

Individual Development Plan Template for Master's Students



Your Individual Development Plan is a personalized and flexible plan for navigating your academic, career, professional, and personal development during each year of your master's program. Some general guidelines about IDPs are:

- The plan is focused on completing your degree by a certain semester/year that is set at the start of your program. The specific goals included in the plan lead to timely degree completion and preparation for your intended career path.
- Create a written plan for every year of your studies through graduation.
- Think about the IDP process as cyclical and similar to the goal setting and performance review process that occurs in many jobs.
- Goals should be set at the start of the year (June/July). There should be a mid-point review to see how things are going (Dec/Jan). Finally, there must be an end of year review (May). The plan is adjusted and goals are set for the upcoming year.
- If you are unclear about your intended career path or have not fully researched it, you should include goals in your plan that will enable you to clarify your targeted careers and potential employer. You should fully research your target career paths.
- The plan is yours! It is flexible and you can modify it at any time. Your faculty advisor, staff, and departmental handbook are sources of info about academic requirements.
- You should keep an electronic copy of each year's IDP for reflection and comparison during your annual updates each (May).

Step 1: End Goals

Graduation Date (Semester/Year) _____

Intended Career Paths (List at least two. Be as specific as possible)

- _____
- _____
- _____

If you cannot list two or three: What were your reasons for enrolling in this PhD program?

Type of company/industry I would like to possibly work in after graduation:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Geographic Regions and/or Countries I would like to possibly work in after graduation:

- _____
- _____
- _____

If you are an F-1 Visa Student, how many years of OPT will you have based on your degree program? _____

Note: International students should prepare for seeking internships and post-graduation employment in their home or other countries of interest in their plan.

Step 2: Possible Goals and Reflection Questions: The following questions will help you to get started.

Academic Goals:

1. Have you carefully reviewed the academic requirements for your program in your department's handbook?
2. Are you confused or do you have questions about the order in which you must achieve program tasks?
3. Have you discussed and mapped out with your advisor the classes that you will take during each semester of your program? Are you on target to finish on time? Have you discussed any changes to the plan with your advisor?
4. If you are experiencing difficulties, have you sought out help in/and or outside of your program to overcome the challenges?

Career Development Goals:

1. Can you list at least two career paths you intend to pursue after graduation?
2. Have you done systematic research about your intended career paths? Have you read information about required skills and qualifications? Possible employers? Industry trends? Salary information? Demand for the occupation currently and in the future?
3. Have you reviewed information about available career services, workshops, and networking events? Do you know how to access these? Do you know the most effective job search techniques? Are your documents and interviewing skills strong?
4. Have your career goals changed in the past year? Have you researched new options? Or accessed career advising if unsure?
5. International students: Are you able to effectively discuss and explain your work authorization with potential internship sites and employers? Do you have a plan for searching for internship and post-graduation opportunities in both the U.S. and at home?

Skill Development Goals

1. What are the top skills required to be a competitive applicant for your top two intended careers?
2. What "skills gap" exists between your current skills and what employers will be looking for in applicants?
3. Are you aware of and do you know how to access professional development opportunities and/or internships for students committed to preparing for a faculty job? Jobs in industry? Jobs in government?
4. What professional development activities did you do in the past year? What skills did you gain?

Personal Development Goals

1. How is my overall physical and mental health? Am I taking care of myself? Is stress interfering with my performance?
2. Am I connected to other students that I can socialize with and that support me through challenging times?
3. Do I have clarity about my life goals and priorities? Are my priorities in conflict with others so as to cause worry or anxiety?
4. Has my stress level changed in the past year? What steps am I taking to stay well? Have I sought out assistance?

Money/Funding Goals:

1. Do you have a budget? Are you effectively managing your money?
2. Are you making good decisions with regard to your budget and managing credit card debt?

Step 3: Plan by Year and Semester

Year 1 (for example, 2021-2022): _____

Goal Area	Fall	Spring	Summer
Degree Completion			
Career Development			
Skill Development			
Personal Development			
Money/Funding			

Year 2 _____

Goal Area	Fall	Spring	Summer
Degree Completion			
Career Development			
Skill Development			
Personal Development			
Money/Funding			

Year ____: _____ (Additional Year)

Goal Area	Fall	Spring	Summer
Degree Completion			
Career Development			
Skill Development			
Personal Development			
Money/Funding			