**INTRODUCING myIDP: A CAREER PLANNING TOOL FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS**

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**Introduction**

- Individual Development Plans (IDPs) can help graduate students and postdocs clarify professional development needs and set attainable career goals.
- Survey data show that trainees would be more likely to develop an IDP if they had assistance with the process.
- Few trainees have access to in-person career counselling services.
- myIDP fills this gap, by providing online guidance through the process of long- and short-term career planning, and facilitating access to career resources tailored to PhD-level scientists.

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**Features of myIDP**

myIDP guides trainees through the process of creating an Individual Development Plan:

1. **Self-assessment**
   - Identify your skills, interests, and values.
2. **Career exploration**
   - A list of 20 scientific career paths with a prediction of which ones best fit your skills and interests.
   - A tool for setting strategic goals for the coming year, with optional reminders to keep you on track.
   - Articles and resources to guide you through the process.
   - Options to save materials online and print them for further review and discussion.
3. **Set goals**
   - Ability to select which portion of your IDP you wish to share with advisors, mentors, or others.
4. **Implement plan**
   - myIDP facilitates trainees’ discussions with career counselors.
   - Convey to mentors that students & postdocs want assistance.
   - Remind trainees that student & postdocs want assistance.
   - Publicize availability of myIDP to both mentors and trainees.
   - Offer workshops or courses to demonstrate myIDP and help trainees begin the process.
   - Engage with your campus Career Center, if available. The exercises in myIDP can facilitate trainees’ discussions with career counselors.
   - Formally integrate myIDP into your institution’s training programs. For example, some institutions require students or postdocs to complete an IDP annually. myIDP allows trainees to submit a portion of their IDP as proof of completion.

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**myIDP is self-explanatory**

In each section, Quick Tips walk the user through the process.

Quick Tips link to in-depth articles, which provide more explanation and examples.

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**Preview of myIDP**

1. **User self-assesses skills, interests, and values**

2. **User is given a list of scientific career paths, with scores showing how their skills and interests match each career.**

3. **Module provides links to articles, books, and professional societies related to each career path.**

4. **User sets goals within module:**
   - Career Advancement Goals
   - Skills Development Goals
   - Project Completion Goals

5. **User can print a summary report, with the option to hide sections that he/she prefers not to share with others.**

6. **User can choose to receive automated monthly e-mails, reminding her/him of her/his goals for the month.**

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**Recommendations for Trainees**

- Begin using myIDP early in your doctoral or postdoctoral training.
- Complete all of the myIDP exercises—but don’t expect to complete them in a day, a week, or even a month. Career planning takes time, and should be an iterative process during which you periodically reassess your skills, values, interests, and career goals.
- Take advantage of myIDP’s career planning resources and those available at your institution and through your disciplinary societies.
- Print your myIDP goals and opt to receive deadline reminders to keep you on track.
- Don’t be afraid to discuss your career plans with your mentors.
- Consider sharing all or part of your IDP during discussions with mentors. Make this a separate conversation, not tacked on to the end of a standard research-focused meeting.

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**Recommendations for Graduate Programs & Postdoc Offices**

- Publicize availability of myIDP to both mentors and trainees.
- Convey to mentors that students & postdocs want assistance with their career planning.
- Offer workshops or courses to demonstrate myIDP and help trainees begin the process.
- Engage with your campus Career Center, if available. The exercises in myIDP can facilitate trainees’ discussions with career counselors.
- Formally integrate myIDP into your institution’s training programs. For example, some institutions require students or postdocs to complete an IDP annually. myIDP allows trainees to submit a portion of their IDP as proof of completion.

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**Where can I find myIDP?**

myIDP.sciencecareers.org (open to all; free of charge)

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[Science Careers](https://www.sciencemag.org/careers)