

**Individual Development Plan  
GSBS PhD Students  
Year 4 & Beyond Guide**

**GSBS IDP Overview:** *The IDP for year 4+ begins with reviewing your training expectations and competencies, and revising your career assessment from the previous year. You will then review, revise, and make new goals towards your training, graduation and career advancement.*

# 1 REVIEW TRAINEE EXPECTATIONS

In the final years of graduate school, GSBS students should be working towards completing their dissertation project and publishing results. Students should have a clear sense of career sectors that they are targeting post-graduation and working towards preparing themselves to transition to the next phase in their careers.

**Milestones to complete every year:**

- Hold advisory meetings every 6 months

**Milestones to complete before dissertation:**

- Complete all program specific requirements
- Submit a signed petition to defend dissertation

**Milestones to complete before graduation:**

- Defend dissertation
- Publish a minimum of one first-authored scientific paper in a peer-reviewed journal

\*For a complete listing of milestones, see the [GSBS website](#)

# 2 REFLECT ON KEY TRAINING COMPETENCIES

GSBS has identified 7 training domains students should develop during graduate training. The following questions are intended to help you reflect on these 7 graduate training domains and guide you in establishing training goals.

<p><b>Scientific Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Am I staying up-to-date with the literature in my field and becoming an expert?</li> <li>• Am I attending scientific conferences and meetings to deepen my scientific discipline knowledge?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I display good scientific judgment? Do I plan my experiments efficiently?</li> <li>• Am I becoming a more independent researcher?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can I communicate my research results effectively in written and oral presentation formats?</li> <li>• Have I discussed or made plans to write and publish my project with my research advisor?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responsible Conduct of Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I continue to uphold the standards of research conduct?</li> <li>• Have I discussed authorship and publication practices with my research advisor?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Management, Leadership, and Professionalism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Am I developing confidence as a member of the scientific community?</li> <li>• Do I have a plan for completing my PhD thesis research?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Career Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have I updated my CV and/or resume?</li> <li>• Am I actively seeking experiences (i.e. internships, fellowships) that will enhance my marketability to potential employers?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Am I effectively managing my responsibilities and stress, completing my graduate studies?</li> <li>• Will I continue to be mindful of my wellness needs as I work towards finishing my graduate studies and transitioning to my next training or professional position?</li> </ul>	

# 3

## REVIEW/UPDATE YOUR CAREER ASSESSMENT

Review the career self-assessments related to your skills, interests, and values at [myidp.sciencecareers.org](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org). Update your self-assessment scores and review your list of suggested career paths.



*Print or save your results, as you will need them for the rest of this IDP.*

# 4

## SET YEAR 4+ TRAINING & CAREER GOALS

Once you have had an opportunity to reflect on your skills assessment and the training expectations for advanced graduate students, it is now time to set your goals for the upcoming year.



Use the “GSBS IDP Year 4+ Worksheet” to set your training and career goals.

# 5

## IDP DISCUSSION

Having discussions about your IDP is a critical step in advancing progress towards your goals. In the final years of graduate school, you are *highly* encouraged to have an IDP meeting with your research advisor. Having these conversations facilitates an open and transparent line of communication between you and your research advisor.

### *Steps to having an effective IDP discussion with your research advisor*

1. **Set up your “IDP Meeting”:** This meeting should be done privately and solely dedicated to a discussion on training and career-related goals. You will use the GSBS IDP Year 4+ Worksheet to guide the meeting.
2. **Discuss your progress and goals:** Give an overview of your progress for last year and the goals you have set for this year. Share why these are goals you have decided to focus on and how you arrived at them. Invite your research advisor to share his or her perspective on each of your goals, and listen carefully to his or her perspective and reactions. Ask whether the goal is realistic and feasible? Will you have the resources to achieve it? Are there additional or alternative goals your research advisor would like to share at this time?
3. **Discuss your career plans:** Invite your research advisor to share his or her perspective on your career plans, and listen carefully to understand his or her perspective and reactions.
4. **Meeting wrap up:** Thank your research advisor for his or her help in this process and set a time when you will meet to check-in.
5. **Revise your GSBS IDP:** After your IDP discussion, you may want to revise your goals for the upcoming year.



*Some students find it helpful to engage in IDP discussions with a career advisor before initiating the conversation with their research advisors.*

# 6

## ACT ON YOUR PLAN

This is your training, your career, and your future. By taking ownership over your development you are taking the steps required to grow your skills and prepare yourself for your future career. The following are helpful tips on how to implement your plan:

- Break your larger goals into step-by-step plans with specific timelines. Consider creating deadlines that are added to your calendar.
- Communicate successes and challenges to advisors regularly.
- Periodically reflect on whether you need to revise your IDP throughout the year. Be flexible to arising opportunities and needs that may require a re-assessment of your IDP goals.

**Congratulations on completing your IDP for this year!!!**