Individual Development Plan Template for Master's Degree Students

Adapted from the University of Maryland Graduate School

Your Individual Development Plan is a personalized and flexible plan for navigating your academic, career, professional, and personal development during your master's program. The initial IDP was developed by a graduate student! Some general guidelines about IDPs (Individual Development Plans):

- An IDP is a process and a tool. We anticipate you will create and revise this plan as you advance through your program.
- The specific goals included in the IDP support timely degree completion and preparation for your future career path.
- Remember: This plan is yours! It is flexible and you can change it at any time.
- You are encouraged to share your plan with others including faculty mentors and peers.
- If this tool is missing something important that is relevant to your planning, add it!
- Revisit your plan annually and after important milestones to update and revise your goals.
- This tool and the other resources listed here are only worth as much as the effort you put in to using them. Owning a hammer will not drive in a nail. Use it, share it, revise it!
- This plan should be shared with your faculty mentors so they can help you refine your plans. **In order to qualify for the additional travel award incentive, you must receive the signature of your advisor or GPD**

Name_____ Graduate Program_____

Anticipated Graduation Term (Semester/Year) _____

Please note that there is one commencement ceremony per year and three times per year that degrees are conferred (Spring/May, Summer/August, and Fall/December). If you are interested in walking in a commencement ceremony, you should be aware of eligibility requirements for the ceremony each May.

Deadlines for Anticipated Graduation term (Month/Year)

Check https://luc.edu/gradschool for Key Dates and Deadlines

Apply for Graduation: _____ Format Check: _____ Final Copy: _____

GPD or Faculty Advisor Signature:_____ date: _____

In signing this document, I agree that I have reviewed and discussed this IDP (Career Goals and Semester Plan) with the student.

Step 1: Career Goals

A critical element of creating your plan will be identifying where you hope to end up, but that question is a big one. Resources for completing this section of your plan are listed on pages 4 and 5. These things will change as you progress! This is not a promise, it's a starting point.

Intended Career Paths (List at least two. Be as specific as possible- industry, role, employer)

_____ _____

_____ _____

Skills

Strong

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Developing

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

To develop

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Career-related Values

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Reflection Questions These questions will help you to get started. Remember to include **how** you intend to meet each goal. Goals should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time delimited).

Academic Goals:

1. After reviewing the requirements for your program in your program's student handbook and the university catalog, do you have any questions?
2. Have you discussed and mapped out with your advisor or GPD the classes that you will take during each semester of your program, and how you should complete your milestones to degree completion? What is the ideal timeline on which you should achieve program milestones?
3. If you are writing a thesis, you must complete the Responsible Conduct of Research requirement. When is the best time for you to do that?

Career Development Goals:

Schedule a career exploration appointment with a graduate student career advisor at Career Services for additional guidance and expert advice

1. Identify and list your career-related **Skills** (What are you good at? What do you enjoy doing?), **Interests** (What do you like to think about? What are problems you want to solve?) and **Values** (What is important to you about where and how your career fits into your life? What of your personal priorities impacts your career choices?). Research your intended career paths. Gather information about the required skills and qualifications, employers, industry trends, salary information, and the outlook for the occupation currently and in the future.
2. Review information about available career services, workshops, and networking events. What are programs or resources you will seek out and use in the next semester? Topics might include creating effective job search materials (resumes, CVs, letters), networking and informational interviews, using internet resources, etc.
3. Have your career goals changed in the past year? What are some of the reasons and how do they relate to your Skills, Interests, and Values?

Skill Development Goals:

1. What are the top skills required to be a competitive applicant for your careers of interest? What gaps exist between your current skills and what employers will be looking for in applicants?
2. How will you access professional development opportunities and/or internships for your career preparation?
3. What professional development activities did you do in the past year? What skills did you gain?
4. If you are an international student, have you spoken with ISSS about options for gaining experience in the United States. (Note: International students should include seeking internship and employment in their home or other countries of interest in their plan)

Personal Development Goals:

1. How is your overall physical and mental health? Has your stress level changed in the past year? What are concrete steps you are taking to care for yourself? Have you sought assistance?
2. Are you connected to other students or to your community for support through challenging times?

Money/Funding Goals:

1. Explore internal and external fellowship opportunities related to your discipline with an advisor.
2. Do you have a plan for managing student debt from previous institutions and from your current program? Are you making informed decisions about budget and your debt?

Resources for Developing and Executing Your Plan

- **The Graduate School's website** provides students with the tools required in the next steps of their graduate school and professional journeys. Explore for advice on working with your faculty advisor, information on policies and procedures, internal and external funding guidance, and for quick links to an array of resources. https://luc.edu/gradschool

  Keep an eye out for weekly Graduate School Announcements emails, where you will find information about upcoming events on campus for graduate students, important news, and funding opportunities, and more!

  The Graduate School website lists many additional resources to assist you in your professional development and job search (https://www.luc.edu/gradschool/studentexperience/professionaldevelopment/).

- **Professional Development Workshops** the Graduate School offers programming for students in partnership with alumni and other offices on campus. Unless specified, all workshops are free to and open to all graduate students. Registration is typically required, and more information can be found in the Graduate School Announcements and our calendar.

- **Loyola's Career Services has a team dedicated to working with graduate students!** Career Services offers opportunities for all graduate students to participate in the Career Self-Assessment Workshop, the LUConnect mentoring program, and career counseling with a staff member. Career Services organizes alumni networking events, job fairs, and recruitment events throughout the school year. Join Handshake to learn about job opportunities, and read the biweekly Career Community Updates. Please see their website https://www.luc.edu/career/index.shtml for more information and follow on Instagram @luc_career

- **LoyolaLinked: TGS** Build strong professional and mentoring relationships using a private platform where you will have the opportunity to directly connect with current students and alumni of The Graduate School at Loyola University Chicago. You can build networking, mentoring and professional connections. Features include messaging and video chats. Join at https://loyolalinked.luc.edu/v2/

- **Loyola's Fellowship Office** https://www.luc.edu/fellowshipoffice/index.shtml

- **Graduate Research Support** https://www.luc.edu/gradschool/academics/research/ Research is a central part of graduate education. As part of its commitment to graduate level research, the Graduate School supports a variety of initiatives that fund research and support its presentation. In addition to research and conference funding, The Graduate School sponsors programs to strengthen research and students' ability to communicate its value including our annual 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition and the Graduate Interdisciplinary Research Symposium (organized by the Graduate School Advisory Council). All students in the Graduate School who will produce a thesis are required to participate in the Responsible Conduct of Research Seminar, offered by ORS, which is a critical opportunity to understand ethical research conduct in an academic setting.

Step 2: Plan by Semester

Year: _____

Goal Area	Fall	Spring	Summer
Degree Completion/ Academic Goals			
Career Development			
Skill Development			
Personal Development			
Money/Funding			

Year: _____

Goal Area	Fall	Spring	Summer
Degree Completion/ Academic Goals			
Career Development			
Skill Development			
Personal Development			
Money/Funding			