The Importance of IDPs

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# Individual Development Plan (IDP)

- Exercise for defining and pursuing career goals

- A record of
  - Current skills and interests
  - Career plans
  - Concrete goals to connect skills/interests with plans

- Encompasses short- and long-term objectives
  - Define ultimate career goals
  - Set goals for the next ~year to improve skills
  - Regularly evaluate progress

- Setting goals improves performance and satisfaction in the workplace[1] and defining career plans makes us more likely to reach our goals[2]

[1]Am Psychol. 2002 Sep;57(9):705-17.
[2]Am Psychol. 1999;54:493–503.

The Importance of IDPs

- Problem:
    - Most life science PhDs will not end up in traditional tenure-track faculty positions
    - "Career exploration" and "professional development" are abstract ideas that are not built in to the graduate curriculum
    - Career goals change over time in graduate school
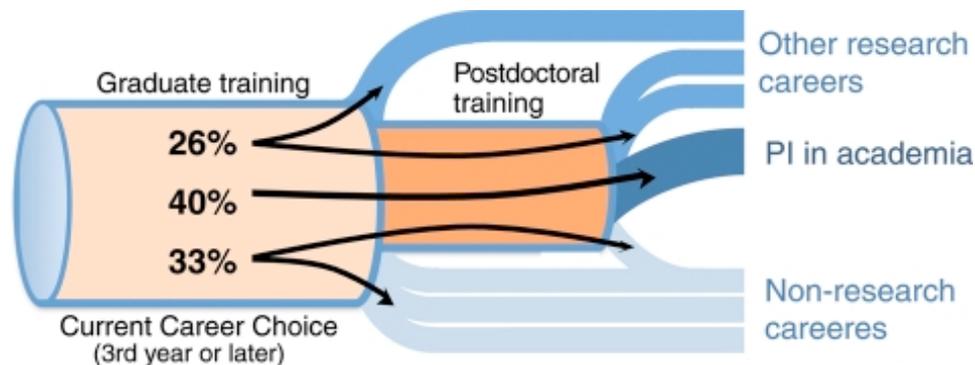
The Importance of IDPs

- IDPs as part of the solution:
  - Encourage a proactive approach to career development
  - Provide an opportunity to define actionable goals
  - Act as a record of goals and progress
  - Allow for reflection as career plans and objectives change over time
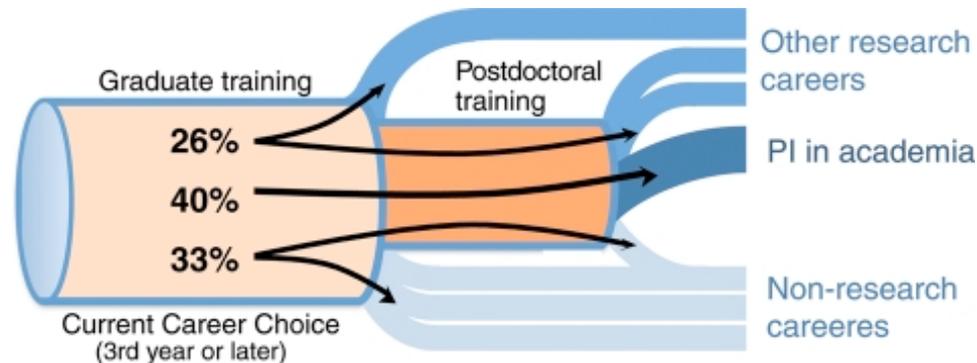
Using IDPs in graduate school

- Gaining traction as an important professional development tool for trainees in the biomedical sciences
  - Trainees and their mentors find IDPs helpful overall[1]
- Serve as a useful tool for communication amongst you, your advisor, and your thesis committee

"By turning introspection int
allows trainees to translate
plan, applying their well-d
problem of building
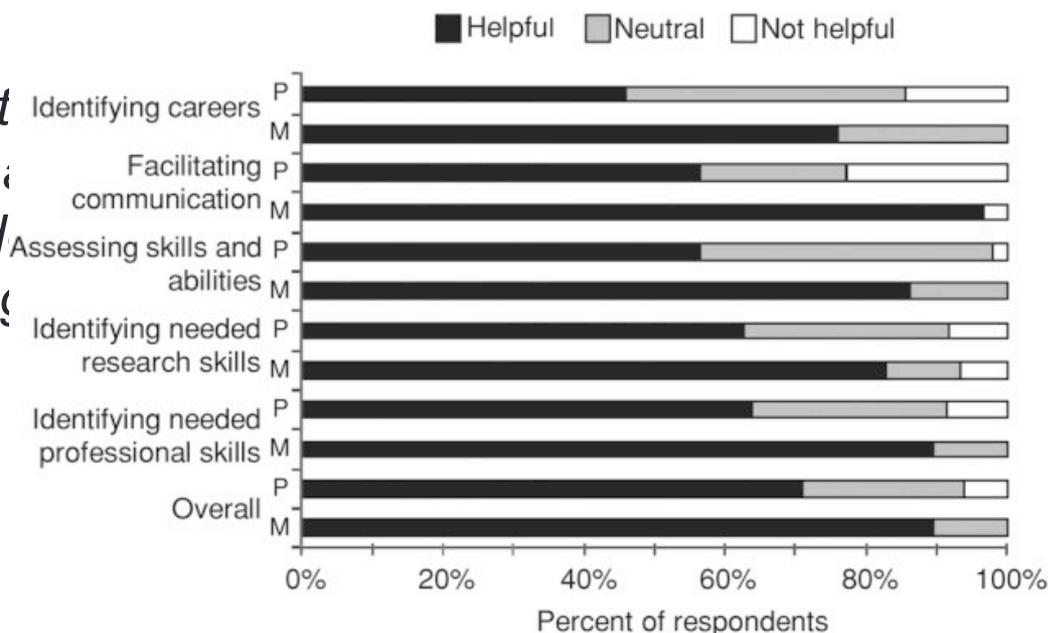
Legend: ■ Helpful ▨ Neutral □ Not helpful

Categories (P/M): Identifying careers, Facilitating communication, Assessing skills and abilities, Identifying needed research skills, Identifying needed professional skills, Overall

X-axis: Percent of respondents (0% – 100%)

[1]CBE Life Sci Educ. 2014 Spring; 13(1): 49–53.

[2]http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2012/09/editorial-planning-career-paths-phds

IDP examples

- AAAS's myIDP (myidp.sciencecareers.org)
  - Web-based tool developed by administrators of graduate programs in the sciences
  - Four steps:
    1. Evaluate your skills, values, and interests
    2. Explore career options, defining a preferred and alternative career goal
    3. Establish specific goals for your identified career path
    4. Execute your plans, regularly assessing your progress
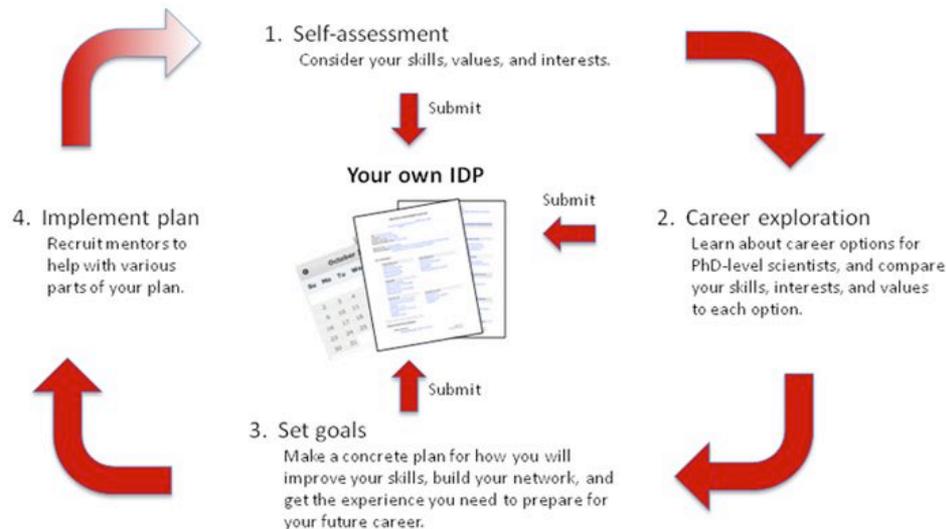
IDP examples

- AAAS's **myIDP** (myidp.sciencecareers.org)
  - In Step 3, set SMART goals...
    - **S**pecific – Is it focused and unambiguous?
    - **M**easureable – Could someone determine whether or not you achieved this goal?
    - **A**ction-oriented – Did you specify the action you will take?
    - **R**ealistic – Considering difficulty and timeframe, is this goal attainable?
    - **T**ime-bound – Did you specify a deadline?
  - ...in three categories:
    - *Project Completion*
    - *Skill Development*
    - *Career Advancement*
  - Significant career exploration resources
  - Option for email reminders about goal deadlines

my **IDP**

AAAS Science Careers
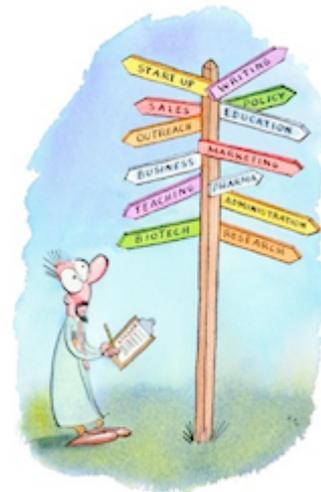
A free, online tool to create & maintain your very own

Individual Development Plan

IDP examples

- Graduate College Career Development Office (CDO) **GradMAP** Professional Development Process (https://grad.illinois.edu/careers/gradmap)
  - Workshop-based IDP with an emphasis on professional development
  - Set 6-12 month goals and identify skills needed for specific career plans
  - Highlights six categories of "skills needed for success" after graduate school
    - *Communication*
    - *Leadership & Innovation*
    - *Research & Specialization*
    - *Teaching & Mentoring*
    - *Professionalism*
    - *Job Search*
  - Participate in specific activities to develop these skills – website contains extensive resources
  - Next GradMAP workshop is June 26

IDP examples

- **<u>Microbiology Department IDP</u>** (implemented Spring 2018)
  - Written checkpoint for progress during graduate school
  - Discussed with committee during annual research progress review meetings
  - Define short-term goals and reflect on failure to meeting previous goals
  - Self-assessment of core competencies needed for research careers

Core Competencies	No basis to evaluate	Needs development	Appropriate to career stage	Strength
Scientific Knowledge				
Broad based knowledge of science				
Deep knowledge of specific research area				
Critical evaluation of scientific literature				
Research Skills				
Technical skills related to research area				
Experimental design				
Statistical analysis				
Interpretation of data				
Creativity/innovative thinking				
Navigating the peer review process				

Basic writing and editing
Writing scientific publications
Writing grant proposals
Writing for nonscientists
Speaking clearly and effectively
Formulating and asking sound questions

How to use IDPs effectively

- Do your research.
  - Explore a variety of resources
  - Talk to your peers and mentors, and don't be afraid to reach out to new people
- Set realistic goals.
  - Utilize SMART method of goal-setting
  - Overly ambitious goals derail progress
- Be honest with yourself.
  - Your career is what *you* make of it
  - Exaggerating (or downplaying) your skills hinders progress
- Discuss your goals with a mentor.
  - Share your goals with your advisor
  - Make an appointment with the Grad College CDO for career coaching
- Make your goals visible.
  - Add your goal deadlines to your calendar
  - Post a copy of your goals in your work space
- Revisit your IDP often.
  - Check in with your progress about once a month
  - Update your IDP every year

How to use IDPs effectively

- Recommendations[1] for trainees by the authors that developed myIDP:
  - *"Recognize that the responsibility for exploring career options and developing a career plan lies with you.*
  - *Begin career exploration and develop an IDP early in your appointment.*
  - *Meet with career advisors to discuss what resources are available to you.*
  - *Do not be afraid to discuss your career plans with your mentors.*
  - *Remember that the IDP process is valuable, even if you have already decided on a career and even if you are pursuing a career in academic research.*
  - *Do not expect to complete this process in a day, a week, or even a month. Career planning takes time; it should be an iterative process during which you periodically reassess your goals."*

[1]CBE Life Sci Educ. 2014 Spring; 13(1): 49–53.

IDP Resources

- AAAS's myIDP: myidp.sciencecareers.org
- Article series accompanying the release of myIDP: http://www.sciencemag.org/tags/myidp

- GradCollege CDO's GradMAP: https://grad.illinois.edu/careers/gradmap
- GradMAP activities and resources: https://grad.illinois.edu/careers/gradmap-activities

- "Improving graduate education to support a branching career pipeline: recommendations based on a survey of doctoral students in the basic biomedical sciences." doi: 10.1187/cbe.11-02-0013
- "Putting PhDs to Work: Career Planning for Today's Scientist." doi: 10.1187/cbe-13-04-0085

- Career exploration resources
  - https://biomedicalresearchworkforce.nih.gov/index.htm
  - http://www.ascb.org/career-development-resources/