



Individual Development Planning

ACHIEVING HIGHER PERFORMANCE

FAQS AND DEFINITIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the University promoting IDPs?

The goal of Individual Development Plans is to create a collaborative partnership between managers and employees for the purpose of supporting the success of our people, while creating and sustaining a high-performing organization. It is only fitting with Yale's mission that we seek to provide the opportunity for our people to develop to their fullest potential.

It has long been recognized that employees who are supported in their professional growth and development are more satisfied and more able to contribute to the success of the organization. The IDP process will enable us all to optimize our contributions to the success of the University while building our individual expertise, professional skills, and confidence, and enhancing our potential and readiness for further opportunity.

Is an IDP mandatory?

All M&P employees at Yale should go through the IDP process annually, and as a result have a current IDP in place. The IDP is a part of Yale's overall performance management and talent planning processes, and as such is intended for the participation of all managerial and professional employees. The 2010 Workplace Survey indicated a significant gap in this area, with a very low percentage of employees indicating a development plan of any type in place for them. In addition, "Inspire and Develop People" is one of Yale's Leadership Expectations, and the IDP process is an important tool to assist managers of staff in achieving this expectation. Yale is committed to being a best place to work, and IDPs are consistently used as a best practice by employers of choice.

I am satisfied with my current job, and I am not interested in moving into another position. Why do I need an IDP?

Development does not mean you are preparing for an immediate move into another job. An IDP can focus on growth within your current job – mastering specified skills or learning different facets of the job. Consider how quickly technology changes; it is important to be current. Also, consider that if you acquire a new skill, you may be able to participate in new projects or initiatives of interest to you, or enhance your current role. Think about all you have learned since the start of your career. We all can work at keeping our skills current, if not ahead of the curve.

Is this another type of performance review? How are the two connected?

The IDP is not a performance review. Performance reviews focus on your achievement of past year annual goals, and IDP discussions focus on your plans for leveraging strengths and talents and developing skills, knowledge and competencies in the coming year. IDP and performance review discussions are two separate, but related conversations. They complement each other. Insight you may have from your performance review and other feedback you have received can aid your understanding of your strengths and areas for development, and can help you determine what skill areas to consider in creating your IDP.

How does the IDP differ from traditional training and development methods?

Individual Development Plans reflect a trend which shifts emphasis away from signing up for classes and “being trained” (though classes can be a valuable part of an IDP) towards more proactive “real-time” learning which individuals obtain for themselves through actual work and job related activities.

An IDP is a conscious plan to develop professionally through a variety of learning and experiences, such as job-shadowing, serving on a project team, self-study, mentoring, unique rotational or temporary assignments, and/or a combination of these. The plan may include using and expanding talents and strengths as well as growing knowledge, skills and abilities. An important part of IDP is in the follow-up, application and reflection on real life successes and failures the individual experiences by engaging in developmental activities, as well as receiving feedback from others involved in the developmental activity.

The trend toward more active learning recognizes strong research findings that most professional learning and growth (75% or more) happens through on the job experiences, interaction with colleagues and special challenges. These experiences avoid the problem of classroom training not being tailored to the individual’s specific needs, and also avoid the need to transfer learning from the classroom to the workplace environment after the fact.

Once something is on the IDP, can I change it?

Yes. Your IDP is designed to expand and grow as you do. Just make sure to discuss your planned changes with your manager.

Is it required that training be applicable only to my present job?

Usually, the training or development activities will be at least partially related to your current role, but they may also include developmental activities necessary to prepare you for future roles or to next steps consistent with your professional goals and aspirations.

I am interested in attending a new class at the Learning Center, but it is not in my IDP. Can I still go?

Your IDP is not exclusive of other learning activities you may undertake; however, it should be the primary focus of your development efforts over a specific period of time. Often, efforts at development fail because they are too many in number, or too scattered to be realistic.

On the other hand, the IDP identifies developmental activities, but you can’t plan for everything! Sometimes options become available after you have prepared your IDP, and they could be better than or a perfect complement to an activity you had prepared. For the best results, speak with your manager before undertaking any extra activities or before modifying your IDP.

How often should I review/update my IDP?

You should monitor your progress through your IDP on an ongoing basis; quarterly is ideal for a check-in conversation with your manager. Every 6 to 12 months is a good time frame for updating. This time frame is short enough to keep you focused on your short term goals, but gives you adequate time to work on some of your long term developmental activities as well.

Is this a long term (multi-year career) plan, or a short term (this year) plan?

You can use your IDP to set step-wise goals that may lead to a larger career goal you have in mind, or to focus solely on goals that are achievable in the short term, or some combination of the two. It’s wise to stick to one or two SMART goals to be accomplished within the year, for this first year of our initial role out of the IDP process.

How can my manager help with my IDP?

Your manager is your partner in the IDP process. While drafting your IDP is your responsibility, your manager will provide support and guidance, and enable you to put your IDP into action. One of the most important responsibilities of managers of staff at Yale is helping to develop people. This involves making resources important to your development available, removing obstacles when necessary, and consistently providing you with candid feedback.

In addition to his or her primary role of supporter and enabler of your development, your manager might play the role of a coach, advocate, and sounding board. He/she can help you explore options or directions you might not otherwise consider in pursuit of your developmental goals.

Should I develop a new IDP if I switch managers?

Not necessarily. First, share your current IDP with your new manager. Discuss your goals and your progress towards them. You and your new manager will decide which, if any, items need to change.

I will be retiring soon; why/how would I benefit from having an IDP?

There are a number of benefits that may result from having an IDP even though you do not plan to continue too much longer in your career at Yale. The IDP is designed to outline developmental objectives that may help you grow in position, ready yourself for a new position (including possible future part-time work), or that may help you sustain challenge and motivation in your role.

You might find a growth or development opportunity in sharing your strengths or expertise with colleagues or others in the form of a mentoring relationship. Or, if there is an area you always wanted to learn about, but have never gotten around to – this may be the time.

Where can I get more information and guidance on the IDP process?

Visit the website at www.yale.edu/idp. Reach out to your Human Resource Generalist, or contact Organizational Effectiveness in Human Resources.

Where do I find IDP forms?

IDP forms and information are online at www.yale.edu/idp.

Who will see my IDP?

You and your manager need to have copies of your IDP. You may be interested in others reviewing your IDP, for career planning purposes, to enlist additional support for your activities, or for additional feedback.

Where will my IDP be kept?

In your and your manager's files.

IDP KEY WORD DEFINITIONS

Action Learning - Learning by tackling real problems, in a group or team, and intentionally analyzing and reflecting on the actions that work and that don't work to resolve the problem as the group's work progresses.

Classroom Training - Structured learning that takes place in a classroom setting, such as the courses offered at the Learning Center. Classroom training is most effective when pursued for specific outcomes and linked to on-the-job experiences that reinforce learning and provide opportunities for practice.

Competency - Competencies are defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that contribute to individual and organizational performance.

Knowledge - Understanding which can be applied, and is developed or learned through experience, study or investigation.

Skill - An effective behavior, rooted in knowledge and ability, exercised consistently and adeptly; the result of repeated application and practice.

Ability - An innate potential to perform certain mental and physical actions or tasks.

Behavior - An observable action or reaction, what is done or said in a specific situation.

Development – Skill and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement; it is the process of increasing one's capabilities through engaging in learning opportunities.

Developmental Activity - Assignments, projects, community service, conferences, self-study, classes and any other actions undertaken to accomplish developmental goals. Developmental activities are intended to expand skills, build competencies, gain knowledge and enhance professional performance and effectiveness.

Development Goal - A development goal is a goal pertinent to work and career aspirations, such as mastering a skill in a current job or attaining a higher position. The goal should imply some work and challenge, but it should not be so high that it cannot be reasonably obtained. Short range goals are planned to be accomplished within 1-2 years, and long-range goals are planned to be accomplished with 3-5 years.

Experiential Learning - Learning by doing, viewed as a highly effective learning mode, which relies on simulation or practice opportunities.

Individual Development Plan (IDP) - The IDP is an individually tailored written plan initiated by the employee and supported and encouraged by the manager, outlining the employee's professional developmental goals and the specific activities for achieving these goals. An IDP is a tool for employees to fuel their professional growth, realize their potential, increase their satisfaction, and enhance their ability to contribute to the organization.

Knowledge base –The content of a particular area of expertise, field or subject.

Learning Objective - A summary of the knowledge, skills, and abilities one expects to achieve through a given activity or set of activities.

On-the-Job-Training - Training that is conducted in the work environment, and is an integral part of doing the job.

Professional Aspirations - Personal goals or desires for success or progress in a given role or area of endeavor regarding one's career objectives.

Rotational Assignment - A special temporary assignment to a job or role where the individual has the opportunity to learn and develop skills beyond those usually called for by his or her regular job or role.

Shadowing - Learning by first observing the work of a qualified individual, and then practicing the application of the same skill or set of skills yourself, followed by feedback and evaluation.

Simulation Training - Learning in a realistic, but not actual situation in which the participant can practice skills before needing to apply them in a live context. Simulation training may involve the use of specialized equipment or, in some cases, scenarios and role playing.

Strength – A competency, ability or skill that is well developed and consistently applied to positive effect; an asset of special worth or utility.

Talent - A natural ability which comes easily to the individual who possesses it; an unusually high level of ability in a field or activity.