

**Sent via Email on March 5, 2015**

**Subject: Required Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Scholars and Faculty**

Dear Faculty:

We are pleased to introduce the Postdoctoral Scholar Individual Development Plan (IDP), intended to ensure the development and annual discussion of a well-considered plan for the postdoctoral training period. Implementation of IDPs is based on the experience and enthusiastic endorsement of Stanford faculty and postdoctoral scholars, and was unanimously recommended and approved by the Provost's Postdoctoral Advisory Committee and the Provost. This new initiative supports our fundamental commitment to postdoctoral progress, training, and research at Stanford.

This initiative also complies with [NIH guidelines](#) asking for structured IDPs for all NIH-supported postdoctoral scholars, as well as with recent recommendations in a [National Academies report](#). In light of the enormous benefits to trainee development and the likelihood that the IDP will be a factor in all NIH and many other federal funding decisions, **Stanford University has adopted a new policy requiring all postdoctoral scholars to complete and discuss an IDP with their faculty mentor on an annual basis.**

Postdocs and their faculty mentors share responsibility for completing this process; the initial IDP meeting and discussion should be completed within three months of arrival and yearly thereafter. **If your current postdoc(s) had an IDP meeting between January 1 and March 1, 2015, they may enter that date in the system. If not, they must schedule an IDP meeting with you within the next three months.** The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) will maintain a database documenting the date on which the IDP discussion took place. IDP forms will not be centrally collected as the IDP forms are intended to guide discussion between faculty and postdocs.

The IDP process consists of five steps for the postdoctoral scholar and faculty mentor:

- Postdoc:** Complete IDP form. Ideally, provide completed form to faculty mentor.  
**Mentor:** Become familiar with the IDP and opportunities for postdoc professional development.
- Postdoc:** Schedule IDP meeting with your mentor.  
**Mentor:** Meet to discuss IDP.
- Postdoc:** Discuss goals and opportunities with your mentor.  
**Mentor:** Discuss development plan with postdoctoral scholar.
- Postdoc:** Enter the date of the IDP meeting online.  
**Mentor:** Confirm meeting date using link included in email prompt sent automatically to the mentor.
- Postdoc:** Refer to plan throughout the year; revise plan annually.  
**Mentor:** Establish regular review of progress.

You can find all necessary information about the IDP including forms, helpful resources, and FAQs for postdocs and faculty on the OPA website: <http://postdocs.stanford.edu/idp>. Thank you for your continued dedication to training our postdoctoral scholars.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Gumpert  
Vice Provost for Graduate Education  
Professor of Education  
Director, Stanford Institute for Higher Education  
Research



Dan Herschlag, PhD  
Professor of Biochemistry and, by courtesy,  
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering  
Senior Associate Dean, Graduate Education and  
Postdoctoral Affairs, School of Medicine