**Department of Molecular Genetics Individual Development Plan**

Graduate school is about training you to ask and address new questions and discover your passion. Having honest and open discussions with your advisor is an important part of your training. As a grad student, you own your education. That means not only being responsible for your thesis project, but also actively getting the training you need and seeking guidance from your mentors (your PI, supervisory committee, and others), who will support you as partners in your training. Fill out this form and (ideally) share it with your advisor ahead of your first thesis committee meeting, using the questions to clarify approaches to your student/mentor relationship. Complete an IDP each year thereafter to continue to develop and maintain your mentor/mentee relationship. Keep in mind that this is not a rigid action plan, but that instead is a way to assess where you are and where you wish to go in your graduate career and beyond.

**KEYS TO A GOOD MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP**

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| **Establish clear**  **expectations and steps**  The IDP covers topics that students have found essential to discuss with their mentors. If you have additional questions or objectives related to your training, these meetings are a great time to bring them up and set action steps. | **Have open and**  **direct dialogue**  Starting off with strong, supportive communication is a fundamental part of getting continual advice that will help guide you throughout your life and career. | **Think intentionally**  **about your training**  You will find it helpful to think through what you want to get out of your training and how your advisors and other sources of support can help you achieve your goals. |

**HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR IDP**

**Step back and self-assess!**

It’s easy to lose sight of the bigger picture.

Fill out this form, using the questions as a starting point for your mentoring relationship with your advisor.

**Set your first meeting with your advisor.**

You are responsible for scheduling and meeting with your advisor within 30 days of joining your thesis lab.

(It’s best to share your completed IDP form with your advisor before the meeting.)

**Lead the discussion.**

The IDP covers topics students have found helpful.

If you have questions or objectives related to your training, these meetings are a great time to bring them up.

**Complete the “Action Plan” and follow up.**

The last page of the IDP encourages you to establish concrete steps in the meeting with your advisor.

Keep your Action Plan accessible and check on it every couple of months.

Keep in mind that plans can change over time, and this can be ok! Don’t let perfection be a barrier to your success.

**Submit the required documentation.**

Record the date the meeting occurred on your committee meeting form.

(The IDP itself remains private between you and your advisor; you should each keep a file of your action plan.)

**STUDENTS:** Read the following responsibilities in advance of your meeting, and discuss with your advisor any questions you may have. This list is intended to help you understand where you should take ownership over your graduate training and how your advisor can support you with your goals.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

* take the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree, take ownership over my project.
* meet regularly with my advisor and provide her/him with updates on the progress and results of my activities and experiments, communicate in a timely manner.
* work with my research advisor to develop a thesis project and select a committee.
* initiate requests for feedback and seek advice from my advisor, committee, and other mentors.
* be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of MoGen and U of T.
* attend and *actively* participate in lab meetings, seminars, and journal clubs. Ask questions, be engaged.
* keep up with original literature in my field.
* be a good lab citizen, maintaining a safe and clean space and working collegially with everyone.
* maintain a detailed, organized, and accurate lab notebook.
* discuss policies on work hours, sick leave, and vacation with my advisor early on.
* discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings/conferences with my advisor.
* always remember that I am here to learn, and should not know everything already.

**ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

* be committed to your education and training as a future member of the scientific community.
* be committed to helping plan and direct your research project, allowing you to take ownership of your research while setting reasonable goals and establishing a timeline for completion.
* provide and seek regular and honest feedback about mentorship on an ongoing basis.
* be committed to improving as a mentor.
* make time to meet with you one on one.
* clearly communicate in a timely manner.
* be open, encouraging you to come to me with concerns and helping to find acceptable solutions to problems as they arise together.
* be knowledgeable of, and guide you through, MoGen’s requirements/deadlines.
* advise and assist with your thesis committee and course selections.
* lead by example and facilitate your training in complementary skills needed to be a successful scientist, such as communication, writing, management, and ethical and professional behavior.
* discuss authorship policies, acknowledge your scientific contributions to my lab, and work with you to publish your work in a timely manner prior to your graduation.

**TRAINING/MENTORING**

1.What MoGen requirements do you need to complete this year, and what is your plan to fulfill them?

2.What fellowships/scholarships are you applying to? When are their deadlines, what is your action plan for completing them, and how will you get the guidance you need?

3. What are your primary goals in your academic training this year and over the course of your degree?

4. What is important to you in a mentoring relationship?

5. Your success as a student is tightly linked to your wellness. What are you doing to tend to this?

6. Are there any factors that you think may negatively affect your progress?

7. What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide regarding professional development and graduate

training?

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

This section should be completed independently by the student and the advisor. Both should mark the student’s perceived current ability level according to the scale: **NI (Needs Significant Improvement); A (Average); G (Good); VG (Very Good); E (Exceptional)**. The PI and student should then discuss their assessments together, using this discussion to check the boxes for skills that you would like to work on in the coming year. This exercise is intended to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses relative to the where you think a student at your stage should be. An honest self-assessment and discussion will help you set goals for your training. Keep in mind that these evaluations are not marks in a course, but are intended to help you improve as a student and scientist. We are all here to learn and grow!

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| **RESEARCH SKILLS & SCIENTIFIC THINKING** | **CURRENT PERCEIVED ABILITY?** | **TARGET SKILL FOR THIS YEAR?** |
| **Broad-based knowledge of science** |  |  |
| **Technical research skills (at the bench or computer for computational projects)** |  |  |
| **Critical reading of scientific literature** |  |  |
| **Experimental design** |  |  |
| **Statistical analysis and interpretation of data** |  |  |
| **Creativity and innovative thinking** |  |  |
| **Understanding of submission/peer review process** |  |  |
| **Identifying and seeking advice** |  |  |
| **Time management** |  |  |
| **Graphically or pictorially representing data (making effective figures and models)** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **COMMUNICATIONS** |  |  |
| **Writing for a research proposal or publication** |  |  |
| **Writing with appropriate grammar and structure** |  |  |
| **Speaking to a specific audience** |  |  |
| **Communicating one-on-one** |  |  |
| **English fluency** |  |  |
| **Working with constructive criticism** |  |  |
| **Effectively communicating with supervisor (spoken, written, emails, etc.)** |  |  |
| **Effectively communicating with others in the lab and being a good lab citizen** |  |  |
| **Teaching, mentoring at the bench (or otherwise)** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, NETWORKING** |  |  |
| **Attending research conferences, and presenting your work (poster, talk)** |  |  |
| **Attending professional/career development workshops** |  |  |
| **Networking within the Dept.** |  |  |
| **Networking outside of the Dept. (social media, events, non-research forums)** |  |  |
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| **OTHER TRANSFERABLE SKILLS** |  |  |
| **Taking on leadership roles** |  |  |
| **Team building, relationship management** |  |  |
| **Decision making, judgment, informed risk taking** |  |  |
| **Managing shifting goals** |  |  |
| **Prioritization of goals** |  |  |
| **Big picture planning events, projects, goals** |  |  |
| **CV, Cover letter writing** |  |  |
| **Job searching, interviewing** |  |  |

**ACTION PLAN**

This action plan is to be developed by the mentor and student during or after the discussion. Keep it accessible for your yearly IDP meetings and regular check-ins (monthly, every other month, every 6 months), as determined jointly.

**1. Communication**

What is the best way to set meetings and communicate regularly?

**2. Target skills**

What skills (~1-3) did you identify as important development targets for the coming year?

**3. Activities**

List any activities in which you and your mentor agree you should participate to achieve your academic objectives in the coming year (ex. career workshops, TAing, coursework, journal clubs, etc.).

**4. Financial support**

What will be your financial support for the next year (ex. grants, your own fellowships, etc.)?

**5. Additional actions**

In order to aid your success, are there any additional actions that can be initiated or continued by you?

**6. Following up**

How often do you and your advisor plan to meet?

**7. Mentor’s role**

How will you, the mentor, contribute to and support this action plan?

**8. Other**

Is there anything else you would like to discuss with your advisor at this time?

**CAREER EXPLORATION**

Take some time to search for career paths that interest you, and list 2-3 below. To get a better assessment of your goals, values, and interests, you may want to try out <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>. Consider including at least one career path outside academia (industry, government, etc.).

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|  | CAREER PATH 1 | CAREER PATH 2 | CAREER PATH 3 |
| POSITION/TITLE AND DESCRIPTION |  |  |  |
| KEY SKILLS REQUIRED |  |  |  |
| EXPERIENCE REQUIRED |  |  |  |
| ANY CONTACTS IN YOUR NETWORK? |  |  |  |