Louisiana State University

Mentorship Resources & Individual Development Plan for Graduate Students and Mentors

Department of Geography & Anthropology

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Mentoring Resources and Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Developing an Individual Development Plan (IDP) can help you, as well as your faculty advisors and mentors, assess your skills, progress, expectations, and career goals. The IDP and other resources are OPTIONAL and there to help you take control over your education and career. The following tools are designed to help you reflect on where you are academically and professionally, where you would like to be, and define specific sets of actions to bring you closer to your career and life goals. The IDP is specifically designed to meet the following objectives:

- Take ownership of your formation and professional development.
- Pause and reflect on your activities and how they align with your long-term goals.
- Think intentionally about your short-, mid-, and long-term academic, career and personal goals.
- Identify and use resources to help you achieve your goals.
- Have open, honest, and direct conversations with your mentors.
- Establish clear and realistic expectations.

The following resources can help students, faculty, departments, and mentors outside academe develop effective mentoring plans and strategies:

- Mentoring Roles and Functions
- Importance Questions Before Selecting a Mentor or Becoming One
- Student-Advisor Expectation Scales
- Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- myIDP
- Imagine PhD
- The Versatile PhD

Mentor Roles and Functions

Role	Responsibility	Relationships
Graduate Advisor//Director of Graduate Studies	Direct graduate work	Focused on performance, professional/career development Based on organizational needs Driven by learning agenda influenced by organizational needs Inside the hierarchy of direct reporting relationships Sometimes, but not always confidential
Committee Chair/Major Professor	Oversee Thesis or Dissertation	Focused on professional development Based on student and program needs Driven by student and program needs Inside the hierarchy of direct reporting relationships Sometimes, but not always confidential
Mentor (inside or outside academia)	Guide & provide support	Focused on professional/personal development Based on mentee's expressed needs Driven by specific learning agenda identified by mentee May be outside the hierarchy of direct reporting relationships Confidential

Adapted from Mitchell D. Feldman (2012) UCSF Faculty Mentoring Program.

Important Questions Before Selecting a Mentor or Becoming One

MENTEE Important questions to consider before selecting a mentor. ***Will this person…***	**MENTOR** Important questions to consider before becoming a mentor. ***Am I able and willing to…***
• Address my specific area of interest? ○ Help me with both short and long-term goals?	• Serve as an expert and a role model?
• Be both a role model and provide guidance related to ethical and moral dilemmas I may encounter?	• Be accepting, encouraging, and supportive?
• Help me understand professional and institutional cultures and policies in relevant professional settings?	• Provide guidance, constructive feedback, and balance challenging and encouraging the mentee?
• Foster my professional identity development?	• Encourage reflection on the part of the mentee?
• Communicate clearly?	• Ensure access to appropriate resources to facilitate the mentee's goals?
• Be available, punctual, and honor commitments?	• Make a commitment to the success of the mentee?
• Establish appropriate interpersonal boundaries?	• Help the mentee problem solve ways to address challenges that impact his/her ability to achieve goals?
• Work with me to establish and follow through on identified goals? ○ Be collaborative?	• Balance support with appropriate professional boundaries?
• Fit with my personality?	• Be accepting of the mentee and value his/her individual differences?
• Provide feedback and guidance, without being critical?	• Set realistic expectations for the mentee?
• Be respectful of me and my opinions, even during difficult conversations?	• Be receptive to feedback from the mentee about how I can improve as a mentor?
	• Be collaborative in the mentoring process?
	• Be receptive to the mentee needing/wanting to find a new mentor if his/her goals change?

From APA's Mentor/Mentee Checklist: http://www.apa.org/education/grad/mentor-mentee.pdf

Student-Advisor Expectations Scales

Student-Advisor Expectations Scales

The Student-Advisor Expectation Scales worksheet list 16 pairs of statements describing endpoints on a continuum. Individuals differ as to the position they take on each scale. These differences reflect variation in educational philosophy, personality, and the norms of the home discipline. Each item is an issue about which most students and advisors need to reach agreement. Often, however, students and faculty members do not directly discuss their perspectives about how this matter should be resolved and why. In fact, in many cases, the situation may change over the student's time in doctoral studies.

Making expectations explicit, and having regular conversations about expectations, helps to minimize misunderstandings. It is important to recognize that most students do not feel comfortable asking their advisors to complete the worksheet. Faculty members may need to be the ones to initiate conversations about expectations.

This document can provide a basis for conversations between students and advisors to align their expectations. The Expectation Scales worksheet can be used in several ways.

Faculty Advisors

Faculty advisors can complete the worksheet and use it as the basis for a discussion with individual students, among a group of advisees, or with a team in the lab. Students prefer faculty members to initiate discussions.

For each item, why does the advisor think that this is the best way to proceed?

Which items are non-negotiable? Which can be discussed and determined together?

In which ways does the advisor tailor their modus operandi to the individual student? Why does the faculty member change their MO? Does the advisor take into account the student's personality, background experiences, stage in graduate studies, or other factors?

What other expectations does the advisor have of students? When and how do students ask for clarification of expectations?

Students

Students can complete the worksheet to explore:

The student's own needs and desires. What does the student think is the best way to proceed for the student's own development?

What does the student believe and understand to be the advisor's preferences and modus operandi?

Complete the worksheet the worksheet identifying both what the student desires and the perception of the faculty advisor's position. If the difference is two points or more, this is an item that should probably be discussed directly.

Do all of the faculty members' advisees share similar understandings of the advisor's preferences and modus operandi?

Develop a personal advising philosophy. How would the student plan to advise graduate students in the future? How does the student mentor and advisee undergraduate or newer graduate students?

Director of Graduate Studies

The worksheet can be used with a group of faculty members to initiate discussion about:

> What positions do individual faculty members hold? Why do they think that this is the best way to proceed?
>
> Does the department have some expectations that are shared?
>
> Do faculty members share the same reasons or rationale for shared positions on scales?
>
> When and how do faculty members discuss expectations with student advisees?

Student-Advisor Expectation Scales

Read each of pair of statements describing endpoints on a continuum. Estimate your position and mark it on the scale. For example, if you believe very strongly that is the advisor's responsibility to select a research topic for the student, on scale #1 you should circle "1". If you think that both the advisor and student should be equally involved, circle "3".

Individual Development Plan (adapted from LSU Postdoctoral IDP)

Course of Study & Dissertation Planning						
1. The advisor should suggest and approve which courses the student takes	1	2	3	4	5	Students should solely determine which courses they take
2. It is the advisor's responsibility to select a promising dissertation topic	1	2	3	4	5	The student is solely responsible for selecting the dissertation topic
3. The advisor should select the other members of the dissertation/thesis committee	1	2	3	4	5	The student should select the members of the dissertation/thesis committee
Contact & Involvement						
4. The advisor should determine how often and when to meet with the student	1	2	3	4	5	The student should decide how often and when to meet with the advisor
5. Faculty-student relationships are purely professional and personal matters are not appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	Close personal relationship are essential for successful
6. The advisor should check regularly that the student is working consistently and on task	1	2	3	4	5	Students should work independently without having to account for how they spend their time
7. The advisor should be the first place to turn when the student has problems with the research project	1	2	3	4	5	Students should try to resolve problems on their own, including seeking input form others, before bringing a research problem to the advisor
8. The advisor is responsible for providing emotional support and encouragement to the student	1	2	3	4	5	Emotional support and encouragement are not the responsibility of the advisor -- students should look elsewhere
The Thesis/Dissertation						
9. The advisor should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure that the student is on the right track	1	2	3	4	5	Students should submit drafts of work when they want input and feedback from the advisor
10. The advisor should assist in the writing of the dissertation if necessary	1	2	3	4	5	The writing of the dissertation should only ever be the student's own work
11. The advisor should determine when and where to present or publish the research	1	2	3	4	5	Students should decide when and where to present or publish the research
12. The advisor should decide when the dissertation is ready to be defended and submitted	1	2	3	4	5	The student should when the dissertation is ready to be defended and submitted
13. The advisor has direct responsibility for the quality of the dissertation	1	2	3	4	5	The student bears sole responsibility for the quality of the dissertation
Support						
14. The advisor is responsible for finding funding for the student until the student graduates	1	2	3	4	5	Students are responsible for finding their own sources of funding
15. The advisor is responsible for introducing the student to others in the field, especially at conferences	1	2	3	4	5	Students are responsible for building their networks in the field
16. The advisor is responsible for providing career advice and preparation to the student	1	2	3	4	5	Career advice and preparation are not the responsibility of the advisor -- students should look elsewhere

Your graduate formation is an academic and professional period vital to establishing an independent career. The graduate education and student and the mentor relationship are a key aspect of career development. Maintaining clear, open communication is important to optimize quality training and the overall research experience. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) facilitates this communication and helps the graduate student to set and achieve goals. The plan also attempts to anticipate and address periodic challenges. You will take a unique path to future success. Designing that path requires careful consideration and collaboration between mentor and mentored and others in the graduate student activities.

Which of you accomplishments will contribute to the success of your graduate studies? What skills are you bringing? Include papers, presentations, techniques, etc.

What areas of learning and growth would you like to develop next semester, six to nine months, and one-year timeframes?

Research goals: what specific areas of research do you wish to explore during your graduate studies? Are there specific methods with which you would like to gain familiarity?

Professional development goals: what professional skills would you like to acquire during your graduate studies? Examples might include public speaking, grant writing, manuscript preparation, teaching, mentoring.

Career goals: what are your first and second choices of long-term careers? What position do you hope to hold 10 years from now? Are you considering non-academic positions including industry, government?

Research goals: What are the activities that might help you achieve your research goals? For example, course, meeting, workshop, grant application, publication.

Professional development objectives: What are the skills and expertise that you need to be employable in your career path of choice?

Plan of action (to be developed jointly by the graduate student and the mentors. Consider the following:

- List any activities in which you and your mentor agree you should participate
- Do you have guaranteed funding for the next year?
- Are there specific actions that you and/or your mentor can undertake that will support your success?
- How can your faculty mentor help you achieve your goals?
- This IDP is a living document and the goals within should be revisited throughout the year.

Additional Resources

Advising and Mentoring Students. Ohio State University, Graduate School.

Carnethon, Mercedes, Kwang-Young Kim and Donald M. Lloyd-Jones
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2006 How to Mentor Graduate Students: A Guide for Faculty at a Diverse University.

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