Individual Development Plan (IDP)

University of Tennessee, Knoxville | Graduate School

This IDP is a short, working plan for your growth as a graduate student, professional student, or postdoc scholar. Revisit the IDP at least once a year, ideally at the start of fall, with a check-in in spring.

Name		**Program**	
Year in Program		**National Association**	
Primary Advisor		**Other Mentor(s)**	

FIND YOUR RESOURCES FIRST

Before setting goals below, take a few minutes to see what's already out there: your program handbook (if available) & UT Graduate School calendars, the Grad Vols or Postdoc Press newsletter, professional associations in your field, and the Next Level Grad resources and website

QUICK SMART GOAL REFRESHER — you'll use this a few times below

S Specific: What exactly will you do?	**M** Measurable: How will you know it's done?	**A** Achievable: Is it realistic?	**R** Relevant: Does it matter to you?	**T** Time-bound: What's the deadline?

1. Self-Assessment

A few honest reflections (no need to overthink it!)

PURPOSE & GROWTH

What do you want to be known for by the time you finish at UT?

What's something you're already good at that you want to keep growing?

Who or what do you want to help in your career?

→ Set one goal from this reflection

My SMART Goal (Specific & Measurable)	Action Steps & Target Date
Example: Present my research to a non-specialist audience at least once this year	*Sign up for a research pitch or 3MT-style event by 09/11; prepare a 5-min talk by 11/1; present by 12/1*

ENERGY & FUN

This year, I want more (pick your top 2):

☐ Challenges ☐ New experiences ☐ Connection with others ☐ Fun & enjoyment ☐ Rest & balance

What would make this year feel more energizing - not just more productive?

→ Set one goal from this reflection

My SMART Goal (Specific & Measurable)	Action Steps & Target Date
Example: Try one of the Wellness Wednesday events offered by Be Well and notice whether it energizes me	*Look up the wellness Wednesday calendars, pick one activity; attend by 10/15; jot a quick reflection after*

WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION

What's something you've been avoiding, or that could use more attention right now?

→ Set one goal from this reflection

My SMART Goal (Specific & Measurable)	Action Steps & Target Date
Example: Feel more comfortable speaking up when I'm upset about something	*Attend an Ombuds workshop by 10/30; read the book on crucial conversations by end of semester*

2. Building Block Priorities

Below are two pillars (and building blocks) to help you think about categories. Check 2–3 you want to focus on this year.

Pillar 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Pillar 2: WELL BEING
☐ Scholarship, Creative Work, and Intellectual Curiosity	☐ Emotional Health
☐ Teaching and Mentoring	☐ Physical and Environmental Health
☐ Leadership	☐ Financial Health
☐ Professional and Interpersonal Skills	☐ Social and Spiritual Connectedness
☐ Occupational Development	☐ Access and Engagement

→ Set a goal for each building block you checked — keep it small

Building Block	SMART Goal	Action Steps & Target Date	Status
Example: Financial Health	*Get control of my finances*	*Complete the Living on a Stipend Grad School roadmap by 11/1*	*In progress*
Example: Scholarship, Creative Work, and Intellectual Curiosity	*Have a better writing practice*	*Sign up for a writing retreat this semester; read Paul Silvia's How to Write a Lot by 12/15; complete NCFDD's 14-Day Writing Challenge by 12/30*	*Not started*

3. Milestones

Specific due dates and milestones live in your Mentoring Agreement; refer to that document to track them alongside this plan.

4. Mentoring Development

Growing your skillset as a mentee and as a mentor are a great way to develop professionally and support a positive mentoring culture. The UT Mentoring Initiative (UTMI is in place to support your development in this area). See the UTMI website at https://gradschool.utk.edu/about-graduate-school/training/ut-mentoring-initiative/

Topics I plan to discuss with my mentor this year:

- ☐ Communication norms
- ☐ Feedback style
- ☐ Aligning Expectations
- ☐ Authorship / credit expectations
- ☐ Work-life balance expectations
- ☐ Path toward independence
- ☐ The value of professional development
- ☐ I plan to participate in UTMI mentee training this year

One way you want to grow as a mentee this year:

If you mentor others (e.g., undergrads, grad students) — one way you want to grow as a mentor:

→ Set one mentoring goal

SMART Goal	Action Steps & Target Date	Status
Example: Set up a regular meeting cadence with my mentor (biweekly, 30 min) by end of September	*Propose 3 time options by 9/15; confirm recurring calendar invite by 9/22*	*In progress*

5. Date & Revisit

It is optional (but encouraged) to review this plan with your mentor. Do set an intention to revisit it yourself.

Date Completed		Date I'll Revisit This	