

## **Columbia University Individual Development Plan (IDP) Worksheet**

This document is designed to assist you in exploring career options, developing an overarching career plan, and setting career related goals. In order to support these aims, this document includes three sections. The first section focuses on self-assessment and reflection. The second section of this document focuses on goal-setting. Completing these two sections can help you organize your thoughts and determine what may be helpful to discuss in greater detail with your mentor.

The third section offers recommendations for taking action on your goals, including initiating a career discussion with your mentor. The purpose of this section is to help you identify action steps on your goals and shape discussions with your mentors on how to achieve your goals and obtain the support needed to assist you.

### **SECTION ONE: REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT**

#### **Reflection**

1. Describe the progress you have made in the past year toward the completion of your previously established career planning, research, and/or self-development goal(s).
  - Career planning goals:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Research goals:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Self-development goals:
  
2. Please list your accomplishments over the past year.  
*(This can include things related to research, career planning, or self-development and any other accomplishments you consider important.)*

3. Did you experience any challenges in making progress on your goals/accomplishments? If so, what action did you take and how was this resolved?

### **Self-Assessment**

*If you have not done so in the past 1-2 years, please consider completing a self-assessment using either [myIDP](#) or [ImaginePhD](#) to help guide you in this section of the worksheet.*

1. What are your career-related strengths and areas for improvement?

Strengths:

Areas for Improvement:

2. What are your career-related interests?

3. What are your career-related values?

4. What are your current long-term career goals? Have these career goals changed in the past year?

5. What additional skills or training would be helpful to develop in getting closer to these long-term goals?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What are some factors that may be influencing your current career goals?  
*These influences may include things such as skills, interests, values, desired geographic location, work/life balance, family, etc.*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. How confident are you on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 being not confident at all and 10 being extremely confident) that the career path that you are considering is a good fit for you?  
 What could help you gain confidence about the fit of this career path?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. When do you anticipate beginning your job search?

## **SECTION TWO: GOAL SETTING**

*When considering long and short-term goals, it can be helpful to reference the SMART goal setting formula listed below.*

**Specific**

**Measurable**

**Attainable**

**Relevant**

**Timely**

### **Short-Term Goals**

*Given your responses to the self-assessment section above, please develop short-term goals for the following areas.*

1. Please list one or two short-term goals (i.e., goals to focus on during the upcoming year) related to your **overall career goals**.  
*These goals can focus on topics such as gathering career related information, networking, gaining specific skills (i.e., writing skills, technical skills, leadership skills, etc.), or developing application materials.*
  
2. Please list one or two short-term goals (i.e., goals to focus on during the upcoming year) related to your **self-development and overall wellbeing**.  
*These goals can focus on topics such as physical, emotional, social, and intellectual wellness or overall work-life balance.*

3. Please list one or two short-term goals (i.e., goals to focus on during the upcoming year) related to your **research**.

*These goals can focus on topics such as experimental design/plan, manuscripts, publications, grants, etc.*

### **Long-Term Goals**

*Given your responses to the self-assessment section above, please consider long-term goals for the following areas.*

1. Please list one or two long-term goals (i.e., larger goals for the next 5+ years) related to your **overall career**.

*These goals can focus on topics such as specific jobs of interest, type of work/employment, benefits, job tasks, work-life balance, etc.*

2. Please list one or two long-term goals (i.e., larger goals for the next 5+ years) related to your **self-development and overall wellbeing**.

*These goals can focus on topics such as physical, emotional, social, and intellectual wellness or overall work-life balance.*

### **SECTION THREE: TAKING ACTION**

In order to make progress on the goals identified above, it is important to take action. Here are a couple examples of ways to take action:

- Schedule “career time” in your weekly calendar to explore career paths, build new skills, research job opportunities, etc.
- Ask your PI/mentor to set up a career planning meeting. (*See below for more information about this.*)
- Set reminders in your calendar or phone about your short- and long-term goals.

**If you are interested in taking action by setting up a career discussion with your PI, consider the following questions and recommendations to help guide your discussion.**

1. What of the above reflection/self-assessment responses would be helpful to share with your PI/mentor? What is the outcome you are hoping for by sharing this information with your PI/mentor?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What short or long-term goals would be helpful to share with your PI/mentor? What support do you think your PI/mentor can offer to help you reach these goals?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What actions should be initiated by 1) you, 2) your PI, and/or 3) other mentors in order to facilitate your success on the goals identified above?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What other ways can you take action on the goals above? Are there other resources or programs at Columbia that may be helpful to you in reaching your goals?

5. When are you and your PI/mentor going to follow up on your IDP and progress?

**General recommendations for career discussion with your PI/mentor:**

- **Set a meeting specific to this topic:** Don't try to add this discussion to another meeting about your research project. Instead request to schedule a meeting just to focus on career development.
- **Do your homework first:** Complete this worksheet before your meeting. This can help you identify your needs and goals for the meeting.
- **Bring appropriate materials:** Make sure to have all materials ready for the meeting. Bring this worksheet to help remind you of the areas you want to discuss. If you are hoping to get feedback on a specific job application document or input on a job ad, make sure to have those accessible!
- **Set Agenda:** Let your PI/mentor know what you are hoping to focus on during your meeting. This helps you and them stay on track.
- **Be confident:** Discussing career development goals can be challenging at times. You may need to advocate for yourself in this meeting, so it's important to bring your confidence! Remember, discussing your IDP is part of your mentor's responsibility, so don't hesitate to ask them for support!

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Please visit the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs' (OPA) website for additional information about programming available to help support your career exploration, skill development, and job search goals. Additional information about other resources available to support postdocs can also be found below and on the Columbia OPA website.

**Career Development Resources:**

[ImaginePhD](#)

[myIDP](#)

[Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#)

[Calendar of Upcoming Events](#)

[Columbia University Individual Development Plan \(IDP\) Program](#)

[Career Development](#)

**Wellness and Community Resources:**

[Columbia University Postdoctoral Society \(CUPS\)](#)

[Postdoctoral Wellness](#)

[Postdoctoral Community](#)

**Other Helpful Resources:**

[Office of Work/Life](#)

[International Students and Scholars Office \(ISSO\)](#)