Individual Development Plan

In order to assist trainees and advisers in the efficient completion of degree training and considered identification of a strategy for career development once the degree has been awarded, all graduate students will be required to create an Individual Development Plan. The IDP will have two components, both of which are critical to the achievement of a successful career outcome.

The first component will address the action plan for the research project over the next 12-month period. This should take a form analogous to the “Specific Aims” section of an NIH grant proposal, identifying key experimental objectives. In addition, objectives in professional development (e.g. attendance at a national meeting, delivery of a seminar) are also identified. The student adviser works with the student to develop this component of the IDP. The IDP is then used as a resource for consideration and comment by the Student Advisory Committee in the annual meeting with the student.

The second component of the IDP will explore the long-term career objectives of the student. “Career objectives” must look beyond a period of postdoctoral training. The nature of this component of the plan will vary widely depending on the individual. For the individual who has identified a particular career position, the IDP might, for example, seek to gain a more complete understanding of the requirements of such a position or the identification of “soft” skills critical to success in the position. If undecided, the individual might explore the variety of career options for which the biomedical science degree can serve as a foundation. While the student’s research adviser can play a role in developing this component of the plan, students should be encouraged to identify a mentor who can provide critical, concrete and confidential counsel to the student.

The use of the career planning tool distributed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science as “myIDP” to both guide the creation of a plan and convert entries into a report format is strongly recommended. A copy of the IDP will be submitted to the graduate program director in June of each year. The plans will be forwarded to the School of Medicine Office of Graduate Education. A record of the receipt of the IDP is placed in the student file.