

Individual Development Plan

http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/files/caps/caps_idp.pdf

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is essentially a planning document that identifies what your goals and objectives are for the upcoming year. Although there are many different ways to create an IDP, overall it can be broken into 3 main steps:

1

Identify your goals

- Make a list of goals that you would like to accomplish in the upcoming year. Examples:
 - To present your work at a conference
 - To expand your skills in communicating your research to diverse audiences.
 - To broaden your job search to careers in industry

2

Break down your goals into SMART objectives and Actions

- Create specific objectives that will help you to achieve your goals.
- Sometimes it will take multiple actions to achieve your objective
- Be deliberate about your choices in order to avoid getting sidetracked by projects that may not be in line with your goals.

3

Evaluate your progress at regular intervals

- Create timelines for review, to ensure that you are on track with your goals.
- Consider scheduling a regular meeting with a career counsellor, a mentor, your supervisor, or another researcher in your field to discuss your progress and goals.

Below is some additional information about each of these steps

1 Identify your goals

Goals are general statements about what you need to accomplish in order to achieve your broader aspirations. These goals can pertain to your research, professional development needs, and career plans. Some categories to consider relative to professional development and career planning include:

- Identify your interests, values, and skills: Self-knowledge will make it easier for you to identify subsequent goals that will help you to be successful in your research and your chosen career.
- Research career options, select possible career options, and identify the skills you will need.
- Develop the skills necessary to pursue these career possibilities: take courses and gain experience.
- Connect with people in your desired field and identify organizations to work for.
- Prepare for the job search: application material, interviewing, negotiation.