

Pitt Public Health Academic Handbook Academic Year 2016-17

University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health Independent Development Plan policy

EPCC Approval on February 12, 2015

A Graduate Student Career Development Plan, also known as an Independent Development Plan (IDP), is a tool for helping students and advisors outline and discuss short-term and long-term objectives to guide the student's professional development. Graduate School of Public Health doctoral students and advisors are required to complete an IDP at least annually, typically timed to coincide with the required annual doctoral committee meeting. An IDP template is available at www.publichealth.pitt.edu/IDP, but students and advisors may substitute any other form that meets the same purpose (e.g. department-specific templates or templates provided by professional societies).

Completed IDP forms should be kept in student files at the department level. They should be treated as confidential student records. The Report on Requirements form for the doctoral preliminary exam and dissertation overview includes a checkbox that the committee should use to certify that an IDP has been completed within the six months prior to the exam.

IDPs are intended as a career development tool, and are not a substitute for a GSR evaluation that assesses job performance. For students whose GSR is closely tied to their dissertation research, it may be possible to combine the two, but it is still necessary to assess academic development and job performance separately.

IDPs are not required for master's students, but they are highly recommended. The template at www.publichealth.pitt.edu/IDP is suitable for master's students as well as doctoral students.