



## **NSF NCAR and UCP Postdoctoral Fellows Individual Development Plan**

**An Individual Development Plan (IDPs)** is a planning tool that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. IDPs serve as a communication tool between the postdoc and their mentor or supervisor. IDPs should be established at the beginning of each postdoctoral appointment, and do not replace performance appraisal or annual report processes at UCAR. Postdocs should take the lead in completing and updating the IDP and should discuss progress regularly with their mentor and supervisor.

### **What is the purpose of the IDP?**

As a postdoc, you own your career. That means not only being responsible for your research, but also actively getting the training you need and seeking guidance from your mentors and supervisors. If you have questions or additional objectives related to your postdoctoral position, these IDP meetings are a great time to bring them up.

### **Steps in creating and using an IDP**

1. Step back and reflect on your career goals and training needs
2. Plan a meeting with your mentor/host
3. Lead the conversation, present your career goals & training needs
4. Complete the “Action Plan” and follow up
5. Meet at regular intervals to revisit your IDP

### **Details:**

- Postdocs should have at least one mentor or supervisor who will guide them on their research, career opportunities, support their networking by introducing them to colleagues and including them in group meetings.
- The IDP includes a self-assessment for the postdoc to identify strengths and areas of improvement for different skills and areas of knowledge.
- The Action Plan of the IDP encourages the postdoc to establish concrete steps in the meeting with the mentor or supervisor. The Action Plan should be kept accessible and checked on it every couple of months.

### **Postdoctoral Fellow responsibilities:**

1. Meet regularly with your mentor or supervisor.
2. Provide them with updates on progress.

3. Initiate requests for feedback and seek advice from your mentors and others.

**Mentor/supervisor responsibilities:**

1. Assist the postdoctoral fellow in clarifying their career objectives. Utilize the self-assessment and action plan to discuss ideas.
2. Assist the postdoc with setting goals as they develop the IDP. These could include research milestones, publishing, conference presentations, grant writing, and service.

**NSF NCAR/UCP Postdoctoral Fellows Individual Development Plan**

Postdoctoral Fellow name: \_\_\_\_\_

Postdoctoral Fellow Lab/Center/Program/Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Postdoctoral Fellow supervisor/mentor name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Postdoctoral appointment start date: \_\_\_\_\_

End date of Postdoctoral appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Postdoctoral Fellow - Self Assessment**

1. Describe your career goals (e.g. a career in research, teaching, the private sector, etc.). You can include short and long term goals.

2. Fill out this self-assessment, and then review it with the mentor/ supervisor. Identify areas for improvement by comparing current skills and strengths with those still needed. Mentors may have feedback on why these skills are valuable in a certain career. The skills and knowledge areas listed are just suggestions, edit as needed.

<b>Skills/knowledge</b>	<b>Strengths/ Areas for improvement</b>
Discipline-specific knowledge	
Research skills (synthesize existing work, data analysis, writing)	
Research tools (statistics, lab skills, software)	
Research Collaborations (how to find collaborators, develop those relationships)	
Grant writing	

Service	
Understanding the publishing process (where to publish, authorship, responding to reviews)	
Communication (skill with presenting or writing work, being heard in meetings)  Leadership (how to take initiative, organize events, lead committees, serve on panels)	
Project Management	

3. Action Plan: Outline specific goals for the duration of your appointment at NSF NCAR and UCP


**Agreement for meetings between postdoctoral fellow and the mentor/ supervisor**

The postdoc and mentor/supervisor should identify approximate meeting dates for IDP review, with reviews at least every six months. Use the space below to note future times for reviewing the postdoc’s IDP.

1. \_\_\_\_\_(first meeting)

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\*updated 3/19/25