



Individual Development Plan

http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/files/caps/caps_idp.pdf

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is essentially a planning document that identifies what your goals and objectives are for the upcoming year. Although there are many different ways to create an IDP, overall it can be broken into 3 main steps:

1

Identify your goals

- Make a list of goals that you would like to accomplish in the upcoming year. Examples:
 - To present your work at a conference
 - To expand your skills in communicating your research to diverse audiences.
 - To broaden your job search to careers in industry

2

Break down your goals into SMART objectives and Actions

- Create specific objectives that will help you to achieve your goals.
- Sometimes it will take multiple actions to achieve your objective
- Be deliberate about your choices in order to avoid getting sidetracked by projects that may not be in line with your goals.

3

Evaluate your progress at regular intervals

- Create timelines for review, to ensure that you are on track with your goals.
- Consider scheduling a regular meeting with a career counsellor, a mentor, your supervisor, or another researcher in your field to discuss your progress and goals.

Below is some additional information about each of these steps

1 Identify your goals

Goals are general statements about what you need to accomplish in order to achieve your broader aspirations. These goals can pertain to your research, professional development needs, and career plans. Some categories to consider relative to professional development and career planning include:

- Identify your interests, values, and skills: Self-knowledge will make it easier for you to identify subsequent goals that will help you to be successful in your research and your chosen career.
- Research career options, select possible career options, and identify the skills you will need.
- Develop the skills necessary to pursue these career possibilities: take courses and gain experience.
- Connect with people in you desired field and identify organizations to work for.
- Prepare for the job search: application material, interviewing, negotiation.

2 Break it down

It is important that to break down your goals into individual objectives and actions, so that you can get a sense of all the activities you will need to complete in order to achieve your goals. To enhance your chances of success, start by creating objectives, and then breaking them down into individual actions that you can accomplish. SMART objectives and actions are:

Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Use action verbs to write a clear definition of what you want to accomplish. •Think about who, what, and where.
Measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How will you evaluate whether the goal has been met? •Set criteria that are measurable so you can chart your progress.
Achievable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Verify whether you have the resources and time to do this. Be selective. •Don't pursue too many objectives –this can lead to failure.
Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Make sure that your objective is clearly linked to a specific goal. •Ask yourself, how will this action help you to get closer to your goal?
Time-bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Set a date and time limit. •Although it is not always possible to predict how long something will take, it is important to decide when you will re-evaluate whether this objective is worth pursuing.

3 Create a timeline

For each action, create a due date. Although you may need to revise these as you pursue your goals, having a timeline will help you to assess your progress and get a realistic sense of how far along you are. In fact, they can be very motivating, as we often only evaluate progress based on our overall goals and fail to notice how much we have actually accomplished!



Strategic planning sample

VISION	Written description of who/where you want to be in the future	I want to be an academic working in a small liberal arts college, on the west coast of North America, living in a home in the country
GOALS	General statements about what you need to accomplish to reach your vision	1) Have enough publications to be competitive 2) Augment my teaching experience
OBJECTIVES	Your strategy for accomplishing your goals	2 a) Teach two classes per year
ACTIONS	What you will actually do to achieve your objective (SMART)	2 a i) Contact 5 colleagues in various departments and institutions to explore opportunities by July 2a ii) Check online postings and apply to teach at least 4 courses per semester
MONITOR	Review your plan at regular intervals	Every 6 months



Worksheet Examples

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL: AUGMENT MY TEACHING EXPERIENCE			
Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes
Teach two classes per semester	Contact 5 colleagues in various departments and institutions to explore opportunities	July 1	
	Check online postings and apply to teach at least 4 courses per semester	August 1	

CAREER PLANNING GOAL: RESEARCH CAREER OPTIONS			
Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes
Use resources	Read book: "Alternative Careers in Science"	Dec 31	
	Spend 2 hours per week browsing career databases: careercruising.ca and myplan.com	From Sept 1 to Dec 31	
	Create a shortlist of top 5 career interests	Dec 31	
Attend career related activities	Go to 2 events in the CaPS Grad Career Series	May 31	
	Go to 2 company information sessions	May 31	
Talk to people	Use the McGill Mentorship database to look mentors in my area(s) of interest	Feb 28	
	Identify people in my area(s) of interest on LinkedIn	Feb 28	
	Ask friends and family for help	Feb 28	
	Reach out to at least 1 person per week	From March 1 to Aug 31	
	Schedule at least one information interview per month	From March 1 to Aug 31	



RESEARCH GOALS: IDP WORKSHEET

Vision: Broad description of your research goal for the next 6 to 12 monthss

RESEARCH GOAL 1:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

RESEARCH GOAL 2:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

RESEARCH GOAL 3:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS: IDP WORKSHEET

Vision: Broad description of your professional development goals (skills you need for research and career) for the next 6 to 12 months

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes



CAREER PLANNING GOALS: IDP WORKSHEET

Vision: Broad description of your career planning goals for the next 6 to 12 months

CAREER PLANNING GOAL 1:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

CAREER PLANNING GOAL 2:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes

CAREER PLANNING GOAL 3:

Objective	Actions (measurable)	Due date	Notes