

Individual Development Plan Fact Sheet

Overview

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a document prepared jointly by the supervisor/rating official and employee as part of the annual performance planning process that outlines development objectives for the employee. The plans may include training, education, individual coaching, work assignments, and/or other activities designed to improve the employee's capability within his or her career field. The IDP is also a collaborative planning tool to develop the competencies, knowledge, and skills needed to achieve performance goals. IDP's can be used by the organization to assess aggregate training and development needs and create group opportunities to efficiently satisfy those common needs.

Creating an IDP

The IDP is a partnership between the employee and the supervisor/rating official with mutual benefits for the employee's development and contribution to the organization's success. DCIPS Policy Volumes 2010 Professional Development and 2011 Performance Management state that IDPs are mandatory for every DCIPS employee. IDPs should be written and approved within 30 days of the start of the performance period (i.e., NLT 30 October) or within 30 days of being assigned. IDP formats vary by DCIPS Component but under policy Volume 2010, a completed IDP shall contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- A statement of the employee's career goals.
- A statement of the employee's immediate and long-range developmental needs.
- A specific statement of the training, education, individual coaching, work assignments and other activities designed to improve or enhance the employee's capability within his/her career field.
- An action plan for the individual to develop the specific competencies, knowledge, and skills needed to improve or enhance performance in the employee's present position and to prepare the employee for new responsibilities.
- A written plan approved by the reviewing official, in conjunction with the rating official, for scheduling and managing the employee's developmental activities.

The IDP should be much more than a training "wish list." It should be a realistic action plan that combines a blend of formal training courses, coaching and mentoring, and on-the-job experiential learning opportunities necessary to help develop the employee in their current position and career.

Maintaining and Updating an IDP

Employees should use their IDP as a tool to chart a course for their personal career growth. In accordance with DCIPS Component guidance, IDPs should be maintained and updated on an annual basis, and may also be updated during the performance period if there are changes in developmental goals or plans or the employee's position responsibilities. For example, if an employee earns a promotion, revisions to the IDP may be appropriate to account for the new role and new developmental goals. Employees should refer to their IDP throughout the performance period to assess progress toward planned activities.

Individual Development Plan Checklist

Roles and Responsibilities

HR Practitioner	Supervisor / Rating Official	Employee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help employees and supervisor/rating officials understand the benefit of IDPs and how to properly complete an IDP • Help ensure employees and supervisor/rating officials are meeting annual Component requirements regarding completion of IDPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist employees in identifying strengths and areas for development, and in setting realistic developmental goals • Helps drafts the employee IDPs, then track progress against IDP goals. (The IDP is reviewed and approved by the employee's Reviewing Official) • Provide opportunities for employees to achieve their IDP and to apply and demonstrate new skills on the job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify strengths and weaknesses • Research available learning and competency development opportunities. • Set IDP objectives with supervisor/rating official that support career development and organizational progression

IDP Checklist

Employees and Supervisors/Raters may find the following checklists useful, along with DCIPS Component guidance, when developing and reviewing an IDP.

Employees

- Have I identified professional development areas where I need more experience, proficiency and/or training?
- Have I identified courses, on-the-job experiences, deployments, or other learning opportunities where I can gain more experience in needed improvement areas?
- Have I categorized and planned specific tasks or additional responsibilities that I will seek out to meet my development goals for the upcoming year?
- Have I considered my long-term goals? What type of work do I see myself doing in 2 years or 5 years? How am I preparing myself for this future work?
- Have I considered a Joint Duty Assignment (if eligible), a detail, or deployment?
- How will I work with my supervisor/rating official to better utilize my capabilities?

Supervisors / Rating Officials

- What professional developmental areas have I identified that the employee can strengthen?
- Has the employee identified courses, Joint Duty assignments, details, deployments, on-the-job experiences, or other learning opportunities that will help the employee in these areas?
- Are the employee's professional developmental objectives realistic for the mission, timeframes specified? Is funding available to support training outlined in the IDP? If they are not, are there alternatives I can suggest to help the employee meet developmental goals that are more realistic; for example internal courses, or project teams, or other on-the-job professional developmental opportunities?
- Are the employee's professional developmental objectives in line with office and Component mission? If they are not, how can I redirect the employee's suggestions to better align with the requirements and goals of the office and the Component?
- How can I encourage and create opportunities for the employee to practice and exercise learned skills on the job?
- Is the employee eligible for, and at an appropriate stage of development in his/her current position or career field to suggest they consider a Joint Duty Assignment or deployment?
- Do I have a plan for monitoring the employee's performance against the IDP?

More Information

For more information about Individual Development Plans, please refer to [policies](#) DoDI 1400.25 Volume 2010 Professional Development, DoDI 1400.25 Volume 2011 Performance Management, and refer to your organization's IDP implementing guidance.