Individual Development Planning

*Staff Guidelines*
Guidelines for Creating a Development Plan

What is an individual development plan? It’s a document created by you, the staff member, then discussed with your supervisor throughout the year. The ideal plan leverages your strengths/talents and provided new skills/knowledge that will help you perform well. Focus on weak areas if they will keep you from being successful in achieving your goals.

Development plans help all staff members:

- Increase and/or expand skills and knowledge.
- Keep skills current.
- Reach one’s potential.
- Support the achievement of career goals.
- Leverage strengths.
- Address gaps in knowledge or skills needed in the job.
- Improve performance.
- Develop holistically through on-the-job development, self-learning, and training.

Reasons for undertaking professional development

- **Leverage strengths.** You were hired because your knowledge, skills and abilities. It makes sense to find opportunities to use these strengths within your job at the University. You feel especially energized and motivated to give extra effort when your strengths intersect with the needs of the organization.
- **Close a gap.** Each year you may identify performance goals as part of the planning process for the upcoming fiscal year. If there is a gap between what you are expected to do and what you currently know or are able to do, that skill is a possible area for development.
- **Develop transferable skills.** In addition to the technical or professional knowledge and skills you may need to do your specific job, you might want to further develop skills that enhance your performance in your current role and are transferable to other positions or roles. These skills may include interpersonal, management and leadership skills.
Key questions to ask yourself as you decide what to focus on in your development plan

- In what direction is my organization going and what will they need from staff in the future?
- What are my goals over the next three to five years? This can help you to find purpose in seemingly unimportant activities if you can see how they will help you toward your long-term goals.
- What are my greatest strengths and how can I build on them?
- Do I have any serious weaknesses that make it difficult to do my job or will prevent me from reaching my goals?

Staff member's responsibility in creating a development plan

- Complete an honest assessment of your current strengths and areas for improvement.
- Using this assessment, complete a plan draft.
- Discuss with supervisor.
- Make necessary revisions.
- Implement your plan.
- Update the plan and share progress and learning with your supervisor throughout the year.

Tips for effective development

- Focus on making the most of your strengths. Address weak areas if they are required in your current job or will be required in future jobs.
- Narrow development goals to specific behaviors when possible. For example, “improve listening” becomes “before I speak, paraphrase what I understood the other person to say.”
- If you are making a behavior change, it is important to be clear about the payoff for you.
- For behavioral goals, work on some aspect of it each day until it becomes a habit, which can be three to six weeks.
- Ask those around you for feedback to see if you are doing well. Despite how we may think we are perceived, our intentions are not always evident to others, and it’s easy to justify our own actions.
Instructions for Completing a Development Plan

1. **Identify a performance goal or competency to address.** Look at your performance goals and the competencies that your supervisor has identified as being important for your job. If you aren’t sure about either of these, ask your supervisor. To identify the most important performance goals or competencies for development, ask yourself these questions:
   - What do I need to **do/achieve** in the next six to 12 months (or longer if applicable)?
   - What are the **results or outcomes** for which I will be held accountable?
   - How am I expected to **behave** as I work at achieving my goals?
   - What **responsibilities** am I expected to take on?
   - Is there a **gap** between what is expected from me and what I know how to do?

2. **Write development goals that will assist you in achieving these target competencies.** Limit your goal-setting to a maximum of three objectives so that you can focus and aren’t overwhelmed. To write your development goals, ask yourself these questions:
   - Do I want the development objective to build on a natural talent, increase my knowledge, or improve my skills?
   - What do I want to be able to do when I have completed my development?

Use this formula for writing development goals:

**Do (verb) + What + Why (Desired Outcome)**

For example:
   - Negotiate lower price with vendor to reduce expenses by 15%
   - Improve student satisfaction with XXXXX system to increase use by 20%
   - Develop and coach staff to support rollout of new program

3. **Identify development activities.** Write one to three development activities that will support the accomplishment of each development goal. Consider:
   - What activities could I do that would be meaningful to me to accomplish the development objective?
   - Can I develop this competency through an on-the-job activity?
Again, use the **Do (verb) + What + Why (Desired Outcome)** formula. For example:

- Improve negotiation skills to enhance service agreement.
- Monitor customer satisfaction to determine improvements needed.

4. **Identify resources needed.** These may include people, funding, books, training or even time.

5. **Note how you will measure progress or implementation of the goal.** Give yourself a deadline for the overall task as well as any activities. Be specific. Avoid putting the last day of the fiscal year; that’s a given. List a date to review progress with your supervisor. Also note the actual date completed. The deadline should be negotiable, depending on other obligations. It’s your plan, but you don’t want to keep postponing your important but not urgent development activities in lieu of urgencies. Make and honor the commitment to yourself. Figure out how you will involve your supervisor in discussing progress and implementation. It will increase the likelihood that you’ll receive support for acting on your plan even though it may mean putting aside other work for a few hours.

6. **Note key learning and application.** Throughout the year, update your plan with the results, even if things didn’t go the way you planned.

7. **Document unplanned development.** Throughout the year there will be opportunities to learn or develop that you didn’t plan for. If you know what you are trying to achieve through development, and you’ve discussed it with your supervisor, it makes it much easier to capitalize on those unplanned opportunities. Write down the competency or performance goal addressed the goal, activity and result.

**Development plan quality review checklist**

- One to three development goals are identified.
- Development goals are clearly linked to the department’s objectives.
- Development goals are focused on development for the current job and/or future responsibilities.
- Strengths and talents are developed as well as development needs to address gaps.
- At least one activity is included for each development goal.
- On-the-job development is used whenever possible.
- Specific completion dates are identified.
- Development activities distributed approximately 70% on-the-job development, 20% self-learning, 10% training.

When completed, plans are not set in stone. Consider them living documents that will evolve with the changing demands of work. Development plans should serve as a reminder to attend to development throughout the year.
**Individual Development Plan Template**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance goal or competency addressed</th>
<th>Development goal</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
<th>How will you measure progress or implementation of the development goal?</th>
<th>Key learning and application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Obtain from existing performance goals or from WUSTL Critical Success Factors competencies) | Do (verb) + What + Why ( Desired Outcome)  
(Describe current and desired skill or behavior. Be specific. Focus should be on current role but may also support achievement of career goals.) | Do (verb) + What + Why ( Desired Outcome)  
(How will the learning be acquired, e.g. special assignment, training, observation, coaching? Describe what, when, where, with whom) | (Manager coaching, other people, tools, funding) | (Demonstrated behaviors, follow-up meetings, debriefing after activity, sharing learning with dept., etc.) | (What insight did you gain and how did you apply it on the job?) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current:</th>
<th>Development Goal:</th>
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**Current:**

- Development Goal:
  - **Strength or Skill gap**

**Current:**

- Development Goal:
  - **Strength or Skill gap**

**Current:**

- Development Goal:
  - **Strength or Skill gap**
Date plan reviewed with manager:  

Notes from the conversation:  

Next meeting with manager:  

## Unplanned Development

Make note of any unplanned opportunities that you used to build skills or knowledge to address a competency or performance goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency or performance goal:</th>
<th>Current:</th>
<th>Activity:</th>
<th>Result:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development Goal:</td>
<td>[ ] Strength or [ ] Skill/knowledge gap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Individual Development Plan Sample

**Name:** Chris Smith  
**Current job title:** Manager  
**Date plan created:** June 17  
**Manager's name:** Lee Jones

| Performance goal or competency addressed | Development goal  
(Obtain from existing performance goals or from WUSTL Critical Success Factors competencies) | Activities  
(Do verb) + What + Why  
(Desired Outcome) | Resources needed  
(Manager coaching, other people, tools, funding) | How will you measure progress or implementation of the development goal?  
(Demonstrated behaviors, follow-up meetings, debriefing after activity, sharing learning with dept., etc.) | Key learning and application  
(What insight did you gain and how did you apply it on the job?) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Competency: Manages Execution/Delegation  
Allocates decision making and other responsibilities to the appropriate direct reports. Consideration is given to the target person's capabilities when delegation of responsibility, authority, or data gathering is contemplated. | Current: New leader for the department  
**Development Goal:** Increase knowledge of departmental team responsibilities and deliverables to facilitate effective project management in upcoming fiscal year | -Schedule one-on-one meetings with team members to discuss their roles | -Staff members  
-Strengthfinder 2.0  
-Staff files | -Completion of one-on-ones with each direct report  
-Development of ability to describe each team member's role, strengths & how he/she contributes to the goals of the department | Discussions provided both staff and me additional clarity about roles and responsibilities. There is clearly untapped potential in the group that might be useful in upcoming projects. I try to mention strengths when I see them being used by individuals. |
| Performance Goal: Coach & Develop Others  
Help staff members write individual development plans; identify development opportunities; coach others in their professional development; inspire others to excel; make continuous learning and feedback a priority | Current: Development plans aren't done by all staff  
**Development Goal:** Use coaching skills to help staff members solve their own issues and create development plans to encourage ownership of professional growth | -Attend coaching workshop  
-Use coaching skills to guide staff members in completing their development plans | -Coaching for Development and Problem Solving workshop - 7/26  
-Development plan templates  
-Staff members' time | -Course completion  
-Staff members' feedback  
-Completion of development plans by staff members | Completed course 7/26. Some development plans were already completed so will use coaching skills for those who haven't completed them. I am also using coaching rather than giving advice when staff is reluctant to address problems because they aren't confident about how to proceed. It's hard to listen sometimes. |
### Performance Goal:
Lead team charged with selecting and implementing critical research technology

**Current:** Strong team leading skills but little experience negotiating with vendors and utilizing this technology

**Development Goal:**
Develop negotiation skills and familiarity with technology in order to confidently make decisions

- Read book on negotiation skills and tactics by 8/1
- Select good negotiator to be part of the team; partner in completing the negotiations by 9/1
- Select subject matter expert to be part of the team; obtain technology summaries to study by 9/1
- Getting to Yes, Fisher, Ury & Patton or other neg. book
- Good negotiator
- Subject matter expert
- Technology summaries from SME, internet, magazines, or other sources

**Strength** or **Skill/knowledge gap**

- On-time and within budget project completion
- Timeliness of decisions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Current:</th>
<th>Activity:</th>
<th>Result:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>- Read book on negotiation skills and tactics by 8/1</td>
<td>- Asked colleague to give me feedback about anything that I do during presentations that's distracting or that makes me appear to be nervous.</td>
<td>Identified a list of distractions that I wasn’t even aware of. Went back and reviewed materials from presentation skills class. Practiced using the tips that addressed my nervous habits. Feedback from my colleague is that I don’t appear nearly as nervous as I used to. Even though it’s uncomfortable, I need to make time for practice before giving a presentation. Seems to really make a difference.</td>
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</table>

**Deadline**
Completed book 7/22. Selected negotiator and SME by 9/1. Haven't had any opportunities to negotiate with vendors by progress review date.

**Date to review progress**
10/1

**Date completed**

### Date plan reviewed with manager:
June 24

**Notes from the conversation:**
My supervisor agrees with the plan, but cautioned me that if I am asking for these development plans from staff, I need to stay on top of the implementation of them. Otherwise, it’s going to seem like just one more task that they had to do that really didn’t matter.

### Next meeting with manager:
Aug. 12

### Unplanned Development

Make note of any unplanned opportunities that you used to build skills or knowledge to address a competency or performance goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency: Oral Communication</th>
<th>Current: Uncomfortable giving presentations; fidgety, restless hands. Took presentation skills course years ago.</th>
<th>Activity: Asked colleague to give me feedback about anything that I do during presentations that’s distracting or that makes me appear to be nervous.</th>
<th>Result: Identified a list of distractions that I wasn’t even aware of. Went back and reviewed materials from presentation skills class. Practiced using the tips that addressed my nervous habits. Feedback from my colleague is that I don’t appear nearly as nervous as I used to. Even though it’s uncomfortable, I need to make time for practice before giving a presentation. Seems to really make a difference.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Goal:</strong> Decrease nervousness and develop confidence in presentation skills to earn attention and respect of listeners</td>
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- Strength or Skill/knowledge gap