

UNT Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Postdoctoral Researchers

Purpose of the IDP

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a career-planning and mentoring tool designed to help postdoctoral scholars reflect on their training experience, identify professional goals, and develop a structured plan for career and professional growth. The IDP supports ongoing conversations between postdoctoral scholars and faculty mentors regarding research progress, skill development, career exploration, and long-term professional objectives.

At UNT, the IDP follows a Shared Discussion model. Part I (Self-Assessment) is primarily intended for personal reflection and does not need to be shared unless the postdoctoral scholar chooses to do so. Parts II and III are intended to guide discussion with the faculty mentor and support collaborative goal setting and professional development planning. Part IV is completed jointly during the annual IDP meeting.

The IDP is intended to promote open communication, mentorship, aligned expectations, and proactive career development throughout the postdoctoral training experience. It is not an evaluation tool.

How to Complete Your IDP

1. **Complete Sections I to III Before Your Meeting:** Before meeting with your mentor, take time to reflect on your current strengths, challenges, accomplishments, career interests, and professional goals.
 - a. **Part I: Self-Assessment** is primarily intended for personal reflection and does not need to be shared unless you choose to do so.
 - b. **Parts II and III** are intended to help guide discussion with your mentor and should generally be shared before or during the meeting to support collaborative goal setting and professional development planning.
2. **Schedule Your Annual IDP Meeting:** Postdoctoral scholars are responsible for scheduling an annual IDP discussion with their faculty mentor. Sharing Parts II and III with your mentor before the meeting is encouraged to facilitate a more productive conversation.
3. **Mentor Preparation:** Faculty mentors are encouraged to review the shared sections of the IDP and complete the Mentor Assessment Form prior to the meeting. Taking time to prepare in advance helps mentors provide thoughtful feedback, identify opportunities for growth, and better support the postdoc's training and career development.
4. **Lead the Discussion:** Use the meeting to discuss research progress, career goals, professional development opportunities, mentoring expectations, available resources, and any challenges or opportunities relevant to your training experience.
5. **Develop the Shared Action Plan:** During the meeting, jointly complete Part IV. This section documents agreed-upon expectations, mentoring practices, professional development opportunities, and action items for the coming year.
6. **Document the Meeting:** The IDP and the content of the discussion remain private and are not used for performance evaluation. However, the date of the annual IDP meeting must be documented, and the mentor will confirm that the meeting took place.

UNT IDP: Meeting Template

Postdoc Name:

Date:

Mentor Name:

Part I. Self-Assessment

Core Competency

Rate your proficiency in the core competencies listed in the table below. Use the dropdown menu to rate your proficiency according to the following rating:

Basic Awareness (Requires constant supervision/instruction)

Developing (Basic understanding; requires frequent guidance)

Proficient (Can perform tasks independently with occasional check-ins)

Advanced (High level of expertise; can troubleshoot and adapt)

Mastery (Expert level; capable of teaching or leading others in this area)

Core Competency	Rating
Discipline-Specific Knowledge (Subject matter expertise and scientific foundation)	
Research Skills (Experimental design, technical skills, data analysis, and scientific methodology)	
Communication Skills (Scientific writing, presentations, teaching, and communication with diverse audiences)	
Professionalism (Workplace conduct, collaboration, networking, inclusion, and professional behavior)	
Leadership & Mentoring (Project management, supervision, mentoring, and leadership development)	
Career Development (Career exploration, networking, grant writing, and professional advancement)	
Teaching & Outreach (Instruction, mentoring, public engagement, and educational activities)	
Responsible Conduct of Research (Ethics, biosafety, rigor, reproducibility, compliance, and data integrity)	

Which core competency do you most want to improve this year?

Previous Experience & Accomplishments

Which of your past accomplishments will contribute to the success of your postdoctoral training? What skills are you bringing? (Include papers, presentations, techniques, etc.) If you are changing fields, consider how your prior experience might apply.

Areas for Growth & Development

What areas of learning and growth would you like to develop in the next year? Which of these areas could be addressed in the next quarter? Which would be better addressed in 6 or 9 months? Be as specific as possible, including how you would like to accomplish them.

Part II. Career Goals

Primary Career Interests

(e.g., Tenure-Track, Industry, Gov, Policy)

Describe your long-term goals. These should paint a vision of your future

Research Goals: What specific area(s) of research do you wish to explore during your postdoctoral training? Are there specific methods or approaches that you would like to gain familiarity with and/or become expert in?

Professional Development Goals: What professional skills would you like to acquire during your training? Examples might include public speaking, grant writing, manuscript preparation, teamwork, personnel management, teaching, mentoring, etc.

Career Goals: What are your first and second choices of long-term careers (i.e., what position do you hope to hold 10 years from now)? Be as specific as you can and indicate relative enthusiasm for each choice.

(Optional) What are the **primary factors** driving these goals (e.g., personal interest in specific research area, teaching, business, government, writing; geographic priorities; family commitments, financial objectives, position in home country, immigrating to the US; etc.)?

Part III. Development Objectives

Identify activities, milestones, and professional development goals that will support your research, training, and long-term career objectives during the coming year.

Competency Area	Development Objective / Planned Activity	Target Timeline
Discipline-Specific Knowledge		
Research Skills		
Communication		
Professionalism		
Leadership & Mentoring		
Career Development		
Teaching & Outreach		
Responsible Conduct of Research		

Part IV. Mentorship & Training Agreement

Complete this section together during your annual IDP meeting.

This section is intended to establish clear expectations, communication practices, and support structures that will contribute to a productive and successful postdoctoral training experience. The plan should reflect a shared understanding between the postdoctoral scholar and faculty mentor and may be revisited and updated throughout the year as goals and circumstances evolve.

Funding & Research Support

Topics to discuss: funding status and duration, contingency plans, conference and training support, fellowship and grant expectations, research resources, and project support.

Communication & Working Relationship

Topics to discuss: meeting frequency, communication preferences, feedback timelines, progress reporting, mentoring style, expectations for independence, conflict resolution, collaborative responsibilities.

Research, Publications & Professional Responsibilities

Topics to discuss: project ownership, data management, publication planning, authorship expectations, proposal writing, mentoring students, teaching opportunities, laboratory responsibilities, and leadership expectations.

Workplace Expectations & Wellbeing

Topics to discuss: working hours, scheduling flexibility, leave requests, remote work expectations, workplace professionalism, laboratory etiquette, inclusivity, and work-life balance.

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

Topics to discuss: research ethics, biosafety, rigor and reproducibility, regulatory compliance, data integrity, record keeping, authorship ethics, and responsible use of AI and computational tools.

Next IDP Review Date:

Meeting Confirmation

By signing below, we confirm we have discussed the postdoc's career goals and the Shared Action Plan.

Postdoc Signature: _____

Mentor Signature: _____