

Individual Development Plans for First-Year PhD Engineering Students

**EmPOWER Professional Development Event
In Partnership with The Office of Graduate & Postdoc Education**

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
ENGINEERING

Agenda

- What is an IDP and why it matters
- Drafting Your IDP goals
 - Research, Professional Development, Teaching, Personal
- Timeline and Process
- Tailoring for Your engineering discipline
- Your 30-day action plan



What is an IDP & Why It Matters

- What is an IDP?
 - A planning tool to help students identify progress, professional development needs, and career objectives
 - It evolves throughout your academic journey and structures mentor-trainee conversations
 - Plan
 - Implement
 - Review

Key Benefits

- Clarifies expectations and milestones
- Documents accomplishments to date
- Jumpstarts long-term career planning
- Develops professional skills needed for your goals

Which of these benefits on this slide feels most important to you right now, and why?

Four Goal Areas for Your IDP

Let's draft one goal in each area

Research Goals	Professional Development	Teaching Goals	Personal Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define research area• Review literature• Develop questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet faculty members• Improve writing skills• Attend conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe lectures• Attend teaching workshops• Teach a recitation or lab section	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stress-reduction practices• Exercise routine• Personal reading



Research Goals Activity (~4-5mins)

Prompt: Write down one research goal for the next 3–4 months.



Use this pattern for example:



"By June 1, I will read 10 foundational papers on [topic] and create a 2-page summary of themes."



Also jot one immediate next step you could take this week. For example: 'Ask my advisor for a starter reading list'

Professional Development Activity (~4mins)



Prompt: Jot down 1-2 sample goals in this area that resonate with you and rewrite one as a SMART goal.



Example: Instead of 'Improve technical writing,' try:
'By the end of the semester, I will submit one drafted manuscript to my advisor and attend one scientific writing workshop.'



Quick Share: Share your PD goal with a neighbor. Does it feel realistic this semester?



Teaching Goals Activity (~3mins)



Prompt: Write one teaching-related goal.



Example 1: "Observe two lectures this term and note three strategies each instructor uses to keep students engaged."



Example 2: "Attend one teaching workshop," "Teach one recitation or lab section and gather student feedback."



Personal Development Goals Activity (~3mins)

Prompt: Choose one wellbeing practice you can realistically start or strengthen in the next month.

Example: “Walk for 20 minutes after lunch 3x’s per week”

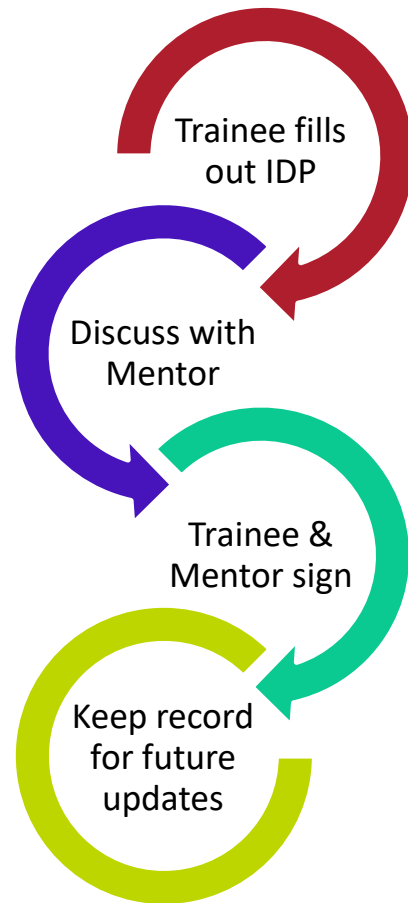
Or

“Practice a 5-min breathing exercise before starting writing each morning”



IDP Timeline & Process

The Process



Timeline Activity

- Draw three columns and place your goals: Now, Mid-semester, End
- Write: Who is your advisor? When will you meet?



Your First IDP Draft

Starting Point

Laptop or notebook

Current CV or resume

Any existing goals or plans

This is a DRAFT-You'll refine with your advisor

Sample IDP



Tailoring IDPs & Anticipating Challenges



Discipline-Specific (small groups)



Add 2-3 examples for your field:



Technical skills



Research objectives



Certifications

Common Challenges

- Time constraints
- Inconsistent mentor support
- Long-term planning difficulty

Discuss: Pick one challenge that feels most real to you. Where do you already see this happening? Brainstorm one solution that would help you.



Your 30-Day Action Plan



Write **THREE** things you'll do in the next 30 days:



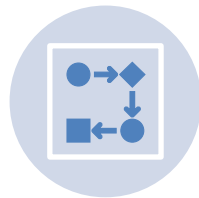
One related to research



One related to PD/teaching



One related to personal wellbeing



Next step: Refine and share with your advisor by (date)



Remember: The IDP is meant to evolve. Revisit it at least once per semester, especially after major milestones.



Thank you!

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OGPE site

