# Individual Development Plan (JHU BME PhD Program)

Annual Review and Discussion of Academic Progress and Professional & Career Development

*form last updated 2021-06-25*

**Summary:**

* An IDP must be completed and discussed at least once per year.
* The goal of the IDP is to facilitate a conversation between student and mentor about academic progress, career development, and professional development.
* Answer the questions honestly. This isn’t graded and there aren’t ‘right answers’; you do not need to pretend things are going well for the IDP to be helpful. Use the IDP to identify areas where you need help and areas where your advisor can do better.
* It is not essential to answer every question below; the IDP should be customized to each student. You also don’t have to start with this document, see e.g. [this one](https://provost.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/08/Annual-Discussion-and-Planning-Document_pdf-form-1.pdf) developed by JHU. Some labs have also developed their own IDP documents.

**Steps:**

1. The student fills in the IDP document as best they can, and sends it to their research mentor.
2. The research mentor edits or adds comments and returns it to the student **prior** to the IDP meeting.
3. The student and mentor meet to discuss the IDP document, stepping through and spending time on any points that are particularly important to the student at this point in their career.
4. Following the meeting, the student completes the [IDP feedback form online](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=OPSkn-axO0eAP4b4rt8N7AjqfrgDBPdCoYRcZXGTyxpUQUJSVzdKOUFSMVVUQjRMSTlTSDBBRkZWNy4u), including uploading a pdf copy of the completed IDP document.

**Detailed background**

All PhD programs at JHU are reviewed and overseen by the Doctor of Philosophy Board (DPB). The DPB’s policy requires *annual* academic/professional development discussions, starting in the first year a student is in the program. Our program uses IDPs as the formal method for this.

The IDP must be conducted at least once per year; of course, if a student wishes to have more frequent discussions on these topics, that should be encouraged.

Please remember that the most important part of the IDP is the conversation and discussion that this document facilitates between the student and their research mentor. It is ok if some parts of this document are not completed, or not useful at a particular point in time; also don’t be daunted if the document feels long, as it’s designed to cover questions that might be useful at different stages of your PhD. The main idea behind a document like this is to pose questions that prompt thought about different aspects of academic progress and career & professional development. No-one is expected to have all the answers, but filling this document out gives you a great place to start.

IDPs are not a test to be passed or aced – you don’t need to pretend things are good for the IDP to go well. Answer honestly, as it is more possible to provide help if you identify those areas where you need help or where your advisor can do better.

You can use this document, or others are fine. See for example [this one](https://provost.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/08/Annual-Discussion-and-Planning-Document_pdf-form-1.pdf) developed by JHU, which includes an Appendix of self-rating competency questions; and some labs have their own – ask your research mentor. IDPs are structured but flexible documents, with prompts to help ensure that the conversation covers all points of relevance to the student, so there’s no one perfect document or set of questions. Also, if there are useful questions or prompts you see on one document that aren’t in the document you are using, add them in. The point of the document is not a rigid set of one-size-fits-all questions; the point of the document is to get you thinking and talking about what you need.

*If you are a rotating first-year student,* you should still complete the IDP document and have an IDP discussion with a mentor. We encourage you to conduct the IDP discussion with one of your research rotation mentors, partly because this is an excellent discussion that would help you learn more about the lab and their mentorship style. If as a rotating student you prefer to conduct your IDP discussion with the program director, then you are welcome to reach out and do so.

If you have significant issues with your mentor that cannot be resolved through discussion, you have multiple possible people with whom to report or discuss this, including:

Patrick Kanold, PhD Program Co-Director: [BMEPhDCoDirectors@lists.johnshopkins.edu](mailto:BMEPhDCoDirectors@lists.johnshopkins.edu)

Rachel Karchin, PhD Program Co-Director: [BMEPhDCoDirectors@lists.johnshopkins.edu](mailto:BMEPhDCoDirectors@lists.johnshopkins.edu)

Michael I. Miller, Department Director: [mim@jhu.edu](mailto:mim@jhu.edu)

Peter Espenshade , Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education: [peter.espenshade@jhmi.edu](mailto:peter.espenshade@jhmi.edu)

**Annual Progress Evaluation and Mentoring Session**

Please read and answer the following questions in a few sentences before coming to our annual meeting. Use as much space as you need for each question, but focus on what you think is most important. Please be honest and forthright as this information will be treated as confidential. We will review the progress made in the last year and develop an action plan for the future.

Name of student: Date of Meeting:

Arrival date in the lab: Year in Program:

Name of advisor: Co-Advisor(s):

**A. Milestones within the program**

Which of the following have you completed? Indicate in the table below.  
If not completed, note if planning to complete in upcoming year

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Y/N** | **Milestone** | **Comments** |
| **University requirements for PhD degrees** | | |
|  | 1. Dissertation |  |
|  | 2. Residency (2 semesters full time) |  |
|  | 3. DBO |  |
| **School of Medicine and BME Program requirements for PhD degrees** | | |
|  | 4. Two semesters of BME seminars (1st year) |  |
|  | 5. Classes (30 credits) |  |
|  | *min. 12cr in bio/lifesci/medicine* |  |
|  | *min. 12cr in eng/quantsci* |  |
|  | *min. 3cr substantial theory* |  |
|  | 6. Intro to Research Ethics I & II |  |
|  | *1st year* |  |
|  | *5th year* |  |
|  | 7. Annual IDPs |  |
|  | 8. Teaching Assistantship |  |
|  | 9. Annual thesis committee meetings after DBO |  |
|  | 10. Thesis proposal (written document and presentation) |  |
|  | 11. Research defense |  |
|  | 12. Public defense |  |

**B. Your Research and Your Project(s)**

If you are still rotating in labs, how is your progress in considering a thesis lab? Is there any information you need to help you decide on a thesis lab?

What is the long-term goal of your project(s)?

Does this project excite you?

If you work on multiple projects, does this cause conflict or bring benefits?

Describe research and professional accomplishments from the past year. These can be large or small.

What are your research goals for the next twelve months?

How will you accomplish these goals?

Are there new techniques you would need to learn to accomplish these goals?

Have there been challenges or obstacles to your progress over the last year, or to your goals in the next year?

What can be done to help reduce barriers in the coming year?

What is your perception of how far along you are within your Ph.D. journey (approximately)?

If you are closer to graduation, when do you hope to graduate?

What do you hope to (or need to) accomplish by graduation?

How can I, as your mentor, better help you meet your academic or research goals and overcome obstacles?

**C. Mentoring**

Would more regular formal feedback from your primary mentor be helpful for you?   
If so, how frequently should we meet?

What can I, as your mentor, do better in mentoring you?

If relevant (post DBO students), who are the active members of your thesis committee?

Does this committee need adjustment?

If relevant, name two things that your thesis committee could do to mentor you better.

Name two things that you as a trainee could do better.

Do you, as a student, get opportunities to be a mentor?

Is this something you would like to do more of, or conversely, something you need to decrease in order to focus on other things?

**D. The Lab Environment**

How do you perceive the larger focus of the lab?

Where does your project fit in to the overall plan of the lab?

Describe your view of the lab’s future direction(s).

Do you have concerns about the lab?

Do you have any suggestions for how the lab could run better or more smoothly?

**E. Outside the lab and beyond**

If you recently taught or acted as a teaching assistant, what was your experience like?

Did you gain relevant skills or experience?

Do you regularly attend seminars, whether in BME, ICM, TTEC, or other seminar series at JHU?

Approximately how many a year?

Does anything interfere with your ability to attend seminars?

Do you serve on committees or have other forms of service in the program, department, school, or university? If so, please list.

Is this something you want to do more or less of?

Are there obstacles to serving in these roles?

Do you hold leadership positions at JHU? If so, please list.

Is this something you want to do more or less of?

Are there obstacles to serving in these roles?

Do you take part in volunteer or outreach activities outside of JHU (whether as part of a JHU group or not)? If so, please list.

Is this something you want to do more or less of?

Are there obstacles to serving in these roles?

**F. Long-Term Career Goals and Professional Development**

What are your long-term career goals? For example, What positions or responsibilities and in which sectors (academic, non-profit, policy, government, industry, other) appeal to you for 5-10 years after graduation? If you are not sure, consider exploring career paths and a self-assessment at <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>.

How can, or does, your current project/research posture you or prepare you for your long-term career goals?

Beyond carrying out your project, are there other professional activities that could be carried out in the next twelve months? For example, are you planning on attending a scientific meeting, hosting outside speakers, taking a professional development course or internships (see opportunities at <https://pdco.med.jhmi.edu>)?

What are some skills you are currently developing, or want to develop, that will be useful in your career?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Technical Skills | Soft Skills (aka Success Skills) |
| Currently Developing |  |  |
| Want to develop in the future |  |  |

What professional development resources have you used or events have you attended?

*Examples:*

PHutures <https://provost.jhu.edu/integrative-learning-and-life-design/life-design/phutures/>

PDCO <https://pdco.med.jhmi.edu/>

BME EDGE <https://edge.bme.jhu.edu/>

What professional development or other extracurricular activities do you plan to engage in this year to help you achieve your career goals?

Do you plan to take an internship?

If yes, answer the questions below. *Visit* [*https://edge.bme.jhu.edu/*](https://edge.bme.jhu.edu/) *or e-mail* [*bme.edge@jhu.edu*](mailto:bme.edge@jhu.edu) *for more on how to pursue an internship.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| When? |  |
| Why?  What do you hope to gain from your internship? |  |
| Where?  List some specific companies/types of organizations you are interested in. |  |
| Have you reached out to BME EDGE? | Yes – using their internship interest survey on the website <https://edge.bme.jhu.edu/>  Yes – by e-mail at [bme.edge@jhu.edu](mailto:bme.edge@jhu.edu)  No |
| What milestones must be completed prior to taking an internship? |  |
| What lab expectations are there for the student during/after the internship? |  |

Is there anything else you have done or plan on doing to prepare for your career?

How can I, as your mentor, better help you achieve your professional and career development goals?

Are there people or resources I can connect you to?

**G. Additional Personalized or Lab-Specific Questions**

*Add your own questions and answers here (both students and mentors can do so). What have we not asked that would be useful to talk about?*