



Individual Development Planning Guide

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PREPARE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN JOURNEY

The College of New Jersey encourages you to take ownership of your development and professional growth, and to pursue experiences and exposures that will enable you to attain your career goals.

As an advocate, the Human Resources Professional Development Team supports your development efforts by providing guidance, training opportunities and performance coaching.

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a personal action strategy that assists you to identify, pursue and achieve professional growth. The IDP emphasizes discussion, collective decision making and a commitment between you, the employee, your manager, and the Office of Human Resources professional development team to mutually determine an appropriate path which will enable you to achieve your short term and long term goals. An IDP is *not* a performance evaluation tool or a one-time activity. The plan requires that you take an inventory of your skills, abilities and background, and define development areas that, once addressed, will enable you to attain your career objectives. Each IDP is uniquely tailored to *your* professional needs and requires preparation and continuous feedback during the IDP period.

The Office of Human Resources is committed to your development and will assist you to successfully complete your IDP. HR offers programs designed to meet your development objectives and educational needs through the delivery of courses facilitated through online self-study, classroom-based, or blended instructional formats, including LinkedIn Learning.

WHAT AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN IS NOT

An IDP is not a binding document. Rather, the plan provides documentation of intent between you, your manager and the Human Resources Professional Development team to support your growth.

Please keep in mind that you may not be able to take advantage of certain developmental opportunities due to budgetary or workload constraints, relevancy to your career path or objectives, or when a developmental request fails to align with TCNJ priorities or goals.

Completion of an IDP does not guarantee advancement. Completion of an IDP may, however, improve upon your potential, and candidacy, when you pursue future positions within The College of New Jersey for which your skills, experience and education meet the requirements of available roles.

WHY WOULD YOU IMPLEMENT AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

Employees pursue an IDP for many reasons, some of which include:

- To enhance skills and behaviors that may be applied across the college
- To strengthen your impact in your current role, and to gain credibility needed to assume a higher level of responsibility
- To gain exposure needed to ascend a particular career ladder
- To prepare for future promotional opportunities and enhance your contributions to TCNJ's success

You may complete an IDP at any time, but it may helpful to build this process into annual goal setting and planning. Regular dialogue with your manager and the HR Professional Development team throughout the year about your progress will help position you to achieve your objectives.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Individual development planning enables you to align training and development efforts with the mission, priorities, goals and objectives of The College of New Jersey. As a vehicle for discovery, the IDP provides a forum for communication between you, your manager and the HR Professional Development team about your professional goals, strengths and development needs.

To the degree appropriate, the IDP uncovers, and may precipitate the creation of opportunities, experiences, training, learning and development to close the gap between your skills, experience and education today, and that of the goal (future) state. Ultimately, you take responsibility and accountability for your career development, and for acquiring and/or enhancing the skills necessary to achieve your goals. Once created, the IDP provides for documentation of progress toward your future development.

Key elements of the IDP include:

- *Career goals:* Short term goals (those that may be achieved within a year) are defined, along with anticipated and actual completion dates. Longer term goals (those that would be achieved in a timeframe of one to three years) may, at your discretion, also be identified.
- *Development objectives:* Your development objectives are determined within the context of TCNJ organizational priorities, objectives and goals.
- *Training and learning opportunities:* You will define the activities to be pursued during the IDP period, along with the anticipated and actual completion dates. Such activities may include formal classroom training, web-based training, rotational assignments, shadowing assignments, on-the-job training, self-study programs, and/or professional conferences/seminars

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

The five phases of IDP preparation and implementation are:

1. *Pre-Planning:* You and your manager prepare independently for your initial meeting. This is the time for self-reflection, self-evaluation and for you to define and document what you hope to gain from the individual development plan process.
2. *Employee & Manager Meeting:* You and your manager meet to discuss your strengths, developmental areas, interests, goals, and organizational requirements. Once the meeting between you and your manager has taken place, you will schedule a meeting to discuss planning of the IDP with an HR professional development team member.
3. *IDP Preparation:* You complete the IDP in consultation with your manager and HR Professional Development.

4. *IDP Implementation:* You pursue training, experiences, learning and development consistent with the IDP.
5. *Evaluation of IDP Outcomes:* You, your manager and HR discuss how well IDP goals were achieved.

PRE-PLANNING

A self-assessment helps you to focus on your career goals, especially in comparison to your current job responsibilities, and in consideration of your development objectives. Questions you might ask to determine your career direction may include:

1. Are you content in your current role?
2. What are some other work areas or roles that are of interest to you?
3. What are the specific skills you would like to develop to enhance performance in your current role?
4. What interests you about your current position?
5. What interests you about The College of New Jersey?
6. Are there any additional responsibilities you are interested in taking on, related to your current role?
7. How can you grow/expand your job?
8. What type of development would enable you to improve or enhance your professional efforts?
9. Is there a position, aside from your own, that you're interested in pursuing? If so, why?

It is likely that you will be able to align your development journey to one of three common areas of focus, as described in the table below.

Need	Description
The scope of your current role has been redefined or altered.	You are content in your current role, but technology or job duties have changed and you need to gain additional knowledge, skills, or abilities.
You want to enhance your performance in your current role.	<p>You are content in your current role, but you want to improve your skills or competencies by engaging in development activities (inside or outside of the organization).</p> <p>You are content in your current role, but would like to take on more challenging assignments.</p> <p>You are content in your current role, but want to exceed expectations.</p>
You are in search of a new role.	You are seeking greater challenges, considering a move to another area of TCNJ, or are oriented to achieve the next step in your career.

COMPLETE COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT SURVEY

During the pre-planning exercise, you and your manager are encouraged to complete the Competency Assessment Survey to assist you to focus on specific behavioral competencies and skills you have already mastered, and to define areas of development. Once you and your manager have assessed your competencies by way of the survey, you, your manager and HR Professional Development will engage in discussion to calibrate your own perceptions, and those of others, including your manager.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Measurable goals and objectives enable you to evaluate your IDP progress. A goal is a desired result or possible outcome that you envision, plan and commit to achieve. An objective, on the other hand, is a specific result that you aim to achieve within a time frame and with available and/or defined resources.

In general, objectives are more specific and easier to measure than goals inasmuch as objectives are specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet the goal. For example:

- **Goal:** Increase my knowledge of careers in higher education administration by December 20__.
- **Objective:** Find five job descriptions for higher education administration positions by September 20__.
 - Interview two current higher education administrators by October 20__.
 - Review trends in higher education administration by November 20__.

Instead of setting a goal of, “I will talking to people about higher education administration”, you might plan to “I will interview three higher education administration professionals and will ask questions about their position and career development by December 20__”.

Below is a description of how goals and objectives differ.

Goals	Objectives
Goals are broad	Objectives are narrow
Goals are general intentions	Objective are precise
Goals are intangible	Objectives are tangible
Goals are abstract	Objectives are concrete
Goals are often difficult of measure	Objectives are measurable

The SMART acronym can help you to create **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **t**ime-bound development objectives. Applying these elements to each IDP area of focus will assist you to clarify what will be required in order for you to achieve success.

SMART GOAL SETTING

Element	Answers the question...	Guidelines
Specific	What do I need to accomplish?	Include all expected tasks or responsibilities, explained in as much detail as possible, rather than in general terms.
Measurable	How will I know if the goal is accomplished?	Define what success looks like, what should happen as a result of achieving the goal? Consider what it would mean not only to meet the expectation associated with this goal, but also how you would know if you exceeded the expectations for this goal.
Achievable	Is it possible for me to achieve this goal in the coming year (short-term) or in the next one to three years (long-term)?	A goal should be challenging, but not so difficult that success is unattainable. Define the actions that you need to take to achieve the goal, and ensure that those actions align with your development needs.
Realistic/Relevant	Does this goal support my development needs?	Relate your goals to the results of your self-assessment activities.
Time-bound	What is the due date for this goal?	Every goal should have a deliverable date.

MEET WITH YOUR MANAGER

Once you have identified your goals and objectives, discuss them with your manager. This step is important because your manager is an important and valuable resource to support you in your development journey. This partnership will increase your chances of success and will heighten your own sense of accomplishment once you achieve your goals.

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind when beginning a dialogue with your manager about your development:

- Take a copy of your completed IDP preparation document.
- Discuss with your manager what he or she believes to be your strengths and developmental opportunities, especially if any of your development focus or activities are outside of the scope of your current position. Your manager may be able to help you expose gaps in your skill set, education or performance that you may not have recognized yourself, or that limit the prospect of achieving certain outcomes of the IDP.
- Ask questions that help clarify your areas of opportunity for achieving your development goals:
 - What potential outcomes could this knowledge, skill, or competency provide?
 - What would my development mean to TCNJ, and to my career with TCNJ?
 - What learning and development activities may be beneficial to me?
 - Ask for support in the form of access to development activities, time for development, and commitment to continuing dialogue as you work toward achieving your development goals.

The Human Resources professional development staff encourages you to check in with HR once the meeting with your manager concludes, and before preparing your IDP.

PREPARE YOUR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN


After you assess your development needs and have received input from your manager and the HR professional development team, you may begin creating your individual development plan.

Complete the each category of the IDP form.

- *Development activities:* The specific activities you will complete to achieve the goal (training, shadowing, stretch assignments, job rotations, etc.)
- *Outcomes measurement:* What should the outcome of the development should look like (how advancing your skills impacts your performance or your mobility within TCNJ)
- *Timing:* The deadline for completing the activity

The IDP Worksheet will help you organize your activities with short term goals (within one year) and, if you decide, longer term development goals.

IDP Worksheet Illustration

 Individual Development Plan Preparation Document			
Instructions: Use this worksheet to create and organize your short term (within one year and, if desired, longer term one to three years) development goals. Work with your manager to validate your goals and document development activities, training and/or other experiences you will pursue to facilitate your growth. Draft your plan and, if needed, work with the Office of Human Resources professional development department to finalize the plan.			
Your Name		Period for IDP <input type="text"/>	
Job Title		Manager's Name <input type="text"/>	
Short term Development Goals (within a year)			
Development Focus	Development Activities	Outcomes	Time Frame
Please indicate the skills, knowledge and/or experiences that are foundational to your IDP.	Activities you will complete to achieve your development goals. Examples are: training courses, on the job training, job shadowing	What does success look like? How will you know that you have achieved your goal?	Please indicate the deadlines associated with your IDP activities.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Optional: Longer term Development Goals (one to three years)			
Development Focus	Development Activities	Outcomes	Time Frame
Please indicate the skills, knowledge and/or experiences that are foundational to your IDP.	Activities you will complete to achieve your development goals. Examples are: training courses, on the job training, job shadowing	What does success look like? How will you know that you have achieved your goal?	Please indicate the deadlines associated with your IDP activities.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Employee Signature	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>
Manager's Signature	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>

IMPLEMENT YOUR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Now you are ready to implement your IDP!

Tips for Successful IDP Implementation

Clear obstacles: Identify possible obstacles that might make it difficult to stick to your plan (workload, family, volunteer work) and formulate strategies to overcome those barriers.

For example: You may commit to completing an online degree in the evenings. One potential obstacle maybe that your household doesn't settle down until very late at night, leaving you no time to devote to your studies. To overcome this, you may need to get some help with the nightly routine a few nights a week from your partner, your extended family, or a friend.

Enlist Support: In addition to the support and counsel of your manager, you may benefit from joining a study group, joining professional organizations, networking with other professionals within TCNJ, or leveraging social media sites such as LinkedIn or Twitter. The encouragement and assistance of others can serve to strengthen your own commitment to your plan.

Monitor Progress: Review your IDP with your manager and HR on a regular basis to track your progress and to make any adjustments necessary.

EVALUATE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN OUTCOMES

It is important that you receive feedback on your progress and evaluate your success in meeting your development goals and objectives. You should schedule follow up meetings with your manager and with HR with IDP updates. The duration and frequency will depend on your specific needs but, as a general guideline, at least one 30 minute meeting on a monthly basis is recommended and will assist you to stay on track. We look forward to working with you on your journey.