

A Guide to Career Development
Companion Guide to the FAMU IDP Process

There are six phases to create a successful IDP:

1. **Assess**
2. **Determine Goals**
3. **Identify Development Activities**
4. **Create a Plan**
5. **Implement and Monitor**
6. **Recognize the Change**

Phase 1 – Assessment of Skills Needed (Initial Discussion)

Who: Employee and Manager (Aligned with Step 1 in FAMU IDP process)

Identifying strengths and development needs is the first important step in the process of improving performance. To help assess strengths and weaknesses, use your knowledge of the employee's skills, and get input from others who work with the employee. You may ask the employee to do the same. Research has found that most people become more accurate assessors of their skills when they solicit feedback from others. If an employee evaluates self solely on the personal opinion of what he/she believes to be effective, he/she may overlook some critical skills necessary for their job.

It is also useful to assess essential skills based upon a set of standard, competency criteria that is needed for the employee's career goal or what the manager needs while the employee is seeking their aspirations within the organization. If the manager is not familiar with the skill set required for the employee's career goal, do some research and ask those in the know (especially those within the organization). The employee should also contribute and seek out the necessary skills. The employee should support their findings with rationale as to why the skills are required if the manager has any questions. Additional refinement of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required are done in stage two.

Employees should ask the following questions, and the manager should then answer them from their perspective. Listed below are some sample questions and activities useful in the initial assessment phase.

Employee

1. Where do I believe development is needed?
2. Where do I lack skills?
3. What existing skills would help me to do my job better? More efficiently?
4. What future skills will help me achieve my career goals?
5. What do I like and dislike about my job?

Manager

1. What kind of development plan does the employee have in mind?
 - a. Short-term?
 - b. Long-term?
2. Can FAMU/HR meet the employee's professional needs? How?
3. What are their short-term (0-3 yr.) career goals with the organization?
4. What sort of skill development does the employee need for short-term?
5. What are your long-term (3-5 yr.) career goals?
6. What sort of skill development does the employee need for long-term?
7. What are the employee's development needs?
8. What sort of feedback has the employee received (performance review, 360*, peers, or customers)?

Phase 2 – Determining Areas to Develop

Who: Manager (Aligned with Step 2 in FAMU IDP process)

After initially assessing developmental needs, the next phase is to determine the areas in which the employee wants or needs to develop. These should be based on the skills critical to the employee's current job and those necessary in the employee's future career goals. Choose the skills to be developed while keeping in mind the importance of current skills, future skills, and skills with the greatest priority. Please keep in mind all skills should be aligned with the organization's business vision and strategies.

Development is an ongoing process rather than an event. Approach the employee's goal setting with this in mind. **Limit the employee's focus and avoid trying to develop too much at one time.** As a manager, address the areas currently targeted for development. You will want to revise and update his/her goals to meet changing needs and conditions.

Leverage the employee's strengths and develop his/her weaker areas in determining developmental goals. Create some specific objectives for each goal based on what the employee needs. For example, does would the employee benefit from:

- More information and knowledge?
- Practice in applying the knowledge or skills (for example, handling group conflict or problem-solving in ambiguous situations)?
- An increased priority in using the employee's existing skills?

Discuss technical skills the career needs. These should be the most relevant according to their career goals and most accessible to develop through cross-training, job enlargement, training, education, and certification.

For key behavioral goals, it's best to write the employee's objectives specific to their needs. For example, one manager may write as an objective "to increase employee's priority on acknowledging people's feelings and preferences," while for another employee, an objective might be "to increase employee's skill at using participative decision-making with his/her team."

Phase 3 – Identify Development Activities

Who: Manager and Employee (Aligned with Step 2 in FAMU IDP process)

Once priorities and specific objectives have been identified, the next step is to determine possible development activities and experiences.

Keep in mind development activities should be aligned to the employee and their department's needs and the employee's learning style. For example, if an employee learns best by seeing something done rather than reading about it or just being thrown into the situation, the employee's plan should reflect their preferred learning style. If an employee needs to put a higher priority on using a skill, the manager should make that behavior a priority.

When you are doing development planning, one should consider and respect learning styles. Ask the employee how they best learn or how they have learned successfully in the past. Examples of learning styles include visual learning style (seeing, reading), auditory learning style (talking /listening), active learning style (hands-on), or a combination.

Create developmental activities, both technical and behavioral that might suit the employee's style and needs. Here are some examples of development activities to meet an employee's particular developmental:

- Use on the job opportunities, including:
 - Improving a process or procedure that is inefficient or out of date
 - Starting something new – new policy/practice, system, method, or new service
 - Representing a manager at meetings or functions
 - Coaching someone who may be weak in an area in which the employee excels
 - Managing new projects
 - Making presentations
 - Taking on individual assignments that challenge the employee
 - Offering to follow up on certain items generated at the meeting
 - Volunteering to lead a task force or committee
 - Transferring to gain experience in a different job, function or business
 - Benchmarking employee's counterparts at other universities about their "Best Practices," or summarizing what employee has learned at a staff meeting
- Learn from off the job experience, including:
 - Joining and leading community groups
 - Trying a new skill in a volunteer organization
 - Making presentations to civic organizations, human resources organizations, or other campus units
- Model others who are competent at a craft, which involves:
 - Watching them in action
 - Asking them how they handle certain situations
 - Asking what lessons they have learned about being effective
 - Trying some of the ideas yourself
 - Discussing what employee tried, and asking for additional ideas
- Take formal courses, such as:
 - Workshops, on and off-campus training courses, webinars

- Seminars
- Conferences
- Read books, articles, and manuals
- Conduct research which involves:
 - Searching for information and materials in a specific area
 - Asking questions and seeking information from other people
 - Consulting with friends, managers, associate, mentor or others who can advise in the area of concern
- Practice, which involves:
 - Identifying a skill or behavior that needs improvement
 - Trying out the behavior away from work in a similar situation
 - Practicing the behavior in the actual work situation

Phase 4 – Prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Who: Manager (Aligned with Step 2 in FAMU IDP process)

Next, create a firm development plan that includes the employee's objectives, action steps, support needed, and time frames. The following parameters can help a manager prepare a development plan:

1. Identify no more than four strengths and four development needs. Don't try to change too much too fast. Focus on the employee's efforts on priority areas or changes that would be most beneficial to both him/her and Human Resources. Keep Development Plans manageable.
2. Specify objectives for each strength or development need. For example, in the Leverage Networks area, an objective might be to "establish networks with people in the same discipline." Focus on tangible outcomes.
3. Do not promise activities that cannot be implemented or that are not aligned with the budget.
4. Create an action plan that consists of specific development activities to help the employee attain each performance objective.
5. Identify the support the employee wants. Employees who receive ongoing feedback and coaching from managers and others are shown to be more successful with behavior change.
5. Specify a timetable for attaining each objective. Completion dates that have been targeted will help to encourage employee's steady progress toward his/her objectives.

Phase 5 – Implement and Monitor IDP

Who: Manager and Employee (Aligned with Step 3 in FAMU IDP process)

Finalize the plan you and the employee have agreed upon. Monitor the employee's progress and keep the employee motivated, provide opportunities to recognize the employee's successes, and help him/her determine when and how to review his/her current development goals and objectives.

Build progress checks into an employee's overall development process by doing the following:

- Get regular feedback from others on how he/she is performing.
- Schedule time to periodically compare the employee's actual accomplishments with the objectives in his/her plan.

- To increase the employee's accountability for their goals, ensure goals/objectives are part of the employee's performance plan, discuss the employee's development objectives and progress with the manager.
- Track progress in the area the employee is working to develop.
- As the employee progresses toward their goals, take time to congratulate them.

Phase 6 – Recognize the Change

Who: Manager (Aligned with Step 3 in FAMU IDP process)

There are many rewards to a developmental plan, recognition can be an essential part of those rewards and helps generate momentum. Many managers may create work development plans, but it is also important they acknowledge that change has occurred with the employee's development. Acknowledging growth helps the employee sustain the gain. Subtle changes may be hard for others to see and acknowledge. Personal recognition reinforces progress because it supports the idea of development, provides ongoing energy and offers confidence in the employees continued growth.

Also, the manager and others should take steps to recognize and acknowledge the changes made to develop the employee. Be clear with the employee's colleagues and staff about what the manager and employee are doing. This can be an effective way to alert others to the changes they can expect to see.