

# INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

## OVERVIEW

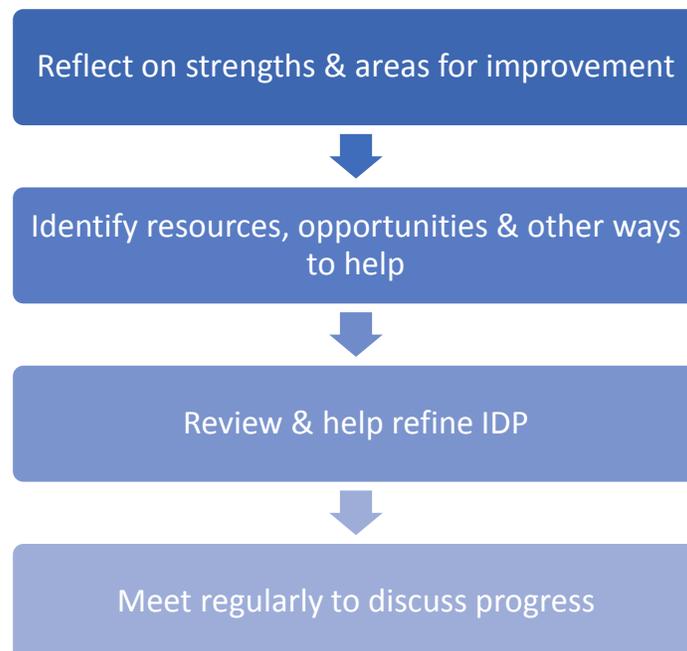
### INTRODUCTION

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a tool to set expectations for the mentor-mentee relationship in terms of postdoctoral career development and annual research goals.

According to [research conducted by Sigma Xi](#), *postdocs who complete an IDP produce more publications and consider their careers more satisfying than those who do not* (Gitlin J. 2008). Encouraging your postdoc to complete an IDP will also help ensure that you and your postdoc are on the same page with respect to career plans, research and skill development activities, progress, and time to independence.

### OVERVIEW OF THE IDP PROCESS FOR MENTORS

The following guidelines for mentors, based on the below steps, are suggestions to help you advise your postdoc when they are developing their IDP.



## GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

### REFLECT ON STRENGTHS & AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- » What attracted you to make an offer to this postdoc, and what gaps did you notice on their CV?
- » What are the postdoc's biggest accomplishments in the past year, in your view?
- » Are the postdoc's grasp of the discipline, research techniques, ability to see the big picture, writing/oral presentation skills, professionalism, and leadership/mentoring abilities appropriate to their stage? What do they need to bring these skills to the next level?
- » Does the postdoc keep up with [RCR training and conflicts of interest reporting](#)?
- » Is the postdoc well-connected with peers and senior researchers in their field(s)? How can that be improved?
- » What conferences should the postdoc be attending?



## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

### IDENTIFYING RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES & OTHER WAYS TO HELP

- » Possible sources of skill development for trainees:
  - » Instructive or Socratic discussions about the literature, research ethics, professional behavior, etc. during lab or one-on-one meetings.
  - » Involvement in lab management, grantwriting, manuscript drafting or budgeting.
  - » Supervising or mentoring junior trainees or undergraduate students.
  - » Connecting with other faculty or senior researchers that have relevant expertise.
  - » Department-specific trainings, seminars or courses.
  - » Discipline-specific national meetings & courses (e.g. [Cold Spring Harbor trainings](#)).
- » Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) resources:
  - » [Professional development for postdocs](#)
  - » [OPA and Career Services consultations](#)
  - » Career development [blog](#) and [newsletter archives](#)
  - » [Workshops and events](#)
- » Email [leah.colvin@colorado.edu](mailto:leah.colvin@colorado.edu) for additional help developing ideas or defining a mentoring plan.

### REVIEW & HELP REFINE IDP

- » Postdocs should complete an initial IDP within their first 2-3 months and annually thereafter in conjunction with the CU Boulder [Performance Management Cycle](#), with a mid-year review to re-evaluate goals that may need to be altered due to the dynamic nature of research.
- » Specific areas are designated on the [CU Boulder IDP Template](#) for you to enter your feedback.

### MEET REGULARLY TO DISCUSS PROGRESS

- » Regular meetings with your postdoc should include *career development* discussions. The postdoc should be encouraged to provide an agenda or agenda items for meetings.
- » The best practice is to meet weekly; however, you may need creativity & flexibility to meet scheduling challenges, for example:
  - » Flex scheduling on a weekly basis.
  - » Meet via Skype.
  - » Discuss via email.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- » [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs \(OPA\) career planning consultations](#)
- » [National Postdoc Association \(NPA\) core competencies](#)
- » [Science Careers online IDP](#)
- » [NPA Career Planning & Exploration](#)

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE CU BOULDER IDP TEMPLATE

