
5. Once revisions are complete, you and your PI will sign and date Section I D.
6. At any time, you or your PI can initiate a meeting to discuss proposed revisions to the document.

A. What are your short-term research objectives?

B. What is your plan to achieve these research objectives?

Research Goal(s)	Action Step(s)	Timeframe

*With all Goal Setting, make sure Goals are **SMART**- **S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**ctionable, **R**ealistic, **T**imely

C. Additional Goals and Expectations During the Postdoc Appointment

Jointly with your PI, summarize any additional goals and expectations for your postdoc, such as publications, presentations, manuscripts, grant/fellowship applications, conference attendance, etc. If applicable, include required expectations of any sponsoring grant or contract.

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D. Signatures

I certify that I have reviewed Section I with my PI.

X

Postdoc Signature

Printed Name

Date

I certify that I have reviewed Section I with my postdoc.

X

Advisor Signature

Printed Name

Date

Section II: (optional) Professional and Career Development Objectives

To help identify and define short-term and long-term career and professional objectives, self-assessment tools are recommended. See Appendix I for more details.

A. Identify Career Objectives

Select two different career objectives that match your skills and strengths.

Career Objective 1:

Career Objective 2:

B. Set Professional and Career Development Goals*

Identify short-term goals in order to map out steps to achieve your long-term career objectives.

Professional and Career Development Goal(s)	Action Step(s)	Timeframe

*With all Goal Setting, make sure Goals are **SMART**- Specific, Measureable, Actionable, Realistic, Timely

C. Set Goals* to Establish and Maintain a Mentoring Network

Establishing and maintaining a professional network beyond your primary advisor is important for success at UMass and beyond. Potential mentors can include peers and near-peers (other postdocs), family, friends, former classmates, former employers, former professors, current professors in your department, professors in other departments, and professionals in your field. Remember, you should be thinking of building a team of mentors. No one individual will share all of your values and provide all of the components you need to be successful. When identifying potential mentors, consider:

1. How might this individual contribute to your professional development?
2. What strategies would help you establish and maintain a relationship with this individual?

Identify areas in your life and career preparation that would benefit from mentorship.	Who could provide this mentorship?	What are your action steps to engage and maintain relationships with your mentors?

*With all Goal Setting, make sure Goals are **SMART**- Specific, Measureable, Actionable, Realistic, Timely

D. Establish Professional References

Your job search will be highly influenced by references who can offer specific information about your research and professional skills. Who will these references be and how will you ensure that these individuals will have enough information to provide a thorough reference?

Reference	Which of your skills can this reference talk about?	Strategy to inform and update your reference on your annual progress

Appendix I: Career Planning Using Self- Assessment

Self-Assessment is a critical part of career planning. The goal is to take a realistic look at your current abilities and identify what is needed to achieve your career objectives. It is also important to take into account your interests and values and assess how these may impact your career preferences. In order to develop a career plan:

1. Assess your skills, determine your strengths and identify areas that need development. Formal assessment tools can be helpful in this process. (See Assessment Resources below.)
2. Ask your peers, mentors, family and friends to identify your strengths and recommend areas for improvement.
3. Assess your interests and values to better understand:
 - What type of work would you like to be doing?
 - Where would you like to be in an organization?
 - What is important to you in a career?
4. See how your skills, interests and values align with career opportunities and select those that are interesting to you.

Assessment Resources

One potential assessment tool to identify skills, interests and values that line up with potential careers is MyIDP (see below for instructions). This assessment tool was created primarily for researchers in the life sciences and as such, may not be appropriate for all disciplines. Other assessment tools may be used, ranging from broad tools like the US Department of Labor's skills profiler (<http://www.careerinfonet.org/skills/>), to discipline specific tools recommended by professional societies (<https://chemidp.acs.org/>), and also can include independent self-reflection on your current skills, interests and values. UMass Amherst has several resources for professional and career development (see Appendix II for resources).

Instructions for using MyIDP

1. Go to www.myidp.sciencecareers.org
2. To set up an account, click on the "first time user" button and set up a username, email address and password (once this has been set up you can select "returning user" and login with your username and password.)
3. Once you are in the account, go to "Overview" (on the left side of the screen), select "Personal Information" and update your information
4. Under "Assessment", select "Skills Assessment", then select the "my Assessment" tab and answer the questions. You can then use the "Summary" tab to get an overview of your skills.
5. It is recommended that you also do the "Interest Assessment" and the "Values Assessment" as all of these are important when planning for your future.
6. It is also recommended that you check out the "Career Exploration" section including:
 - "Consider My Career Fit" which has the tab "My Career Path Matches." This will suggest some potential careers based on your Skills and Interest Assessments.
 - "Read About Careers" which has the tab "Resources." This will give you links to read about career paths.
 - "Talk to People" which has the tab "Informational Interviews" which will give you some resources for talking to people about their careers.