

TIGER TIPS

RESOURCES FOR AUBURN RESEARCHERS

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) is encouraging the development and use of **Individual Development Plans (IDP)** for every graduate student and postdoc supported by an NIH grant, *regardless of funding mechanism*. If you're an NIH-funded graduate student or postdoctoral researcher (**or the mentor of one**) you need to be aware of this. A link to the Notice can be found [here](#).

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an essential tool to help graduate students and postdoctoral researchers:

- assess current skills, interests, and strengths;
- make a plan for developing skills to meet academic and professional goals; and
- communicate with supervisors, advisors, and mentors about evolving goals and related skills.

The IDP is a document to be revisited again and again, to update and refine as goals change and/or come into focus, and to record progress and accomplishments.

Resources for graduate students, postdocs and their mentors include [“My IDP,”](#) an interactive IDP tool developed by the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS) for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) disciplines that includes a list of 20 scientific career paths with a prediction of which best fit an individual's skills and interests; and a tool for setting strategic goals for the coming year. Note that participation in the site requires a login and password. Another model IDP, developed by the [Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology](#) (FASEB) can be found [here](#). The [National Postdoctoral Association](#) website also offers several [career planning resources](#).

In addition, for all NIH annual progress reports received on/after October 1, 2014, there is a **new requirement** that a notation of *whether and how* IDPs are being used ***must be included*** as part of mandatory annual Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPRs). According to NIH's August 4, 2014 Notice, a “description” about whether these are used “for all the graduate students and postdoctoral researchers [is] included in Section D. list of Participants” in the RPPR

and “how they are employed to help manage the training and career development of those individuals.” The requirement appears to apply broadly, as NIH states the description of the IDP use is “required for all T, F, K, R25, R13, D43 and other awards or award components designed to provide training and professional development opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.” A link to the Notice can be found [here](#). Additional information related to the RPPR can be found in the [Instruction Guide](#).