



# CIHR IRSC

Canadian Institutes of Health Research    Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

## Developing Leaders of Tomorrow

### CIHR Individual Development Plan (IDP) Form

**Trainee Name:**

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**Program:**

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**Year:**

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**Mentor(s) Name:**

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## Section 1: Self-Assessment

Self-knowledge is the foundation of effective career planning. Through self-assessment, you will identify your academic and professional strengths and weaknesses as well as your personal motivations, passions and values. Please use the **three activities in this section** to create a clear picture of your skills, passions, values, professional development activities and networking connections at this time.

*You may wish to build on a previous IDP to remind yourself of any recently acquired skills, lessons learned or particularly successful goals.*

### Activity 1: Skills Assessment

Skills assessment is a quick reflection of your current strengths and development opportunities. This exercise divides skills into three categories: **Research Skills**, **Communication Skills**, and **Transferable Skills**. Each category has its own table that lists relevant activities. To capture your progress on these skills at this point and to plan ahead, locate the skills in the table below and enter the following information where indicated:

- For last year (past 12 months):
  - Which activities did you perform in relation to developing each skill?
  - On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being low and 5 being high), how do you rate your degree of progress in attaining each skill? \*
- For this year (upcoming 12 months):
  - Which skills are important for you to develop?
  - On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being low and 5 being high), how important is the skill in relation to your priorities and interest? \*

| RESEARCH SKILLS   |   |                                   |  |                             |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| SKILLS DESCRIPTION  | LAST YEAR                                 |                                   | THIS YEAR                                    |                             |
|   | Activities performed and skills developed | Degree of attainment<br>1 2 3 4 5 | Skills that are important for you to develop | Priority Level<br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| Perform discipline-specific technical and research tasks      |   |                                   |  |                             |
| Analyze statistics, manage and interpret data                 |   |                                   |  |                             |
| Write and prepare grants                                      |   |                                   |  |                             |
| Write scientific reports, journal articles and book chapters  |   |                                   |  |                             |
| Other skills relevant to your training and career aspirations |   |                                   |  |                             |

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

| <b>SKILLS DESCRIPTION</b>  | <b>LAST YEAR</b>                                 |  | <b>THIS YEAR</b>                                    |                                    |
|--|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
|  | <i>Activities performed and skills developed</i> | <i>Degree of attainment</i><br>1 2 3 4 5 | <i>Skills that are important for you to develop</i> | <i>Priority Level</i><br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| <b>Give presentations present posters</b>                                      |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Communicate with mentor(s), supervisor(s), colleagues and collaborators</b> |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Teach/lecture, develop course material and lesson plans</b>                 |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Participate in debates, speeches and other public speaking events</b>       |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Other skills relevant to your training and career aspirations</b>           |  |  |   |                                    |

**TRANSFERABLE SKILLS\***

| <b>SKILLS DESCRIPTION</b>  | <b>LAST YEAR</b>                                 |  | <b>THIS YEAR</b>                                    |                                    |
|--|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
|  | <i>Activities performed and skills developed</i> | <i>Degree of attainment</i><br>1 2 3 4 5 | <i>Skills that are important for you to develop</i> | <i>Priority Level</i><br>1 2 3 4 5 |
| <b>Provide leadership</b>  |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Make decisions and take informed risks</b>                        |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Model and use interpersonal skills</b>                            |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Think and plan with the big picture in mind</b>                   |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Manage shifting goals and projects</b>                            |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Manage teams and relationships</b>                                |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Manage budgets for research and other projects</b>                |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Build an effective CV, search for jobs, and attend interviews</b> |  |  |   |                                    |
| <b>Other skills relevant to your training and career aspirations</b> |  |  |   |                                    |

\* These CIHR-selected transferable skills were informed by employers of PhD graduates and the skills they are seeking and expecting in them.

## Activity 2: Passions and Values Assessment

Passion is a strong enthusiasm for something that sparks your interest and that you are highly motivated to pursue. This could be a hobby, a person, or a cause. Work-related passions are influenced by and evolve with life stages.

Values are your fundamental beliefs at the very core of you and rarely change. They determine your sense of self and help you better understand what is right for you in situations requiring moral judgment. This could be trust, empathy, giving, integrity, respect, etc.

Aligning your passions with your values is incredibly empowering. It creates the foundation for a truly satisfying and fulfilling career that runs on positive energy and motivation. It strengthens your decisions, and helps you follow through on your plans.

Passions and values are personal. To gain insights into **your** passions and values, review events and activities where you feel emotionally invested or motivated. Which ones make you feel happy, proud, or fulfilled? What could you not live without? Other questions to ask yourself are:

- What kinds of work and activities make me happy? Motivated?
- In 10 years from now, what do I want to achieve from my career that will make me happy and satisfied?
- What kinds of jobs absolutely do not align with who I am and the values I hold?
- If I were forced to give up one or more of my most highly ranked passions, which would be the first to go? Which would be the second?
- What might I regret not doing in life? Is there something that I have always wanted to do?

The following two articles may help you in assessing your passions and values:

- [What do you care about?](#) By Bill Lindstaedt *et al.*, Published in *Science* on December 7, 2012 (doi:10.1126/science.caredit.a1200135, Retrieved on 14 November 2018)
- [How Passions, values, and goals shape your career.](#) By Brittany Gregg, Published in *The Buchtelite* on September 23, 2015 (Retrieved on 14 November 2018)

Considering the above, list your most important passions and values in the table below.

| PASSIONS AND VALUES |   |
|---------------------|---|
| •                   | • |
| •                   | • |
| •                   | • |

### Activity 3: Professional Development and Network Assessment

Professional development helps you gain practical skills and experiences to build and enhance your capabilities into significant strengths. Developing your professional skills ensures success in your field of study and prepares you for a successful career ahead. Professional development activities can be related: to your training program such as training modules to help you better design your research, (e.g.: [sex and gender integration in research](#), [ethics in research](#), [research data management](#)); to skills relevant to the industry and/or government sector (e.g., intellectual property); or more generally, to professional knowledge and career development, (e.g., seminars on transferable skills, such as influencing others).

Networking means building professional contacts with people who can help you with your professional growth. It allows you to exchange information with like-minded people; connect to experts who have knowledge of trends and opportunities in your fields of interest; and, gain first-hand information about the world of work. Networking can occur at formal events focused on academic and career development. Networking can also occur elsewhere, for example, while playing sports, attending cultural events or travelling.

Together, professional development and networking activities gives you the opportunity to build on your strengths, identify your skills gaps and reflect critically on your passions and values.

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Last year, which workshops, [training modules](#), seminars, conferences or symposia did I complete/attend?

*Related to my training program*

- 
- 
- 

*Related to general career development*

- 
- 
- 

This year, which workshops, seminars, conferences or symposia have I already planned to participate in? Do I have an interest in participating in any other opportunities?

*Related to my training program*

- 
- 
- 

*Related to general career development*

- 
- 
-

**NETWORKING**

**Last year, which networking opportunities (formal or informal) did I participate in?**

*Related to my training program*

- 
- 
- 

*Outside my academic program*

- 
- 
- 

**This year, what networking opportunities have I already planned to participate in? Do I have an interest in participating in any other opportunities?**

*Related to my training program*

- 
- 
- 

*Outside my academic program*

- 
- 
- 

**Among these networking opportunities, are there any individuals, groups or associations who are helping me with my career? If yes, who are they, how are they helping me, and how am I strengthening my connections with them? Who else can help?**

*Related to my training program*

- 
- 
- 

*Outside my academic program*

- 
- 
-

## Section 2: Career Exploration

Career exploration involves gaining an understanding of career paths available to you both within and outside academia (industry, government, health care system, etc.). It allows you to research job descriptions; attend job panels and job fairs; and speak with people who are performing activities or have a position that you find meaningful or interesting.

Using the templates on the following pages, complete these steps:

1. Endeavour to create a comprehensive picture of each career you are considering:
  - Consider each skills category: Research Skills, Communication Skills, and Transferable Skills.
  - Gain insights on the career culture.
  - Identify relevant networking opportunities.
2. Determine your overall “fit” with each of these careers:
  - Compare your current qualifications, skills, and experience with the requirements for the career you are interested in. For each career requirement, do you demonstrate a fit or a gap?
  - How well do your passions and values align with your career of interest, its culture and its activities?
  - How well do your current networking activities align with the networking requirements of your career of interest?



**CAREER PATH A**

*Possible Employer:  
Possible Position Title:*

*What are the key career requirements: qualifications, skills and duties?*

*What are my qualifications, skills and experience?*

*For each requirement,  
do I show a fit or gap?*

*Overall, how does this career path, its culture and its activities align with my passions and values?*

*What networking opportunities can I pursue for this career? Are there specific events or informal networking opportunities? Can any existing contacts (e.g., my supervisor), potential mentor(s)/contact(s) or groups help me either now or later in my career? If yes, how can they help me? And, how can I strengthen my connections with these individuals or groups?*

**CAREER PATH B**

*Possible Employer:  
Possible Position Title:*

*What are the key career requirements: qualifications, skills and duties?*

*What are my qualifications, skills and experience?*

*For each requirement,  
do I show a fit or gap?*

*Overall, how does this career path, its culture and its activities align with my passions and values?*

*What networking opportunities can I pursue for this career? Are there specific events or informal networking opportunities? Can any existing contacts (e.g., my supervisor), potential mentor(s)/contact(s) or groups help me either now or later in my career? If yes, how can they help me? And, how can I strengthen my connections with these individuals or groups?*

**CAREER PATH C**

*Possible Employer:  
Possible Position Title:*

*What are the key career requirements: qualifications, skills and duties?*

*What are my qualifications, skills and experience?*

*For each requirement,  
do I show a fit or gap?*

*Overall, how does this career path, its culture and its activities align with my passions and values?*

*What networking opportunities can I pursue for this career? Are there specific events or informal networking opportunities? Can any existing contacts (e.g., my supervisor), potential mentor(s)/contact(s) or groups help me either now or later in my career? If yes, how can they help me? And, how can I strengthen my connections with these individuals or groups?*

### Section 3: Goal Determination

Goal determination, for the purposes of the IDP, is to decide what key accomplishments you want to achieve in the short, medium and long term. These could be accomplishments pertinent to your work and your career that you see as worthwhile to strive for, either the improvement or mastery of some skill in your current role, gaining a new responsibility, or the attainment of your future career of interest.

The previous section helped you identify your potential careers, as well as your fit with them. Guided by your passions and values, which skills would you choose to develop to best prepare for the career(s) of your choice? Which courses, tools, events, resources and networking opportunities would you prioritize? For example, if your goal were to present a co-authored paper, what technical, analytical, communications, interpersonal and budgeting skills would you need to develop? How much time would you need to develop them? Could this goal be divided into a series of goals? How could your goals build on each other? What networking would be necessary?

With your desired career(s) in mind, determine your short, intermediate, and long-term goals. Within each goal, list the skills you need to develop to reach that goal. Where relevant, also list key professional development (courses, tools, events, etc.) and networking opportunities that you could benefit from to acquire your skills. Ensure that goals are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).

| SHORT-TERM GOALS<br>(1 yr.) | KEY SKILLS TO ACQUIRE | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITITES NEEDED TO ACQUIRE KEY SKILLS |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| •                           | •<br>•<br>•           | •<br>•<br>•   |
| •                           | •<br>•<br>•           | •<br>•<br>•   |
| •                           | •<br>•<br>•           | •<br>•<br>•   |
| •                           | •<br>•<br>•           | •<br>•<br>•   |

| <b>INTERMEDIATE GOALS<br/>(2-4 yrs.)</b>            | <b>KEY SKILLS TO ACQUIRE</b>  | <b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITITES NEEDED TO ACQUIRE KEY SKILLS</b> |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                  |
| <b>LONG-TERM GOALS<br/>(5+ yrs.)</b>                | <b>KEY SKILLS TO ACQUIRE</b>  | <b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITITES NEEDED TO ACQUIRE KEY SKILLS</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                  |

## Section 4: Plan Development

Plan development involves setting a path toward for your career(s) of choice. It is generally built one year at a time. Keeping in mind your short-term goals, write an **action plan** for this year.

The insights you gained in Sections 1, 2 and 3 have prepared you to develop your plan. The goals identified in Section 3 become your goals in this section; and the components of those goals (Sections 1 and 2 related to skills and professional development/networking opportunities) become your objectives in this section. Ensure that both goals and objectives are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). In this manner, objectives can become milestones on the way to the accomplishment of a goal.

Define what you will accomplish in **action verbs**. This is especially important for measuring the level of competency you intend to gain in each skill. Avoid statements such as “I will learn...” or “I will understand...” [Bloom’s taxonomy](#), in its various iterations, is a valuable list of action verbs that can equip you to develop a strong plan via objectives that are effective, precise and measurable.

**Goal:**

Objectives (identifying the action to be accomplished, means of measurement, and timeframe):

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Do you believe your mentor(s) can assist you in meeting your objectives? If yes, how?

**Goal:**

Objectives (identifying the action to be accomplished, means of measurement, and timeframe):

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Do you believe your mentor(s) can assist you in meeting your objectives? If yes, how?

**Goal:**

Objectives (identifying the action to be accomplished, means of measurement, and timeframe):

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- 

Do you believe your mentor(s) can assist you in meeting your objectives? If yes, how?

## Section 5: Plan Refinement and Implementation

Plan refinement involves a discussion between the mentor(s) and trainee about the trainee, their IDP and the goals and objectives outlined in the IDP, with the aim to improve the IDP.

The IDP is a living document and can be revised multiple times as required. Review and revision are essential to implementing an effective IDP.

As this discussion moves the IDP from the development phase to the implementation phase, the conversation can assure that expectations are clear, the goals and objectives are SMART and that the trainee and mentor have a shared understanding of the plan and are committed to the plan.

### IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

One or two weeks prior to the meeting:

- a) **Trainee**, provide a copy of this IDP to your mentor for review and prepare any questions you may have.
- b) **Mentor**, use this section to provide your insights, and any useful resource and/or network that can help refine the plan.

#### Mentor Insights

##### Section 1: Self-Assessment

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##### Section 2: Career Exploration

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##### Section 3: Goal Determination

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##### Section 4: Plan Development

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## AT THE MEETING

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At the meeting, consider the following questions:

1. **Trainee and mentor**, when do you plan to meet next to discuss the IDP, review progress towards goals (e.g., discuss milestones and revisions) and continue to explore career options?

Date:

2. **Trainee and mentor**, if this IDP is evolving or is following a previous IDP, what was the trainee's professional growth while reaching for the goals in the previous IDP? Have any lessons learned or particularly successes influenced this new version? Are these insights clarifying goals for this year and the future?

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3. **Mentor**, considering the contents of this IDP, the notes you prepared for this meeting, and insights gained from this discussion, how could you support the trainee in achieving the goals in this IDP?

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4. **Trainee and mentor**, this IDP can now serve as a formal one-year plan that the trainee will act on and the mentor will support — understanding that the ***IDP is a living document, and review and revision are essential to its effective implementation***. Given this understanding, are you each committed to moving forward with this plan?

Trainee: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_