



Individual Development Plan (IDP)

A “Getting Started” Guide

Individual Development Plan

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) helps you:

Identify Strengths & Opportunities

**Define What
“Success”
Means to You**

**Identify What
“Success”
Looks Like for You**

**Set Clear Goals for
Growth
(Personal and/or
Professional)**

**Develop a Roadmap
for Achieving Your
Goals**

The IDP is a process through which you reflect, plan, and execute, to grow and develop in your career.

Since it is your IDP, you choose which parts to share with your mentor(s) and/or supervisor(s).



IDP Steps

1

Assess Your Current State

- Where are you currently?
- What are your strengths and opportunities?

2

Envision Your Future

- Where do you want to be?
- What do you want to be able to do [better]?

3

Identify Gaps *(Compare Current to Future State)*

- What areas need improvement?
- What types of experiences do you need to grow?
- What skills and/or knowledge do you want to develop?
- What can you accomplish realistically with current workload?

4

Write Your IDP

- Outline specific actions to address identified gaps.
- Set AIM SMART goals for development.

5

Discuss Your IDP With Someone *(optional)*

- Seek feedback and guidance.
- Align development plan with team/agency/organizational goals.

6

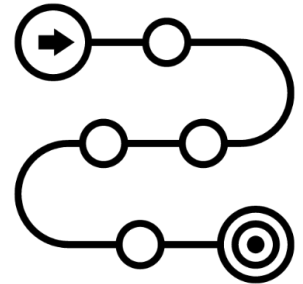
Develop Your Gaps

- Implement strategies to address identified gaps.
- Seek 'stretch' opportunities for growth.

7

Monitor, Track, and Update Your IDP as Needed

- Regularly assess progress towards your goals.
- Adjust your plan based on changes in priorities and/or circumstances.



Step 1: Assess Current State

Understanding our mindset, skillsets, and behaviors in the present enables us to identify development gaps and plan more effectively for our desired future state.

Please choose one of the following formal assessments:

These assessments ask you a series of questions and will provide you with a profile.

Myers-Briggs

Myers-Briggs is a personality assessment tool that categorizes individuals into one of 16 personality types based on preferences in four contrasts: extraversion/introversion and thinking/feeling.

Time: 20 – 25 minutes | **Cost:** Free



Clifton Strengths (Top 5)

CliftonStrengths is an assessment that identifies an individual's top strengths out of 34 themes, providing insights into their talents and potential.

Time: 30 – 45 minutes | **Cost:** \$24.99



Enneagram Test

The Enneagram Test is a personality assessment tool that categorizes individuals into one of nine personality types, offering insights into motivations and behaviors.

Time: 10 – 20 minutes | **Cost:** Free



Personal Mindset Assessment

The Personal Mindset Assessment evaluates an individual's mindset, such as growth or fixed mindset.

Time: 10 – 15 minutes | **Cost:** Free



Wellness Wheel

A Wellness Wheel is a visual guide and tool for self-exploration that can help you assess different aspects of your wellbeing. ([Vibrant Soulful](#)). This is just one of many different types of Wellness Wheels.

Use this wheel below to reflect on what areas you are satisfied with, and which areas you feel might need improvement or more focus in your life.



Step 2: Envision Your Future

“Dream and give yourself permission to envision a YOU that you choose to be” – Joy Page

Where would you like to be in the next 5 years?

- What achievements/milestones do you hope to reach in the next 12 months?
- What are your long-term career aspirations?
- What are your long-term personal aspirations?



What core feelings do you want to experience during a typical day [of work]?

What brings you joy? Meaning? Satisfaction?

How can you bring more joy, meaning, or satisfaction into your life?

Step 3: Identify Gaps

“Embracing the ‘gap’ and the discomfort it brings is necessary for growth and development” – Unknown

You’ve assessed your current state and now have an idea of where you’re at.
You’ve envisioned your future and now have an idea of where you want to be...



What skills do you want to develop?

What experiences do you want to have?

What will get you closer to your envisioned future state?

Step 4: Write Your IDP

Get from where you are to where you want to be with AIM SMARTE.

This might look a little different from what you're used to. Usually, we aim for big goals with lots of steps that can take a long time to achieve.

The AIM SMARTE method suggests something different. Instead of focusing on big goals, it encourages breaking things down into smaller goals. This helps in two ways: 1) it makes it easier to take action because you're looking at the very next step; 2) it turns vague, ongoing goals into specific ones with deadlines, making them easier to prioritize alongside other time-bound tasks.



AIM

Decide on a goal: _____

A – Acceptable: What is the minimum you can do? _____

I – Ideal: What is the maximum you can do? _____

M – Middle: What is the middle; a realistic stretch? _____

SMARTE

Write your **middle** goal from the AIM process: _____

Now, follow this SMARTE process:

S – Specific: What exactly is the **first step** of the action/goal you identified?

M – Measurable: For what you have listed in “Specific,” make sure you have qualified or quantified the measure of success.

A – Achievable: Is the initial step (listed in “Specific”) possible to achieve? _____ YES or NO _____

R – Reasonable: How reasonable is it that what you’re saying you’re going to do can be done **at this time**?

T – Time-Oriented: By when, exactly, will you complete this **first step** of the goal?

E – Equitable: Does this goal support fairness, justice, and equal outcomes for all?

TIPS

- *If you answer that it is not achievable or reasonable, go back to the start of the goal setting process and adjust your goal.*
- *Decide how you will follow up and be accountable to the goal upfront.*

Step 5 (optional): Discuss Your IDP with Someone

It is strongly recommended that you share your action plan with someone. You can get useful feedback from multiple people with a broad range of experiences and perspectives including friends, family, and colleagues other than your primary mentor and/or supervisor.



List the steps you have already taken to establish career goals, and review whether they are realistic given your skills, aptitude, and how your employer defines an “ideal employee.” This step requires total honesty.

Build a list of questions to ask – what do you want to learn about as a result of meeting with this person?

Engage in self-reflection through discussion.

What improvements have you made since the last progress meeting?

Step 6: Develop Your Gaps

Put your plan into action. Stay organized and seek out the support you need to stay on track. Commit to the plan, but also remember that you will need to be flexible and modify your plan as your goals and/or circumstances change. Keep your IDP in a convenient place and check it often. Add your IDP deadlines to your calendar to stay on track.



Checklist of AIM SMART Goals: Use your IDP in Step 4 to identify strategies below to help you GROW!

First Day	30-Days	90-Days
6-Months	9-Months	12-Months

My first step will be:

My accountability partner will be:

I will ask them for support by saying:

I will review my progress on the following date:

How can you make your IDP a priority throughout the year?

Step 7: Monitor, Track, & Update Your IDP



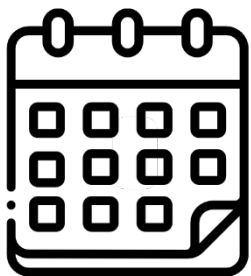
Review the IDP with your mentor or supervisor on a regular basis (on a schedule decided upon together) and revise/update. At a minimum, you should revisit and discuss your IDP with your mentor or supervisor annually.

And, importantly, celebrate your achievements!



[Online Courses: Individual Work Planning](#)

Work through the 13 short on-demand videos to become familiar with the practice of work planning. There are resources including a work planning template which can help with monitoring, tracking, and staying up-to-date on your IDP.



A recommended frequency to revisit your IDP is *at least* annually to:

1. Update and refine as your goals change and/or come into focus.
2. To record your progress and accomplishments.

Resources & References

Sources:



Self-Assessments:

- **Myers-Briggs:** <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>
- **Clifton Strengths:** <https://store.gallup.com/p/en-us/10108/cliftonstrengths-top-5?c=1>
- **Enneagram Test:** <https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/>
- **Personal Mindset Assessment:** <https://ryangottfredson.com/resources/>

Emotion Wheel: <https://humansystems.co/emotionwheels/>

AIM SMART: <https://katierasoul.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Team-Awesome-AIM-SMART-Goal-Setting.pdf>

Additional Resources:



- **Forbes article on goal-setting in organizations:** <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markmurphy/2015/01/16/passion-is-the-missing-ingredient-in-goal-setting/#4bcacf261017>
- **Meyer, Paul J** (2003). "What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Creating S.M.A.R.T.E. Goals". *Attitude Is Everything: If You Want to Succeed Above and Beyond*. Meyer Resource Group, Incorporated.

Portions of this Workbook Adapted From:

- **myIDP website:** myidp.sciencecareers.org
- **Individual Development Plan for UCSF Faculty**
- **University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School Office of Professional Development, DiscoverPD:** my.grad.wisc.edu/DiscoverPD

