Creating an Individual Development Plan (IDP)

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What is an Individual Development Plan?

It is a written plan that:

- Helps graduate students and postdocs
  - assess skills, interests, and values; determine a plan for meeting academic and professional goals; and communicate goals with their mentor(s).
- Helps identify strengths and areas needing development.
- Allows for mentee to be responsible for their own learning by setting clear and attainable goals.
- Facilitates important discussions between mentees and mentors.

Why should you create an IDP?

- Opportunity to focus on what you need
- Identification of skills, interests, and values
- Development of learning and performance goals
- Communication with mentor(s)
- Goal setting leads to enhanced success and satisfaction
- Developing an IDP is a skill you'll use again and again
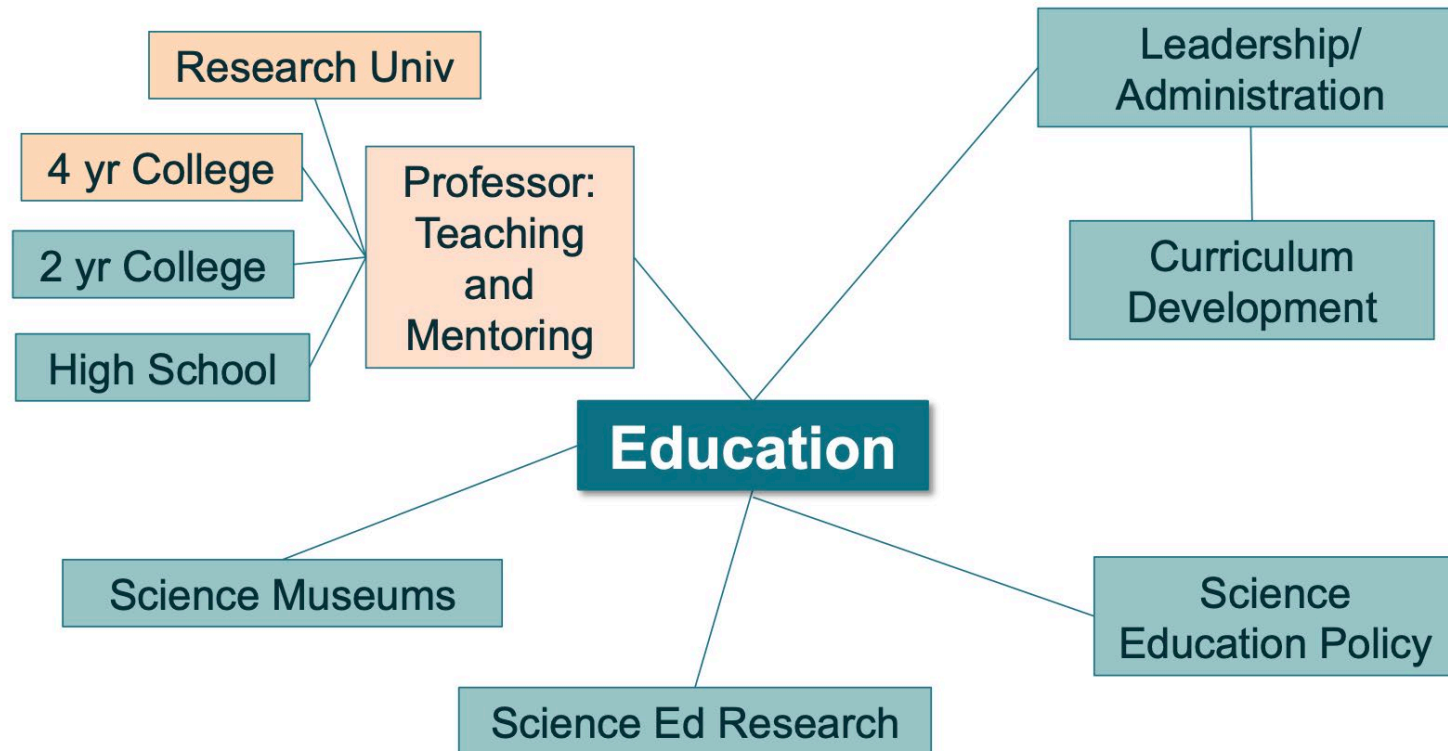- Compliance (NIH; NSF)

Compliance

- NSF: https://new.nsf.gov/policies/pappg/24-1/summary-changes
    - Chapter II.D.2.i(i), Mentoring Plan, has been expanded to address the revision to Section 7008(a) of the America COMPETES Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. § 1862o(a)) requiring a mentoring plan for postdoctoral researchers or graduate students supported on the project.
- NIH: https://www.ninds.nih.gov/funding/training-career-development/choose-award-program-type/career-development-awards/suggestions-good-career-development-plan
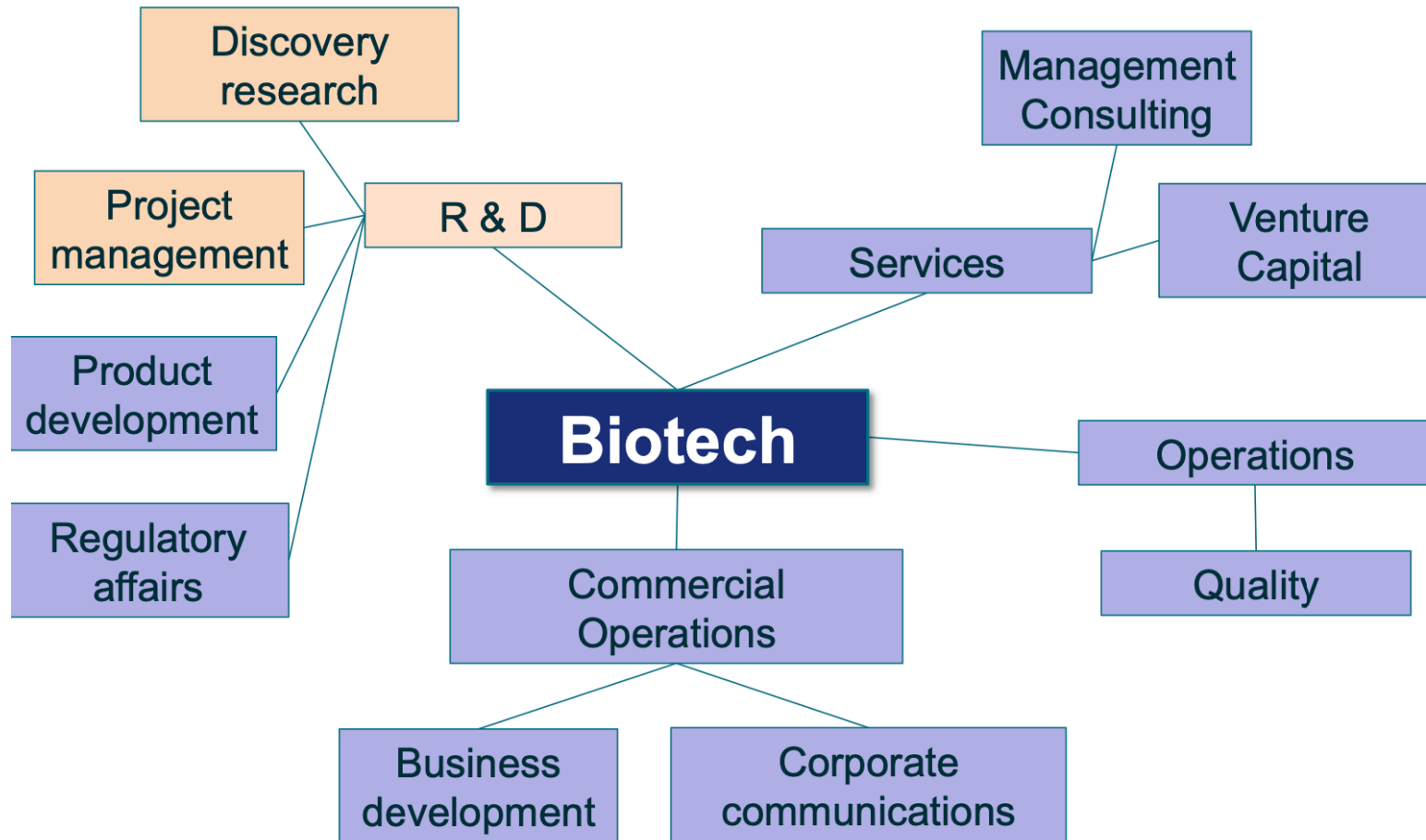
What will we do today?

1. Self-assessment
2. Career exploration
3. Set goals
4. Implement plan. Engage mentors.

Your own IDP
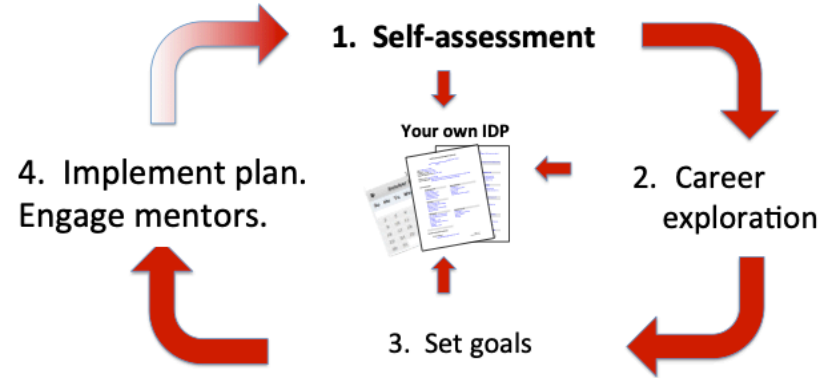
How to…

- **Link *your* skills, values, interests to career path options**

- **Confidently discuss your career objectives with:**
  - Your network
  - Future employers
  - Your mentors (and PI!)

"The point in life is to be *happy*.

All other goals

(money, fame, status, responsibilities, achievement)

are merely ways of making you happy, and worthless in themselves."

Peter Fiske, "Put Your Science to Work"

Self-assessment –
a key first step to ultimate happiness

Skills

Values

Interests

Fit!

What are you *good at*?

What is *important* to you?

What is most *rewarding*?

What do you *enjoy* doing?
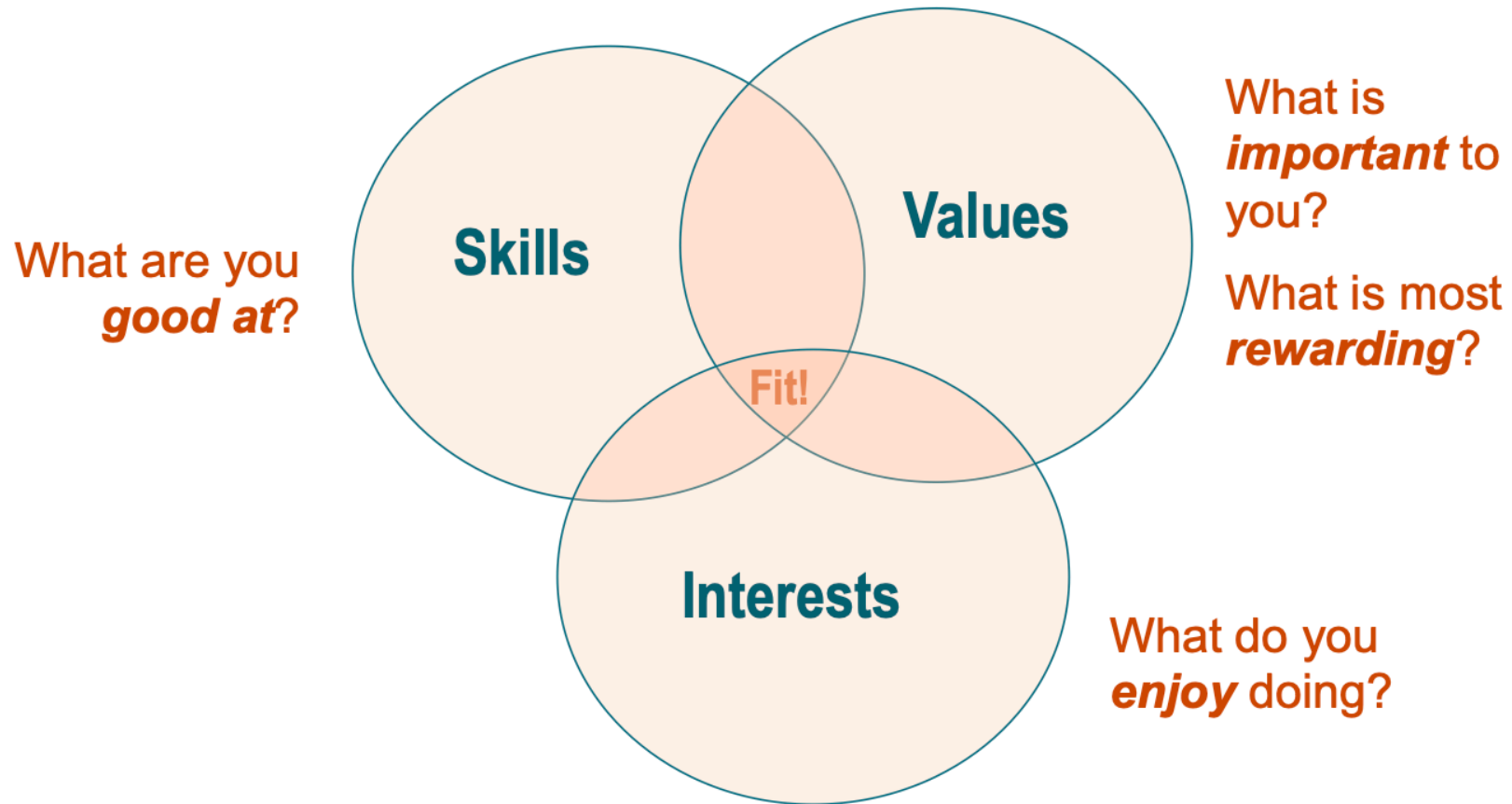
Job Satisfaction ⬌ **Skills, Interests, Values**

Individual Development Plan Overview

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a structured planning tool designed to help you:

- identify **long-term career goals** that fit with your unique skills, interests, and values,
- make a plan for **improving your skills**,
- set goals for the coming year to **improve efficiency and productivity**, and
- structure productive **conversations with your mentor**(s) about your career plans and development.

This module will guide you through the process of creating an IDP:

1. Self-assessment
   Consider your skills, values, and interests.

   Submit

Your own IDP

2. Career exploration
   Learn about career options for PhD-level scientists, and compare your skills, interests, and values to each option.

   Submit

3. Set goals
   Make a concrete plan for how you will improve your skills, build your network, and get the experience you need to prepare for your future career.

   Submit

4. Implement plan
   Recruit mentors to help with various parts of your plan.

S.M.A.R.T. goals

S = Specific
(Is it focused?)

M = Measurable
(Could someone identify whether or not you achieved this goal?)

A = Attainable
(Can it realistically be accomplished?)

R = Relevant
(Does it matter?)

T = Time-bound
(By when should you complete this goal?)

Steps to create an IDP

1 Assess — Assess skills, values, interests

2 Write — Develop goals and write the plan

3 Discuss — Discuss plan with mentors

4 Implement — Execute your plan

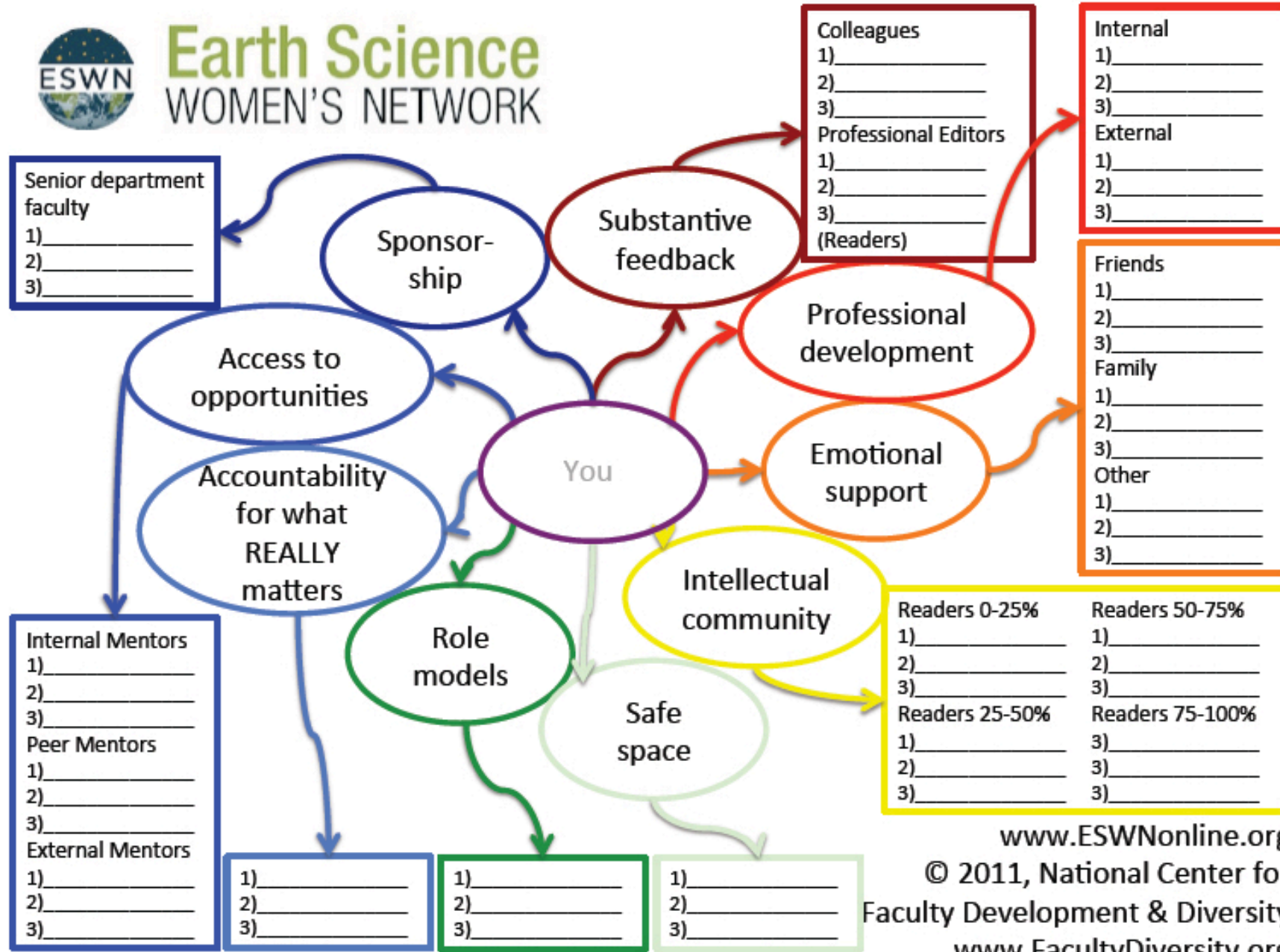**5** Revise — Revise and Review

Mentoring:
Critical throughout the process

- **Have reasonable expectations of mentors**
    - No one mentor can know all
    - Personality styles
    - Time limitations

- **Have a team of mentors,**

    utilize the strength of each.

Earth Science WOMEN'S NETWORK

Senior department faculty
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

Colleagues
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
Professional Editors
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
(Readers)

Internal
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
External
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

Friends
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
Family
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
Other
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

Sponsor-ship

Substantive feedback

Access to opportunities

Professional development

You

Emotional support

Accountability for what REALLY matters

Role models

Intellectual community

Safe space

Internal Mentors
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
Peer Mentors
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____
External Mentors
1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

Readers 0-25%	Readers 50-75%
1)_____	1)_____
2)_____	2)_____
3)_____	3)_____
Readers 25-50%	Readers 75-100%
1)_____	3)_____
2)_____	3)_____
3)_____	3)_____

Templates

- https://myidp.sciencecareers.org
- http://www.imaginephd.com
- https://research-tools.mun.ca/rpm/process/plan-project-execution/plan-data-management/
- https://www.ithinkwell.com.au/for-phd-students

Advice

- Look at online resources.
- Give yourself time to develop IDPs on your own, and then meet with your supervisor when ready.
- Realize that there may be some parts of the IDP that you may choose to keep to yourself.
- Be open to accepting feedback.
- Challenge yourself to set important goals and commit strongly to them.

Other resources

- https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03535-y
- https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I4ua7im2rGdv7zquoQPOg2CMenjBCxWj?usp=sharing
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1R1MgvSoT_v9aV03kbb4mOezWUTudhZUWQCuanQ89uVU/edit?usp=sharing
- https://www.science.org/content/article/you-need-game-plan

Selected references

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- Seijts G. H., Latham G. P. (2012). Knowing when to set learning versus performance goals. *Organizational Dynamics, 41*, 1-6.
- Vanderford NL, Evans TM, Weiss LT et al. Use and effectiveness of the Individual Development Plan among postdoctoral researchers: findings from a cross-sectional study [version 2; peer review: 3 approved, 2 approved with reservations]. F1000Research 2018, 7:1132 (https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.15610.2)