Setting goals and taking stock of whether you have accomplished those goals is a crucial habit to being productive, not just busy. Guided by the Individual Development Plan (IDP), formal meetings with your advisor are a chance for you to step back from your daily lab work, assess your progress, and plan for the future. Your advisor and mentors are invaluable resources to help you propose and execute next steps that will help make you a better scientist.

**Scientific/Research Goals and Objectives**

1. What specific question is your thesis intended to answer? How familiar are you with the academic literature related to this topic?
2. Do you have a good grasp of how this project fits into your lab/field as a whole?
3. How do you feel your project is progressing?
4. What are your near-term research goals? For each goal, specify any areas where you feel you need help or additional training (e.g., the need to learn data analysis software). Include any techniques you want to learn and scientific collaborations, etc.

**Challenges**

1. Describe any unusual and unanticipated challenges you experienced this year in trying to accomplish the goals you set out last year with your advisor.
2. What actions have you taken to meet these challenges?
3. How can your advisor help you?
4. What Home Program requirements do you need to complete, and what is your plan to fulfill them?
5. What fellowships are you applying to, and have you been able to get the guidance you need?
6. Many students find it useful to participate in additional training, teaching, conference, and outreach. Do you need any help finding opportunities?
7. Are there any factors that you are concerned about may negatively affect your progress?

1. List any involvement you are thinking about in the following areas:

* Academic coursework/training
* Teaching/mentoring
* Professional development
* Conferences
* Service/Outreach

One of the most important parts of your PhD training is to develop a skill set transferrable beyond graduation. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses below relative to where you think a student should be at the end of their PhD studies, checking the boxes for skills that you would like to target in the coming year. Ask your advisor how s/he agrees or disagrees with this assessment. An honest self-assessment and discussion will help you set goals for your training.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scientific knowledge** | **Mark your perceived current ability level**  **1 (weak) 3 (strong)** | | |
| Broad-based knowledge of science |  |  |  |
| Deep-based knowledge of mentee’s specific research area |  |  |  |
| Critical evaluation of scientific literature |  |  |  |
| **Research skills** |  |  |  |
| Technical skills related to mentee’s specific research area |  |  |  |
| Experimental design |  |  |  |
| Statistical analysis |  |  |  |
| Interpretation of data |  |  |  |
| Creativity and innovative thinking |  |  |  |
| Understanding of submission/peer review process |  |  |  |
| **Writing communications** |  |  |  |
| Basic writing and editing |  |  |  |
| For a scientific publication |  |  |  |
| For a research proposal |  |  |  |
| For a lay audience/non scientists |  |  |  |
| Grammar/structure |  |  |  |
| **Oral communications** |  |  |  |
| To a specialized audience |  |  |  |
| To a lay audience/non scientists |  |  |  |
| In a classroom |  |  |  |
| One-on-one |  |  |  |
| English fluency |  |  |  |
| Training and mentoring individuals |  |  |  |
| **Professionalism/Interpersonal** |  |  |  |
| Demonstrating workplace etiquette |  |  |  |
| Complying with lab rules and regulations |  |  |  |
| Upholding commitments and meeting deadlines |  |  |  |
| Identifying and seeking advice |  |  |  |
| Maintaining positive relationships with colleagues |  |  |  |
| Contributing to institution (e.g. outreach) |  |  |  |
| Approaching difficult conversations |  |  |  |
| **Project Management** |  |  |  |
| Planning projects |  |  |  |
| Breaking down complex tasks |  |  |  |
| Time management |  |  |  |
| Managing data and resources |  |  |  |

1. Target skills of improvement for research skills & scientific thinking:
2. Action items for the target skills for research skills & scientific thinking:
3. Target skills of improvement for communication:
4. Action items for the target skills for communication:
5. Financial support: if you know what will be your financial support for next year?

**Professional and Personal Development**

1. Have you started to think about your long-term goals? (i.e. activities you want to be doing on a daily basis in 5-10 years after you graduate.)

* If so, list any early thoughts you have. If not, do you have any questions at this point?

1. Have you thought about what factors inform these goals?

* If so, list any early thoughts you have. If not, do you have any questions at this point?

1. What guidance would help you with your development and exploration of career options?
2. What features of the lab group and your relationships with colleagues are most helpful and supportive to your personal development?
3. What features and your relationships with your advisor are most helpful and supportive to your personal development?
4. Are there any factors that you are concerned may negatively affect your progress?
5. What help can your advisor or other faculty/staff provide? Indicate if you need help finding professional or personal development resources.
6. Your success as a student is tightly linked to your wellness. What are you doing to maintain this?