

Your Guide to Individual Development Planning

Introduction

A commitment to continuous learning and development opens the door to career options and increases your value as an employee. This guide explains how you can leverage the Individual Development Plan (IDP) in directing your professional development.

The IDP is a tool to help you organize and track your professional development. Its primary purpose is to provide a structured approach to help you reach short- and long-term career goals and strengthen current job performance through intentional learning. IDPs guide you to align your goals with specific knowledge, skills, or competencies, such as the UC Core Competencies, or with the mission, goals and objectives of your organization. With goal setting at its heart, a professional development plan helps you arrange your ideas into an organized plan with defined timeframes and expected results. The UC Davis IDP form is structured to help you to identify learning activities that are experiential, on-the-job, or classroom-focused so that your development is well-rounded.

The Individual Development Planning Process

The individual development planning process is directed by you, in partnership with your supervisor, to enhance your professional growth. IDPs are used to develop an increased level of competency in your current position and/or to help you advance in your career. An IDP can be created at any time and should be reviewed and updated regularly (quarterly is recommended).

The steps in the IDP Planning Process are:

Identify – Assess – Plan – Act – Evaluate

IDENTIFY

The first step in the IDP process is to have a clear picture of your career goals. This includes self-reflection and career exploration to help you identify the career path that will bring you the most job satisfaction. Once you've identified your career interests, you can identify the related knowledge, skills, and competencies you need to develop in order to reach your career goal.

TIP Explore the UC Davis career management tools and resources available to you as you identify your career goals.

- [Career Management Toolkit](#)
- [Career Counseling Services](#)
- [UC Davis Health System Training and Development](#)

ASSESS

Once you have identified the knowledge, skills, and competencies required of your career goal, you will need to assess your current competency in those areas. You may want to review past performance appraisals and feedback you have received from your supervisor or others. You may focus on strengths you would like to further develop, or new skills you would like to have.

PLAN

The next step is to create the IDP. The *Completing the Individual Development Plan* section of this guide provides a step-by-step process for creating the IDP. Once you've created your plan, share it with your supervisor or a mentor. As you are the ultimate owner of your own development, you may lead the conversation. Then the plan should be mutually agreed upon by your supervisor or mentor.

ACT

Once your plan is in place, you can get busy completing learning activities by the deadlines you have identified. Individual development often involves changing behaviors in addition to learning new ones. Research suggests that desired change is more likely to be successful when:

- *The desired competency is specifically defined*
- *There is a commitment and motivation to the behavior change*
- *An action plan is shared with and supported by others (e.g., supervisor or mentor)*
- *The behavioral outcomes are visible and can be measured*

Use your calendar to highlight deadlines and schedule time with yourself each week to carry out the learning activities in your plan; a minimum of 30 minutes a week is recommended. Address barriers as they arise and make adjustments to the plan as necessary – remember, this is *your* IDP.

EVALUATE

It is important to receive feedback on your progress and evaluate your success in meeting your development milestones. Set follow-up meetings with your supervisor or mentor. The duration and frequency will depend on specific needs but as a general guideline, a 30 minute meeting every three months is recommended.

Completing the Individual Development Plan

Once you have identified your career or professional goals and assessed your skills and knowledge of the related competencies required to meet the goal, you are ready to create your Individual Development Plan (IDP).

1. UC Davis IDP – WORKSHEET PART ONE

Research shows that you increase your likelihood of obtaining a goal if you write it down and if it is written in a specific format. Part one of the IDP worksheet provides you with a structure for documenting your professional developmental goal(s). Think about your goals, both short-term and long-range. Consider the benefits of achieving these goals and write them in the SMART style – Specific-Measurable-Achievable-Realistic-Time-bound (see *Your Guide to Creating SMART Goals*).

TIP Start small, perhaps with just one developmental goal, to ensure that you are successful in completing all your selected developmental activities.

2. UC Davis IDP – WORKSHEET PART TWO

Elaborate on each developmental goal by identifying activities that will build the skill, knowledge or competencies required to achieve it. Research indicates that most learning in the workplace occurs on the job, so look for development opportunities beyond classroom and online courses. Effective development activities encompass a variety of learning methods such as learning by doing, learning from others (such as mentoring, job shadowing), classes, e-learning, and individual readings.

Use worksheet part two to brainstorm the type of activity you might do and describe specifically how you would do it. Think about the resources needed to accomplish the activity; perhaps you will need access to a manager to conduct an informational interview, or use [Books 24/7 in the UC Learning Center](#) to access reading material.

TIP Each developmental goal should have 2 – 3 developmental activities that you can accomplish in about 12 months.

TIP Keep your focus to a maximum of 3 developmental goals at any one time.

TIP Explore available formal training. Take a look at offerings for UC Davis employees by searching the [UC Learning Center](#) (Kerberos login required).

3. UC Davis IDP – FORM

Bring it all together. You've brainstormed a lot of ideas and options for development and now you will list the specific developmental activities you will implement. Complete the IDP by transferring select information from part one and two of the IDP worksheets. List specifics, including:

- **Outcomes/Results:** Detail what the successful completion of the developmental activity looks like. To do this, answer, "*How will you know when the learning you have identified has been accomplished?*"
- **Support:** Sharing goals with another person increases your likelihood of accomplishing the goal. Share your IDP with someone that can support you by checking-in with you on a regular basis and provide you with feedback. Your supervisor is your best source of support and a mentor can help in this way as well.
- **Target Dates:** List specific and provisional activity completion dates to assist you in reaching your goals in productive timing.
 - **TIP** Set reasonable target dates for completing developmental activities to avoid feeling unmotivated or overwhelmed.
 - **TIP** Start small and enjoy small successes.
- **Status:** Use this area of the IDP to note completion of activities or identify potential barriers that can be discussed with your supervisor or mentor. Record the date you discuss the plan with your supervisor and set a date for a follow-up meeting. It is important to refresh your IDP often as goals change or new opportunities present themselves.

Should you need assistance in completing the UC Davis IDP, please contact Talent Management at sdps@ucdavis.edu OR traininganddevelopment@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu.

Your Guide to Creating SMART Goals

Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Realistic – Time-bound

SPECIFIC

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you can answer the six “W” questions:

Who: Who is involved?

What: What do I want to accomplish?

Where: Identify a location.

When: Establish a time frame.

Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

A general goal would be, “Get in shape.” But a specific goal would be to “Join a health club and workout 3 days a week.”

Example: Decrease department time to complete XYZ process by 10%.

MEASURABLE

Establishing concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set is key. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as:

How much?

How many?

How will I know when it is accomplished?

Example: Write a draft proposal with 95% grammatical accuracy.

ACHIEVABLE

Goals should be written so that they can be accomplished within the timeframe specified. You should design your goals to be a stretch, while still attainable. When you identify goals that are most important

to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and capacity to reach them. You can begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

Example: Complete the first draft of my IDP by July 30.

REALISTIC

To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective towards which you are both *willing* and *able* to work. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress.

A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Example: Complete the public speaking training within four months.

TIME-BOUND

A goal should be grounded within a time frame. Without a timeframe, there is no sense of urgency. If you want to lose 10 lbs, consider by when do you want to lose it? “Someday” won’t work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, “by May 1st”, then you have set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

Example: Meet with the five department representatives by September 30.