

# The Individual Development Plan

## Applicant Background & Goals

## Letters of Recommendation

March 22, 2021

For all Fellowship (F) Applications

Section of Application	Page Limits * (if different from FOA, FOA supersedes)
Project Summary/Abstract	30 lines of text
Project Narrative	Three sentences
Introduction to Resubmission or Revision Application (when applicable)	1
Applicant's Background and Goals for Fellowship Training	6
Specific Aims	1
Research Strategy	6
Respective Contributions	1
Selection of Sponsor and Institution	1
Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research	1
Sponsor and Co-Sponsor Statements	6
Letters of Support from Collaborators, Contributors, and Consultants	6
Description of Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training	2
Note: This page limit includes the Additional Educational Information required for F30 and F31 applications.	
Applications for Concurrent Support (when applicable)	1
Biographical Sketch	5



Applicant Background and Goals (6 pages)  
mention the IDP

## **Three sections:**

- Doctoral Dissertation and Research Experience  
(similar but longer than NIH biosketch)
- Training Goals and Objectives  
(organize around NPA competencies)
- Activities Planned Under this Award  
(including timetable for each year)

Shares similarities with sponsor's training plan

- **Discipline-specific conceptual knowledge and critical thinking**  
*Ex. coursework, qualifier exam, journal club, clinical experience*
- **Research skill development including computational skills and data management**  
*Ex. Core facility workshops, lab experience, biostatistics*
- **Communication skills, oral, written and lay public**  
*Ex. career courses, journal club, meetings*
- **Professionalism, respect, reflect values of workplace and profession**  
*Ex. Outreach, service, promote discipline, journal club, authorship*
- **Leadership, management and team science skills, including collaboration**  
*Ex. Collaborations, overseeing students*
- **Ethics and responsible conduct of research**  
*Ex. Coursework, lab interactions, IACUC, IRB, manage conflict of interest*

What strengths and weaknesses do you have right now?

What do you need to learn to do the research?

What do you need to learn for your career goals?

Who will teach you those things, and how?

What is your timeline for your research career development?

What are your professional goals?

How are your activities related to your goals?

Do you need more information to achieve your goals?

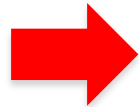
The work in graduate school is not intrinsically difficult. You are smart enough to do this.

What IS difficult is often the lack of structure, supervision, and help, both emotional and practical

There may not be much direct guidance, and most of the structure (and timing) is up to you

Some trainees flounder, waiting in vain for someone to tell them what to do.

You need to take charge. You need a plan.



my IDP INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN Science Careers

LOG ON | CONTACT US | ABOUT my

You have put a lot of time and effort into pursuing your PhD degree. Now it's time to focus on how to leverage your expertise into a satisfying and productive career. An individual development plan (IDP) helps you explore career possibilities and set goals to follow the career path that fits you best.

myIDP provides:

- Exercises to help you examine your skills, interests, and values
- 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

There is no charge to use this site and we encourage you to return as often as you wish. To learn more about the value of IDPs for scientists, read the first article in our myIDP series.

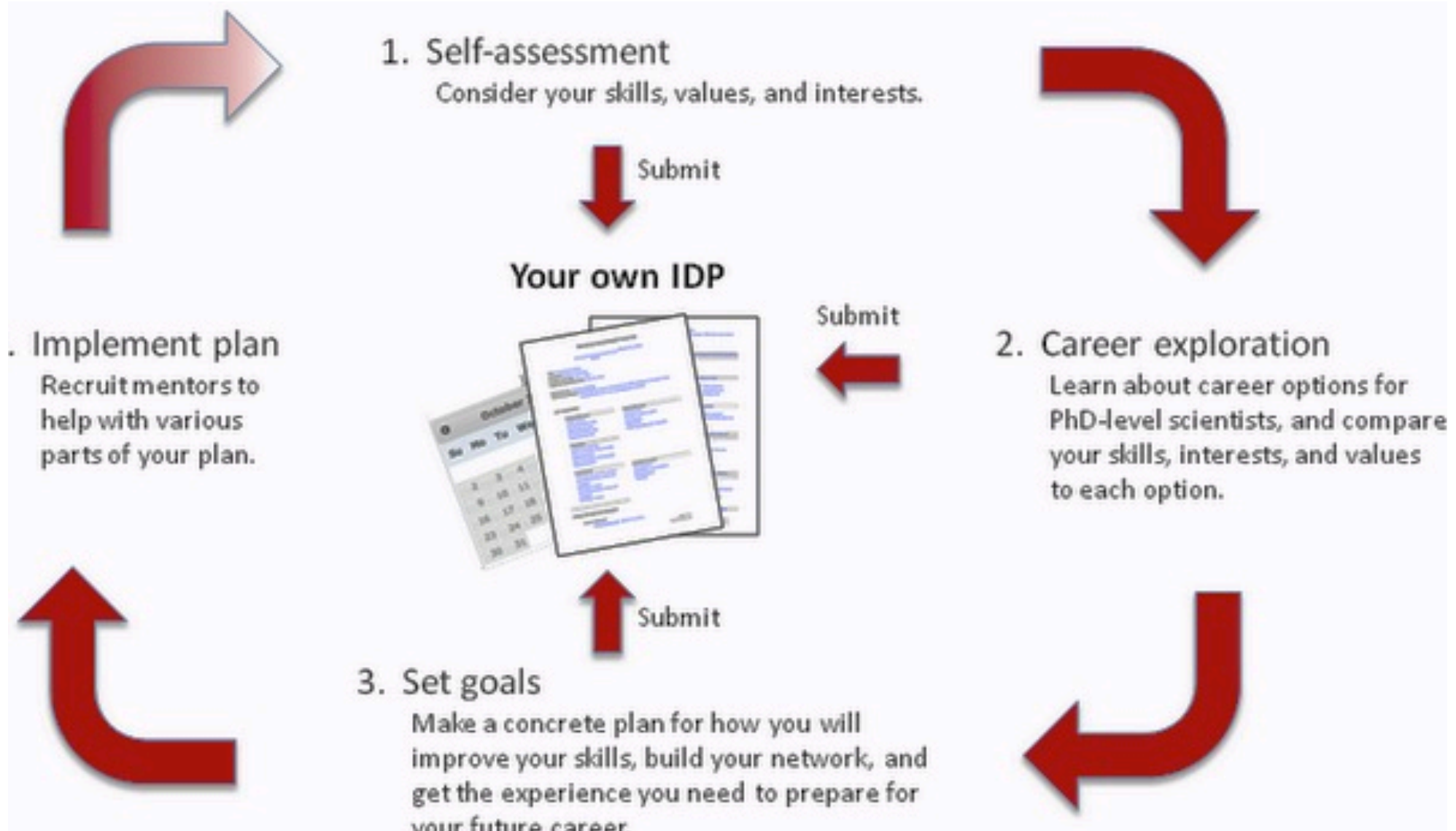
Click below to get started.

First Time Here? Returning User



Model IDP developed by  
Federation of American Societies for Exp. Biology  
<http://www.faseb.org/portals/0/pdfs/opa/idp.pdf>.





Solid career decisions depend on understanding you--the skills you possess, what interests excite you, and what values add meaning to your life.

- GW Center for Career Services  
<https://careerservices.gwu.edu/career-exploration-assessment> offers self assessment tools and services
- Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) will help you to understand your preferences



# GW Skills & Competency Assessments

- Excellent way to look at career/professional development
- Skills employers and/or educational institutions seek



Use NPA  
competencies  
to organize  
training

National Postdoc Association  
Core Competency Checklist

Research Competency Skill Assessment				Date			
		Completed Workshop or Training	Watched Another Perform	Performed with Supervision	Performed Independently	Taught the Skill	Published with Skill
1	<b>Discipline-Specific Conceptual Knowledge</b>						
	Defining scientific questions						
	Design testable hypothesis						
	Broad knowledge acquisition						
	Critical interpretation and analysis of data						
2	<b>Research Skill Development</b>						
	Literature Search Strategy and Interpretation						
	Experimental Design						
	Statistical Analysis						
	Identifying Sources of Error and Bias						
	Data Analysis and Interpretation						
	Laboratory Techniques and Safety						
	Principles of Peer Review Process						
3	<b>Communication Skills</b>						
	Writing (Abstract/Paper/Grant)						
	Oral (Journal Club/ Oral Talk)						
	Teaching Others						
	Public Outreach						
4	<b>Professionalism</b>						
	Workplace						
	Cultural Diversity						
	Skills as Mentor and Mentee						
	Team Work/ Collaboration						
5	<b>Leadership and Management Skills</b>						







**Professional Development & Career Resources**

FASEB's professional development and career resources are designed to facilitate employment connections in the life sciences community. These resources embody new concepts, technologies, and services aimed at giving you access and mobility within your desired career field. Our main focus is to help develop your career in the life sciences, so whether an undergraduate, postgraduate, postdoctoral, seasoned scientist, or an employer seeking to hire top-notch scientists and professionals, the resources and tools found here are designed to help.

**Career Centers**  
 Career Centers are an onsite meeting-related career service that provides job-seekers and employers with an informal environment to meet, exchange electronic messages, and schedule/conduct interviews. Job-seekers and employers also have the opportunity to post resumes or recent job opportunities.

**Society Resources for Trainees**  
 FASEB member societies offer a wealth of professional development opportunities to their trainee members. From travel awards, to networking at annual meetings, to leadership experience on committees, learn about the many benefits your society provides via this [interactive spreadsheet](#).

**Life Sciences Job Center**  
 Reference this online resource to post and view job-seeker profiles and employment opportunities within the life sciences profession.

Explore current openings at Novartis based on your skills & interest.  
 Notice to all applicants for US job openings (PDF 66 KB).

Search by keyword(s)

2. Career exploration  
 Learn about career options for PhD-level scientists, and compare your skills, interests, and values to each option.



https://www.usajobs.gov USA jobs

An official website of the United States government

**USAJOBS** Sign In Hel

Keywords:

Location:



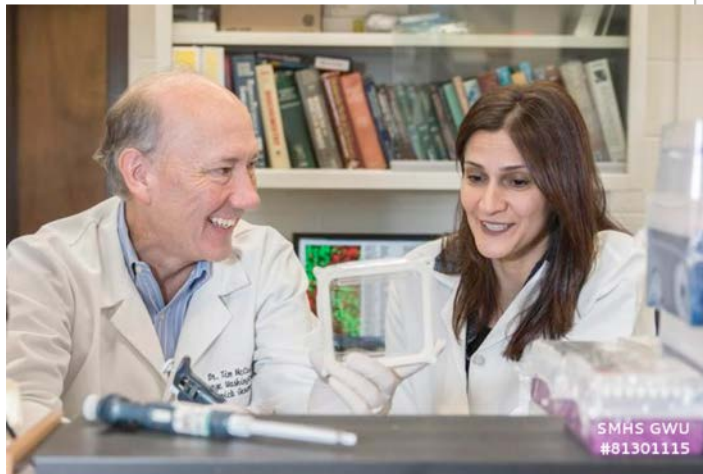
NEWS JOURNALS MEMBERS CAREERS PROGRAMS GIVING EVENTS ABOUT SEARCH

**Careers**

Shaping a career in science need not be a solitary challenge. Helping scientists and engineers forge successful career paths is one way that AAAS "advances science and serves society."

Science Careers | Visiting Scholar | Career Development | Fellowships | Internships | Work at AAAS

## What activities/experience make you a good candidate?



- Overview
  - Overview Summary
  - Personal Information
- Assessment
  - Skills Assessment
  - Interests Assessment
  - Values Assessment
- Career Exploration
  - Consider Career Fit
  - Read About Careers
  - Attend Events
  - Talk to People
  - Choose a Career Path
- Set Goals
  - Career Advancement Goals
  - Skill Goals
  - Project Goals
- Implement Plan
  - Mentoring Team
  - myIDP Summary
  - Completion Certificate

### Consider Career Fit

Quick Tips | My Career Path Matches

The table below lists career paths commonly followed by PhD-level scientists.

Click on the percentages in the right-hand columns to see how your skills and interests compare to the skills and activities most important to each career path professional career advisors). [Return to the Quick Tips](#) to learn about how these match scores were calculated. NOTE: Do not feel that these results limit your career to improve key skills to allow success in any career path.

Click anywhere in the "Values" column for a list of questions to help you think about how your values may fit into each path. Keep these questions in mind as you career path in later sections of the module.

Career Path	Skills Match	Interests Match
<b>Principal investigator in a research-intensive institution:</b> Independent researcher at a medical school, private research institute, government lab or university with minimal teaching responsibilities	0%	0%
<b>Research in industry:</b> Discovery or preclinical researcher; manager of a research team or facility	0%	0%
<b>Research staff in a research-intensive institution:</b> Staff scientist or researcher in academia or government, lab manager, director of a multi-user research facility in an academic institution	0%	0%
<b>Combined research and teaching careers:</b> Faculty at a liberal arts college or university whose job includes both research and major teaching responsibilities	0%	0%
<b>Teaching-intensive careers in academia:</b> A primarily teaching faculty position in a research university, liberal arts college, community college	0%	0%
<b>Science education for K-12 schools:</b> Classroom teacher; curriculum developer; science specialist	0%	0%
<b>Science education for non-scientists:</b> Education or public outreach specialist such as at a science museum or scientific society	0%	0%

Discuss with career advisors/counselors/mentors/coaches  
print out self assessment summaries, career path matches

Ask research advisors to get involved  
includes research goal-setting

Clarify expectations  
Improve communications

Form peer mentoring groups

Connect with alumni, professional society resources

After completing the initial parts of the IDP,  
You likely have some goals in mind, or gaps to be filled

You need a plan and a roadmap—Goals & Tasks

Break long-term goals

- into several short-term goals
- assign a deadline
- come up with related tasks

Ask yourself: Are they **SMART** goals?





**S**pecific

Do I know what has to happen?

**M**easurable

Will I know if I've completed the task?

**A**chievable

Is it realistic or do-able?

**R**esult-oriented

Will it move me toward my goal?

**T**ime-limited

Does it have a due date?

## F31

It is expected that the mentored research [training](#) experience will provide:

- A strong foundation in research design, methods, and analytic techniques appropriate to the proposed dissertation research;
- The enhancement of the applicant's ability to conceptualize and think through research problems with increasing independence;
- Experience conducting research using appropriate, state-of-the-art methods, as well as presenting and publishing the research findings as first author;
- The opportunity to interact with members of the scientific community at appropriate scientific meetings and workshops;
- Skills needed to transition to the next stage of the applicant's research career;
- The opportunity to enhance the applicant's understanding of the health-related sciences and relationship of the proposed research to health and disease.



# Applicant's Background and Goals

## 3 sections:

Doctoral Dissertation and Research Experience

Training Goals and Objectives

Activities Planned Under this Award

- Interest in research, research career & how this application will assist in your goals
- IDP and goal setting
- Address any personal factors that affected advancement
- NRSAs are not designed to make better teachers
- Include a *training timeline*
- Sponsor also describes a training plan in detail; “training goals” and “activities” should be similar.

- individual development plan, plan to address gaps
- Candidacy date, any remaining coursework in PhD program
- Specific skills needed for your career
  - short course or workshop (CSHL, MBL)
  - advanced statistics, imaging, clinical populations
- New research skills, perhaps with a collaborator or core
- Skill-building in manuscript and grant-writing, speaking
- Presentations at national meetings, name target societies
- Goals for publications, name target journals
- Describe lab meetings, research in progress explicitly--  
meeting content and frequency
- Name thesis committee members and why

## Selecting a Referee

- At least three, but no more than five, reference letters are required.
- The letters should be from individuals not directly involved in the application, but who are familiar with the applicant's qualifications, training, and interests.
- The sponsor/co-sponsor(s) of the application cannot be counted toward the three. Make sure you include a list of referees (including name, departmental affiliation, and institution) **in the cover letter** of the application so that the NIH staff will be aware of planned reference letter submissions.

**Who will you ask? What do they need to know?**

## Who might be your referee?

Previous research advisors (UG honors, IRTA or postbac, employ)

Course directors or qualifier committee members

## Provide:

Up to date curriculum vitae

Your specific aims page

Draft letter/ bullets to emphasize

- Referees must submit reference letters through the eRA Commons by the application due date.  
Referees DO NOT need need to login to eRA Commons to submit their letters.
- Referees will need to provide the following information with their reference letter:
  - PI's (fellow/candidate's) eRA Commons user name
  - PI's first and last name as in eRA Commons account
  - FOA Number to which you are applying
- Upon submission of the reference letters, the eRA Commons will send confirmation e-mails to both the referee and the fellow/candidate.