Individual Development Plan Template for Doctoral 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 doctoral 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 your for your intended career path.
- Create a written plan for every year of your studies through graduation. It is OK to have less clarity about later years in your plan since you will be updating the plan annually.
- Think about the IDP process as cyclical and similar to the goal setting and performance review process that occurs in most 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. You should fully research two or three target career paths and potential employers.
- The plan is yours! It is flexible and you can change it at any time. You are encouraged to share your plan with others including faculty mentors and peers. 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?

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 include seeking internship and employment in their home or other countries of interest in their plan.

Step 2: Reflection Questions: The following questions will help you to get started with drafting your IDP. Review the list of suggested goals from the ImaginePhD handout and reflect on the following questions.

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 milestones?
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 specific career paths you intend to pursue after graduation?
2. Have you done systematic research about your intended career paths? Have your read information about the 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 for PhDs? 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?

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 your overall physical and mental health? Are you taking care of myself? Is stress interfering with your performance?
2. Am you connected to other students you can socialize with and that get support from through challenging times?
3. Do you have clarity about your life goals and priorities? Are your priorities in conflict with other in your life causing worry/anxiety?
4. Has your stress level changed in the past year? What steps are you taking to stay well? Have you sought out assistance?

Money/Funding Goals:
1. Have you explored and discussed fellowship opportunities related to your discipline with my advisor?
2. Have you read about and applied for any of the internal and external funding opportunities on the Graduate School website?
3. Do you have a plan for managing student debt from previous institutions as well as from your doctoral program?
4. Are you making informed decisions with regard to a monthly budget and taking on additional debt?

Step 3: Plan by Year and Semester

Year 1 (for example, 2018-2019): _____

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 3: _____

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

Year 4: _____

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

Year 5: _____

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			