

Career Development and Planning Options for New Research-active Faculty

Department of Internal Medicine

Overview

Career planning, coupled with mentorship, has been demonstrated to enhance both personal satisfaction and professional achievement of faculty [1-5]. As such, the Department of Internal Medicine requires that all new research-active faculty members (and strongly suggests that existing research-active faculty members) participate in a documented process of career planning. Recognizing that the process needs flexibility to adapt to individuals with different goals and planning styles, new research-active faculty may select from any of the following options to satisfy the departmental requirement for career planning:

1. Use the Department of Internal Medicine Individual Development Plan (IDP) template, which can be obtained from [Academic Research Services](#).
2. Use the interactive program found at <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/> to create an IDP, including reminder capabilities.
3. Complete a faculty-identified IDP template (note that the form must be pre-approved by an Associate Chair of Research or their designee; plans developed as part of NIH K-awards or similar career development awards would be acceptable)
4. Conduct standing regular meetings (weekly to quarterly) with a primary mentor and maintain a documented minutes, which should include topics on both research activities and discussion of career goals, planning, and progress.
5. Conduct standing regular meetings (semi-annual to annual) with a mentoring committee and maintain a documented minutes, which should include topics on both research activities and discussion of career goals, planning, and progress.

Regardless of the option used, documentation must be submitted. A PDF of the IDP (options 1-3) or meeting minutes (options 4 and 5) should be sent to IMResearch@uc.edu. Each of the options has unique benefits and although you will select one option (such as an IDP), **you may find it useful to pursue other options** (such as regular meetings with a mentor or mentoring committee). In fact, all faculty are encouraged to identify both a primary mentor and a mentorship committee.

What is an Individual Development Plan (IDP)?

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a document that outlines your career goals based on your desired career path and establishes the concrete steps towards achieving those goals. Although an IDP requires self-reflection on your past activities, achievements, and skills, it is not an evaluation tool. Although there may be some similarities with the faculty annual evaluation process, a well-crafted IDP is a unique document. In general, the annual evaluation process is mostly retrospective, while the IDP is primarily prospective (future looking). The DOIM IDP template is designed to align with the faculty annual evaluation process and enables copy and paste between documents. IDPs typically look at a timeline of 1 to 10 years into the future.

What content is in an IDP?

A quick internet search will turn up a plethora of IDP templates. The number and variety are representative of the fact that different individuals will benefit from including different information in their IDP. The template you select will guide you through a specific process of thinking about what to include in your IDP. Common topics for research-active faculty may include research directions, outlining short-term (6-24 months) and long-term (36-60 months) research goals,

funding and publication goals, goals for scientific skills development, and professional development goals. Most faculty are involved in multiple missions (e.g., research, education, clinical practice, administration, etc.) and it is appropriate to include goals and skills development for those missions too. There may be opportunities for symbiosis between activities across multiple missions. Because your IDP is meant to assist in achieving your career plans, the text of your IDP should be actionable, such as the use of [SMART](#) goals.

What is the purpose of a mentor or mentoring committee?

A mentor is an individual who can serve as a guide or advisor in helping to share knowledge, perspectives, feedback, and support that benefit your career. A mentor's support can extend from career to psychosocial. Your mentor may also serve as a model of the kind of person you want to be as an academic. Because of the number of roles a mentor can play, a single individual will likely be unable to meet all of your mentoring needs. Thus, a mentoring committee may be useful to achieving the balance and coverage that would benefit you the most.

Who can be a mentor?

Often, mentors are more senior to you, but peer mentoring or reverse mentoring can be beneficial. As noted earlier, your annual evaluation process and career planning should play two separate roles in your professional activities. It is possible that a conflict of interest can arise between these roles (e.g., receiving fruitful feedback may necessitate an admission of weakness that could negatively impact an annual evaluation). As such, careful consideration of potential conflicts should be made when selecting a mentor who may also serve as a supervisor, such as a division director.

Who might be members of your mentoring committee?

The composition of a career development mentoring committee is highly dependent on your own background, career goals, and needs. Thus, there is no single prescription for who must be on your committee. Typical committees have 3-5 members, have a membership that provides a diverse set of perspectives, and the membership may change over. Individuals you might consider including are:

- Your primary mentor
- Senior investigators
- Internal and/or external collaborators
- Near-peer mentors
- Coaches
- Role models
- Individuals that enhance the mentoring experience

Individuals that can provide holistic perspectives

If you have any questions on this process, please contact Kevin Haworth (kevin.haworth@uc.edu) or Maggie Powers-Fletcher (margaret.powers@uc.edu).

References

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