

## Individual Development Plan – Guide for Supervisors

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### What is an Individual Development Plan?

An individual development plan (IDP) is a personalized tool to help graduate students identify skill strengths and gaps, develop and prioritize goals, and map out an actionable strategy to achieve their goals. The IDP offers students an opportunity to think about how they will complement the disciplinary knowledge they develop through their program with skills, competencies, and experiences academic and non-academic employers are looking for.

Students who actively focus on developing self-management skills with career building skills experience have “fewer mismatches between labour market supply and demand” (Bridgstock, 2009). An individualized plan, developed in conjunction with one’s supervisor increases student satisfaction and productivity while reducing student-supervisor conflicts (Platow, 2012; Rose, 2012).

IDPs are increasingly common across Canadian institutions, including at UBC, McGill, and the University of Alberta. In the US, IDPs are now required for all postdoctoral researchers and graduate students supported by the National Institutes of Health.

How does it help students?	How does it help supervisors?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify their professional development and career planning needs, and communicate them to others, including their supervisor</li> <li>• Ensures that expectations (both student’s and supervisor’s) are clearly defined and aligned</li> <li>• Improves career success and satisfaction (Bridgstock, 2009)</li> <li>• Offers a structured way to implement frequent self-reflection practices, which will improve self-awareness, learning, and ‘big-picture thinking’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the most of limited time by clearly outlining student needs and expectations, and pairing them with actions</li> <li>• The IDP’s evidence-based framework provides a platform for communication, facilitating supervisors’ support</li> <li>• Empowers students; they are responsible and accountable for their own development. This supports autonomy and self-directed learning for students,</li> </ul>

### What's involved?

The following table describes the 3 major phases of the IDP. In addition to these activities, it's recommended that you hold semi-structured conversations throughout the year to monitor short-term progress. This structure is not set-in-stone – you are encouraged to adjust the program to fit within your preferred supervisory processes (e.g. meeting frequency, level of preparation, depth of conversation).

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## How to Have IDP Conversations with your Student

This section provides examples of discussion points and outcomes to support your three main IDP conversations – the initial conversation, the mid-year, and year-end reviews. Again, these conversation timepoints are suggestions; you may decide on a different schedule for your check-in meetings.

Please note, Career Services can also support the IDP process through individualized advising and counselling appointments.

### Part 1: Discuss the Student's Personal Vision

In the first month, students complete the vision portion of the IDP workbook, and supervisors are asked to help them develop goals and self-development activities for each component.

1. **Career Goals and Vision:** Students are asked to choose four possible career paths.

‰ Can the student explain why they've chosen the four career paths? (e.g. How do they align with their personal values? How does their chosen discipline set them up for work in these fields?)

#### Discussion Prompts

- "Why do these career paths appeal to you?"
- "What research have you done into these four career paths?"

2. **Assessing Skills and Experience:** Students are asked to reflect on their skills as they relate to their chosen career paths, and to determine the skills they will need to be competitive in their chosen fields.

‰ Has the student reflected



- "When will the IDP be revisited to measure progress and to reassess?"

After your discussion, please sign off below to confirm your mutual agreement:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (supervisor – print name) and I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(student – print name), agree that the steps discussed in the Partd [(Pa)d



Student signature:

Date:

Supervisor signature:

Date:

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### Part 3: Year-End Review

The student should now

student ID: 11104300110/C2\_096-07780330