



The Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) functions as a personalized strategic plan. IDPs assess students' current skills and areas for development, as well as provide students with measurable goals and outcomes that help guide career and goal attainment.¹

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an essential tool to help you:

- Assess your current knowledge and skills.
- Create a purposeful plan for developing and enhancing skills needed to meet your academic and professional goals.

Communicate with your faculty mentor and the Program Director about current and desired skills, academic/professional goals, and gather input regarding strategies to meet your objectives.

To complete your IDP, you will:

STEP 1: Complete the Baseline Self-Reflection on your current skills and strengths (p. 3-4).

Reflect on your current skills and strengths and identify your academic and career goals using the guide on p. 3. What skills do you need to achieve your goals? What activities and experiences will you engage in to gain these skills?

STEP 2: Complete a Skills-based Assessment (p. 5-9).

After reflecting on your current skills and strengths, you will complete a skills-based assessment (see p. 5-9) grounded in EvaluateUR. EvaluateUR is a method to provide objective assessment of the value of undergraduate research by documenting student success and growth in key outcome areas.

By completing a skills-based assessment, you will better understand your current skills and track your academic growth as well as research progress. The skills-based inventory will help your mentor and the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship understand your growth in the competencies.

STEP 3: Consider your long-term, intermediate-term, short-term, and immediate goals (p. 10-11).

Building skills is key to achieving long-term, intermediate-term, short-term, and immediate goals. Record several of your goals on p. 10. What skills are necessary to achieve these goals? How will you know you've been successful? What parts of your support system (e.g., mentor, family, friends, etc.) may help you achieve this goal? Finally, envision an ideal timeline for completion of each goal.

¹ Elements adapted from Florida State University's Graduate School IDP, University of Wisconsin, Madison IDP, University of Pittsburgh Health Sciences IDP, and C. Gita Bosch's "Building Your Individual Development Plan (IDP): A Guide for Undergraduate Students" and Pfund, Branchaw, and Handelsman's Entering Mentoring.

STEP 4: Develop a mentorship plan (p. 13).

Once you establish your goals and fill out your skills inventory, you are ready to develop a mentorship plan (template on p. 13). Consider who might be suitable to help you build your skills and/or reach your goals. Record the mentor who might help you attain a goal/skill set. What mentored activity will be crucial for that particular goal/skill? Mentorship relationships are often reciprocal – what benefits might you provide your mentor? What outcome would indicate success?

STEP 5: Discuss with your mentor(s) and/or advisor(s).

After filling out your IDP, you must discuss it with your faculty mentor. Your mentor should be aware of your current skills, the skills you wish to develop, and your goals, as well as your mentorship needs. With this knowledge, your mentor will be better equipped to work as an important ally as you work toward building skills and achieving your goals.

Your mentor will likely give you feedback. **After receiving feedback, REVISE and EDIT your IDP.** This document should not be static, rather revised and edited as you move through your academic and professional career. You can approach other potential mentors or confidants (e.g., friends, family, staff, and faculty other than your primary mentor) for advice on your IDP.

Once your IDP is completed, you and your mentor will need to sign and date the document (p. 14).

STEP 6: Implement your plan (IDP).

Put your plan into action! Seek support to remain on track. Remember you should be flexible and modify your IDP as your goals and circumstances evolve. Refer to your IDP often and add your IDP deadlines to your calendar to integrate them with deadlines for other work and personal events.

STEP 7: At the end of the research period, review and revise your IDP.

For this program, **you and your mentor will complete an IDP check-in at the end of the summer.** More instructions will be shared with scholars and mentors in July.

Significant revisions to your skills, goals, or mentorship needs must be written into an updated IDP and emailed to the Program Director for review/consultation. When sending the updated document, include a short memo listing major revisions to your IDP. Please keep a copy of your previous IDP to help track your progress over time.

BASELINE SELF-REFLECTION

Rate your confidence in the following

	Unconfident	Neither Unconfident nor Confident	Confident	Notes
Awareness of career opportunities in your field				
Establishing career goals				
Knowledge of preparation needed to achieve your academic and career goals				
Seeking faculty and professional mentors				
Asking for letters of recommendation from faculty and other professionals				
Writing a CV/resume and cover letter				
Time management				
Persevering in the face of obstacles and setbacks				
Taking on leadership positions				
Tailoring communication to the wide variety of audiences				
Managing conflict promptly and appropriately				
Recognizing, respecting, and valuing differing viewpoints related to ability, age, class, education-level, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, sexuality, national origin, rank, religion, or veteran status				
Developing an awareness of one's identities and how they affect one's experiences.				

Reflect on the following questions (take notes on a separate page, if helpful).

- What is important to you in your future career? What are your career goals? *Example: It is important that my future career makes an impact in the field of mental health. My career goal is to be a professor who conducts research on attitudes towards people with psychiatric disorders.*
- What skills are required for your chosen career? How well do your current skills match what is required for your chosen career?
- What are your current responsibilities/requirements for your research?
- What are the responsibilities/requirements for your research that you must meet in the next year?
- What skills or discipline-specific knowledge do you need to develop?
- What scholarly activities would you like to accomplish or work toward during the next year? *Example: I would like to present a poster at a professional conference.*
- What are your short-term goals related to career exploration? *Example: My goal is to understand how the skills I learn during my summer research experience are useful for future employment and educational opportunities.*

SKILLS-BASED ASSESSMENT

Now, you will complete a skills-based assessment based on EvaluateUR. EvaluateUR is a method to provide objective assessment of the value of undergraduate research by documenting student success and growth in key outcome areas.

Limited Competency: You are in the early stages of developing this new skill.

Some Competency: You are limited in your ability to perform this skill and require significant focus and concentration while you continue to practice the skill.

Achieved Competency: You can perform this skill confidently and with little effort.

1. Communication

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Writing for diverse audiences (e.g., scholars/ researchers within your discipline, scholars outside of your discipline, the general public)				
Presenting to diverse audiences (e.g., folks in your discipline, scholars outside of your discipline, the general public)				
Communication etiquette in email, social media, or face to face				
Ability to give or receive constructive feedback				
Networking within or outside of academia				

2. Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Familiarity with what is determined to be a valued contribution in your discipline				

Knowledge of important contributions in your discipline				
Familiarity and engagement with scholarly journals and other academic sources of knowledge within your discipline				

3. Project Knowledge and Skills

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Understanding of the literature and/or current research related to my project				
•				
•				
•				
•				
Understanding of the methodology/research techniques being used in my project				
•				
•				
•				
•				

4. Creativity

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Ability to understand and approach research-related problems from a variety of perspectives				
Can understand how your ideas and research fit within existing scholarly work				

Thinks creatively about ways to share research findings with broader audience (e.g., scholars/ researchers within your discipline, scholars outside of your discipline, the general public)				
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5. Independence

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Comfort with setting professional boundaries/expectations				
Ability to engage in self-advocacy				
Successfully manages multiple assignments or tasks				
Uses time wisely to accomplish project goals				
Works independently and identifies when guidance and support is needed.				

6. Ability to Navigate Obstacles

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Take responsibility for mistakes				
Perseveres when problems or setbacks arise				
Shows flexibility and willingness to take risks, when appropriate				
Understands how to mitigate or manage research-related risks				
Troubleshoots problems and searches for effective solutions				

7. Growth as a Scholar/ Researcher

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Recognizes problems are often more complicated than they first appear				
Understands there may be more than one right solution to a problem				
Accepts limits of one's own knowledge and seeks out information				

8. Practice and Process of Inquiry

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Can ask questions and generate hypotheses within your discipline				
Can recognize and/or generate appropriate data within your discipline				
Understands how knowledge is generated, confirmed, and communicated within your discipline				

9. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Practices problem solving and making informed decisions				
Can recognize flaws, assumptions, and missing elements in arguments				
Seek to understand the ideas of others and look for mutual solutions				

Anticipate and proactively address problems or behaviors				
Can maintain open-minded skepticism about potential solutions to problems				
Asks good questions to seek out the root causes of problems				

10. Ethical Skills and Mindset

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Understand of authorship and recognizing others' academic work				
Understand of conflict of interest				
Understand of ethical behavior as it pertains to my research and discipline				
Understands the importance of diverse viewpoints in conducting scholarly work				
Works well with diverse groups				
Has practice attributing credit to sources in ways that are appropriate in the discipline.				

11. Career Planning and /or Graduate School Planning

	Limited Competency	Some Competency	Achieved Competency	Strategies to improve
Engages in professional development workshops and incorporates learning in career and academic development plans				
Aware of nationally competitive fellowships in your field				

Awareness of funding available for graduate and professional school				
Writing a personal statement, cover letter, and CV/resume				
Seeking letters of recommendation/ job references				
Knowledge of graduate school application process				
Ability to search for and prioritize graduate school programs and/or career pathways				

GOALS ASSESSMENT

When writing goals, focus on making them “SMART,” or Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-limited.

Specific – answers 5 “W’s” – What do I want to accomplish? Why do I want to accomplish it? Who is involved? Where will the work be completed? What is the timeline?

Measurable – How will I know when my goal has been accomplished?

Attainable – Can the goal be accomplished with my available time and resources?

Relevant – Does this particular goal fit with my other short, intermediate and long-term goals? Does it align with my field of study? Is the goal appropriate for my current level of expertise, knowledge, and skills?

Time-limited – What can be done today? What can be done six weeks from now? What about six months from now?

<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>	<i>Column 4</i>	<i>Column 5</i>	<i>Column 6</i>	
GOALS	Competencies & Skills	Activities & Experiences	Assessment of Progress	Support People and Their Roles	Timeline	
					Begin	Complete
<p>LONG-TERM (5-10 years, ex. <i>I will be a researcher at NIH studying new treatments for cancer</i>).</p> <p>1.</p>						
<p>INTERMEDIATE-TERM (2-5 years, ex. <i>I will earn a Ph.D. in Sociology. I will contribute to knowledge on late-life parent-child relationships.</i>)</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>						

<p>SHORT-TERM (1-2 years, ex. <i>I will earn my B.S. in Behavioral Neuroscience. I will present a poster on my research at the Society for Neuroscience meeting.</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>IMMEDIATE (6 months-1 year, ex. <i>I will earn an A in a statistics class. I will participate in an undergraduate summer research program at another university.</i>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 					

MENTORSHIP ASSESSMENT

1. Identify your Mentorship Needs

Using the Skills Assessment from pp. 4-8, identify **skills** you may want to build this summer that will help you reach your **goals**. Consider mentors at GVSU or another institution that may help you refine these skills. Potential mentors can be individuals beyond the scope of your summer research project, as well.

From the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR), a mentor is an experienced individual who shares knowledge, experience, and advice with a mentee.

Mentoring Plan

Mentor	Long/Mid/Short-Term Goal (review p. 9); (ex. manage own research project)	Skill (ex. mastery over discipline-specific lab skills)	Activity to learn skill (ex. time spent in lab environment)	What Mentee (you!) can offer (ex. increase the lab capacity of the mentor)	Outcome (ex. mentee learns skill and mentor has increased lab productivity)

IDP CERTIFICATION

Once you have completed the IDP and reviewed it with your mentor, please sign and date the document. Once this final step is completed, forward a copy to the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (OURS) at ours@gvsu.edu.

Submitted to Faculty Advisor (date and initials): _____

Discussion with Faculty Advisor (date and initials):

Revisions completed (date and initials): _____

Submitted to OURS (Date and method):