



## Systems Biology Program IDP Instructions

Systems Biology students are required to complete an IDP meeting with their Dissertation Advisor (or an alternate Harvard faculty mentor of their choosing) annually. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) provides students with the opportunity to think about their training objectives, their progress towards them, and to set and/or refine goals for the future with their mentor. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) encourages trainees to make Individualized Development Plans to help them prepare for academic and nonacademic careers.

### Timing

Because the beginning of a new year is an ideal time for self-reflection and planning, we ask that students **complete the IDP in January, and have the yearly planning meeting before February 15<sup>th</sup>** of every year. Students must notify the Program Coordinator ([Sysbio\\_phd@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:Sysbio_phd@hms.harvard.edu)) of the IDP meeting date and the name of the faculty member that they met with. For G1 students, the Spring semester meeting with their faculty advisors that takes place in January will serve as this planning meeting.

### Resources

Students and their mentors should read the *Molecular Cell* article [“Yearly Planning Meetings: Individualized Development Plans Aren’t Just More Paperwork”](#) that describes an approach to implementing IDPs and the benefits of IDPs. We also encourage students to visit the Harvard Office of Career Services and <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org> where they provide additional IDP resources and excellent articles related to mentorship and science careers.

### Forms

Sharing the IDP is not a requirement, nor will the IDP be kept on file by SysBio. Students are free to share as much or as little of the plan as they feel comfortable. Note that the IDP process will be most effective if used to guide candid discussions with an advisor.

[Blank IDP Form](#)  
[Example IDP Form](#)