*Individual Development Plans (IDPs)*

Vanderbilt University School of Medicine (VUSM) has required completion of an IDP from postdoctoral fellows since 2008. The annual IDP has been, and will continue to be, a required component of the annual reappointment process, ensuring 100% compliance.  The postdoc IDP covers issues such as productivity (publications, meetings attended), a listing of competencies developed over the previous year, career planning over the last year, and an evaluation of whether they are satisfied with their progress. The postdoc also sets detailed research and career goals and expectations for the upcoming year.  The document concludes when the advisor records his/her expectations and plans for facilitating the postdoc’s career development in the upcoming year. The postdoc and mentor must acknowledge each other's views by discussing and each signing the document.

Following new NIH guidelines, the VUSM developed IDPs for graduate students compatible with program-specific evaluation forms already in place.  The student IDPs, like the postdoc IDP, will be required annually of all School of Medicine PhD students and administered centrally through the Biomedical Research, Education and Training (BRET) office; compliance with the completion of an annual IDP will also be monitored by the BRET office. The student IDPs begin with a self-review of general expectations and responsibilities for each stage (year) of training, a self- assessment of progress toward career goals, and a self-assessment of current skills in seven core competency areas: (1) scientific knowledge; (2) research skills; (3) communication; (4) professionalism; (5) leadership and management skills; (6) responsible conduct of research; (7) career advancement. Students then set specific goals for professional development within the coming year and finally discuss the form with the advisor. Advisors identify additional expectations (if any), review the IDP, and provide feedback to the student. The student and the research advisor jointly sign and then file the IDP signature page with the BRET office. The IDPs were launched in May 2014 and have been executed in May of each year since.