

Individual Development Plan

Overview

Setting goals can help you be more intentional about the experiences you have in your education and professional development. The best goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an essential tool to help you:

- Assess your current skills and strengths
- Create a plan for developing and enhancing skills to help you meet your academic and professional goals
- Communicate with your EIRs about your evolving goals and related skills

The IDP you create is a document you will want to revisit again and again, to update and refine as your goals change and/or come into focus, and to record your progress and accomplishments.

Self-Assessment

STEP 1: Conduct a self-assessment

Using the TypeFocus assessment tool via the CSUSM Career Center, you will be able to narrow down your interests and identify your personality type based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. In addition, you will conduct a skills and passions assessment located in Cougar Community.

In addition to the above-mentioned tools, take some time to reflect on the following questions:

Currently

- What are the requirements and responsibilities you must meet during the next year? Two years?
- What are the technical skills or discipline-specific knowledge that you need to develop?
- What professional or scholarly activities would you like to accomplish or work toward during the next year? Two years? (Examples: Join a professional organization, present at a conference, join the Professional Mentor Program)

Future Position

- What type of work would you like to do?
- What is important to you in your future career?
- What competencies are required for your chosen career?
- How well do your current skills match the competencies required for your chosen career?
- What are your short-term goals related to career exploration? (Examples: Learn how to write a business plan; conduct informational interviews; find out where graduates in my field are working/finding careers)
- How will you develop contacts--a network--related to your career exploration goals?

Draft

STEP 2: Write your IDP.

Some important things to remember in writing your IDP:

- It is a living document that will and should be updated and changed as often as necessary.
- Identify specific and achievable objectives or skills to be learned.
- Write these in a way that makes very clear what you are going to do. The goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-limited

A specific goal will usually answer the five "W" questions:

What: What do I want to accomplish?

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

Who: Who is involved?

Where: Identify a location

Which: Identify requirements and constraints

A measurable goal will usually answer questions such as:

How much? / How many? / How will I know when it is accomplished?

An attainable goal will usually answer the question:

How: How can the goal be accomplished?

A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions:

Does this seem worthwhile?

Is this the right time? / Am I the right person?

Does this match my/our other efforts/needs?

A time-limited goal will usually answer the questions:

When? / What can I do six months from now? / What can I do six weeks from now? What can I do today?

Meet with EIR

Discuss STEP 3: Discuss with your EIR/advisor.

The purpose of discussing the results of your assessments and career goals with your EIR is to help you identify areas needing improvement. By helping you compare current skills and strengths with those needed to achieve your career objectives, your EIR can be an important ally.

In addition to discussing your plan with your primary EIR, you should also approach others for advice. You can receive useful feedback from multiple people with a broad range of experiences and perspectives, including friends, family, staff, and faculty.

Implement

STEP 4: Implement your plan (IDP).

Put your plan into action and seek support you may need to remain on track. Remember that you should be flexible and modify your IDP if your goals or circumstances change. Refer to your IDP often and add your IDP deadlines to your calendar to integrate them with deadlines for other work and personal events.

Revise

STEP 5: Review and revise your IDP.

Review your IDP with your EIR on a regular basis (on a schedule decided upon together) and revise/update. At a minimum, you should revisit and discuss your IDP with your EIR twice this academic year.