

Stanford | Office of Postdoctoral Affairs



Postdoc name: Mentor name: Date:

Your postdoctoral training is a period of growth toward your independent career. Your relationship with your mentor is a key aspect of that growth; maintaining clear, open communication is important to optimize your training and research experience. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is designed to help catalyze this communication, help you reflect on your goals, make plans to help achieve those goals, and to address challenges that arise along the way. There is no single prescribed pathway to postdoctoral success. Rather, every postdoc takes a unique path; designing that path requires reflection on your part and collaboration with your mentor and others.

Fill out this form and ideally share it with your mentor ahead of your annual mentoring meeting. Also, take advantage of resources here at Stanford, which can be found on the **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs website**.

How to Complete Your IDP

1**Step back and self-assess!**

It's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. Fill out this form, using the questions as a jumping off point to understand your research progress, development, and goals. Please **visit our website** for more resources on making use of the IDP.

2**Set your annual meeting with your faculty mentor.**

You are responsible for scheduling annual IDP meetings with your faculty mentor to discuss your IDP. We recommend that you share your completed IDP form with your faculty mentor before your meeting.

3**Lead the discussion.**

The IDP includes topics postdoctoral scholars have found helpful. This meeting is a great time to bring up additional questions and set expectations about your working relationship.

4**Complete the Action Plan and make a plan for following up.****5****Document your meeting.**

Both your IDP and the content of your conversation with your faculty mentor are private. The date of your IDP conversation must be recorded using the IDP Reporting Form at **<http://postdocs.stanford.edu/idp/reporting/>**. Your faculty mentor will confirm that the meeting took place on the recorded date.



Part I. Progress

1. Briefly review your research progress in the past year. (If you have any publications, presentations, fellowships, etc., include them here.)

2. What other activities have you been involved in? Have you been satisfied with the balance of activities? (E.g., coursework/training, teaching/mentoring, professional/career development, grant/manuscript writing, clinical duties.)

3. Which experiences in the past year have been most valuable to you, your research, and/or your professional goals?



4. Describe any unusual or unanticipated challenges you experienced this year in trying to accomplish your goals. What actions have you taken to meet these challenges? How can your faculty mentor help you?

5. Do you expect the balance of activities identified above will change in the coming year? If so, how?

6. What is the current source and duration of your funding?



Part II. Goals and Objectives

1. List objectives in each of the following categories for the coming year.

A. Research Objectives:

B. Professional Development Objectives:

2. Are there opportunities at Stanford and beyond that can assist you in reaching your objectives? (E.g., meetings, courses or workshops. Consider including associated dates.)? Identify specific events if possible.

3. What are your near-term research goals for your postdoctoral training period? For each goal, identify any areas where you feel you need improvement or additional training (e.g., new data analysis methods). Include any techniques you want to learn, collaborations to pursue, etc.



Part III. Mentoring

Your faculty mentor can provide guidance in many areas, and a continuing discussion should be valuable. Input from others about your research, professional development, work/life balance or other areas may also be useful, and you may want to consider using some or all of this IDP form as a basis for conversations with each of your mentors. In the space below, consider the breadth of mentoring you currently receive.

	How often are you meeting?	Is this sufficient?	Do you initiate meetings?
Faculty mentor (sponsor)			
Additional mentors (List names if applicable) If none, would additional mentors be useful?			
Collaborators (List names and roles in your research if applicable.)			

2. What have you found most beneficial from the mentoring you have received? Is there anything that would improve the mentoring you receive?



Part IV. Career Goals

1. What are your current career goals? Include more than one, if identified.

2. What steps are you taking to enhance your ability to attain these goals? How can your mentor best support you in reaching your career goals?

3. When do you anticipate beginning a job search? Do you feel comfortable with the resources you have? How can your faculty mentor help?

4. What additional training or skills would most benefit you in preparing for your career goals?



Part V. Well-being (*optional*)

Consider this section as you make your plans.

For example:

- Research environment: Features of your lab group or your relationships with colleagues and collaborators that are helpful and supportive to your well-being/Issues that might negatively affect your progress.
- Work-life balance: How to maintain a balance between your work and life/personal needs. What will you continue to do? Do differently?
- Other stressors or concerns

You may also find the following resources of use: **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs**, **Faculty Staff Help Center**, **Office of the Ombuds**, **School of Medicine Office of the Ombuds**, the **Diversity and Access Office**, the **Stanford WorkLife Office**, and the **Office of Religious Life**.



Part VI. Action Plan for Your Next Steps

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)?
- How can your faculty mentor help you achieve your goals?
- 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?