RFUMS Program in Postdoctoral Development

Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Fellows

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are tools for self-evaluation and goal setting. In training of postdoctoral fellows, IDPs can be an effective mechanism to determine the current status of postdoctoral training and to chart a plan for continued training in relation to self-identified career directions and goals. IDPs provide information for the postdoctoral fellow. Importantly, IDPs also provide information for mentors of postdoctoral fellows. Therefore, IDPs can be an effective means to frame discussions between the postdoctoral fellow and their mentor leading to mutually agreed upon training priorities and activities.

Postdoctoral fellows at RFUMS are expected to receive training and become proficient in the following core competencies, established by the National Postdoctoral Association:

- Discipline-specific Conceptual Knowledge
- Research Skill Development
- Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Leadership and Management Skills
- Responsible Conduct of Research

Importantly, the postdoctoral fellow, mentor, and institution share in the responsibility of ensuring that postdoctoral fellows meet these competencies by the end of their training period. As such, each participate has a significant role in postdoctoral development. Definition of the roles of the postdoctoral fellow and mentor can be facilitated by self-assessment followed by discussion with the mentor to develop a plan to meet these competencies. Several steps have been put forth by the National Postdoctoral Association to assist postdoctoral fellows and their mentors in generation of plans to meet postdoctoral competencies. These steps are:

Step	Postdoctoral Fellow	Mentor(s)
1	Conduct Self-Assessment	Become familiar with available career opportunities
2	Write IDP, share with mentor, revise	Review IDP, help revise
3	Survey career opportunities with mentor	Discuss career opportunities with postdoc
4	Implement plan, revise IDP annually	Establish regular review process, help revise IDP annually

Self-Assessment Form for Individual Development Plan

Assess your current abilities in the following areas related to postdoctoral activities, mentorship, and fulfillment of postdoctoral core competencies. Be honest with yourself. You may or may not choose to share the results with your mentor(s). The range of 1 to 5 indicates low to high proficiency. NA indicates "Not Applicable".

Research Skills	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Research field specific skills (experimental skills)						
Creativity and innovative approaches						
Experimental design						
Data interpretation						
Knowledge and critical review of literature						
Problem solving and troubleshooting						
Statistical analysis						
Computer Skills	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
General computer software (word processing, Excel, etc)						
Data analysis software (imaging, statistics software, etc)						
Lab records and data management						
Professional Skills	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Manuscript preparation						
Grant preparation						
Oral presentation						
Teaching						
Mentor (you as mentor)						
Self-Organizational Skills	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Establishing priorities						
Meeting deadlines						
Multitasking						
Work efficiency						

Administrative and Leadership Skills	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Working in a group						
Working by yourself						
Delegating responsibilities						
Supervising/managing people						
Leadership in meetings						
Organizational leadership						
Developing and managing budgets						
Consensus building						
Decision-making						

Communication and Interpersonal Skills	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Communicating effectively in writing						
Communicating effectively by speaking						
English proficiency						
Ability to take constructive criticism						
Networking and meeting new people						
Collaborative interests and abilities						
Collegiality (willingness to work with others)						
Understanding others' perspectives/opinions						

Job Skills	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Finding job opportunities						
CV building and presentation						
Pre-interview preparations/research						
Interview skills						

Which of the previous areas are your:	Areas of Strength	Areas Needing Improvement
Research Skills		
Computer Skills		
Professional Skills		
Self-Organization Skills		
Administrative and Leadership Skills		
Communication and Interpersonal Skills		
Job Skills		

Preparation of the Individual Development Plan

IDPs should be created with consideration of the self-assessment, resources and opportunities to meet core competencies, as well as short and long-term career goals. Mentors should actively participate in review of the IDP and assist the postdoctoral fellow in creating a plan to meet core competencies and career goals.

What are your short term (2-3 years) career goals? List at least three goals.
What are your long term (10-15 years) career goals? List at least three goals.
What are your research project goals?

What are your expectations for types, quantity, and quality of publications?
What professional meetings do you think are important to attend?
What workshops and/or skill development activities are important for you to attend?
What are your goals for presentations at scientific meetings (poster, oral
presentations)?
presentations)?
presentations)?
presentations)?
what funding opportunities are you/will you pursue as a postdoctoral fellow?

What teaching activities (lecture/small group/lab, etc) do you consider important for your career advancement?
What mentoring opportunities do you seek?
What leadership activities do you think are important to engage in for career advancement?
Are you well positioned to advance in your career path? Why or why not?
If not, by what date will a plan (including specific activities to engage and skills to be mastered) be in place to address areas for improvement?

Individual Development Plan

The IDP should be created by discussion between the postdoctoral fellow and mentor(s). The plan should be as specific as possible with anticipated timelines. However, the plan should also be flexible to account for changing priorities and unanticipated career and life circumstances. The plan should be reviewed annually and revised as needed. Postdoctoral Researcher Date

Date

Mentor