



Universität Hamburg

DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

FACULTY

OF MATHEMATICS, INFORMATICS
AND NATURAL SCIENCES

Introductory Phase
familiarization with
research topic and
design of project
outline

Research Phase

adjustment and
reflection of
research project

Graduate Phase

Completion of
dissertation and
exploration of
future career plans

my doctoral degree

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

As a doctoral candidate, you need to own your education!

Obtaining a doctoral degree requires autonomous and independent research that provides new insights.

The success and the quality of your research depends on your ability to receive training and career guidance. Therefore, we encourage you to regularly analyze and monitor your progress with the help of this Individual Development Plan (IDP) and to share it with your supervisor(s).

The IDP, which is available for you as a printed booklet and in digital form on our website, consists of three parts tailored to the stages of your doctoral project:



Based on your self-assessment, we will be able to provide you with guidance in soft skills and specialized qualification programs. Please, check the suggestions in the IDP and make use of the offers proposed by Universität Hamburg (UHH) and others for your personal development. The competences and qualifications that you gather during your doctoral education will open up a wide range of career paths.

Seize the opportunity: record your achievements, receive feedback, and set goals for your future.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP MY IDP?

1. Get an IDP template for yourself!

It is easy to get lost in details; however, it is essential that you always keep the bigger picture in mind. Use the questions in the IDP template to specify key points for yourself and to foster a mentoring relationship with your supervisor(s).

2. Meet with your supervisor(s).

You should initiate requests for advice and criticism. After you have completed the skills assessment, contact your supervisor(s) and schedule a first meeting for the discussion of your IDP in order to develop a roadmap for your professional development. Ideally, this should happen within the first semester of your doctorate - but it's never too late to get started!

3. Jointly discuss and refine your IDP.

The IDP highlights core issues that will most likely arise during your doctoral training. You may use it to structure and promote an honest and open exchange with your supervisor(s).

4. Establish clear steps and implement your plan.

The last section of the IDP invites you to set specific objectives for the coming year. Keep this plan at hand for reference and reflect on your development.

BENEFITS of the IDP

With the help of the IDP you can

- ☑ identify short-term goals to gain important skills for your PhD journey
- ☑ align expectations and clarify responsibilities to avoid conflicts
- ☑ jumpstart long-term career planning

YEAR 1: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

What are central questions and hypotheses for my doctorate?

Set main goals, structure the project into small steps and develop a clear plan how to proceed in the first year.

Keep it simple – note only key points.



What skills and resources are necessary?

Most projects will develop over time and become more specific. Ask yourself if you have the necessary skills and access to the required resources (e.g., lab space, appliances, software, and literature).



Who may be peers or mentors in the beginning?

Establish your network. It may be helpful to seek advice from peers (e.g., how to start, where to find, whom to contact etc.). Join the MIN PhD club to get to know your peers. Try to figure out what kind of guidance you need and can expect from your supervisor(s).



Do I know the rules of Good Scientific Practice (GSP) bylaws of UHH?

Get acquainted with the rules (e.g., on how to properly store data, who owns the data, who should be an author on your publications, where does scientific misconduct start). Talk to your supervisor(s), mentors and other doctoral candidates about these topics and register for a course on good scientific practice.



Yes
No
Not sure
Attended a GSP course

How do I finance my doctorate?

Doctoral candidates in Germany often work part-time as academic assistants or research associates. The different funding schemes have consequences for your personal workload and time line. Keep in mind, research project and doctoral project are not always identical!

Financial support provided through:



Institutional position
Scholarship
Third party funded position



Until:

Others (please specify):

How do I want to publish my doctoral project?



Monography

Cumulative dissertation



Minimum peer reviewed publications:

First authorship:

What is the timeline for my doctorate?



Start:

Expected end:

Weekly working hours:

What type of career do I desire?

Teaching, academic research, consulting, non-academic research, writing, research management, others



YEAR 1: ACADEMIC SKILLS

You gain relevant competences and skills besides scientific knowledge during your doctoral project.

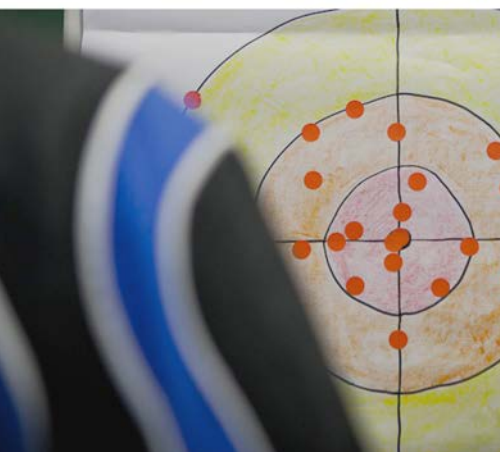
Reflecting on these regularly is important to identify strengths and developmental needs.

Take an honest look at yourself; compare your skills and qualities to those a doctoral candidate ready to defend their dissertation should have. Use the form on the right to evaluate your personal, current ability level from weak (--) to strong (++). You may skip individual lines, if there is no basis for evaluation, or use the blank spaces to add other skills.

It is a challenging task to do this assessment, especially at the beginning of your research studies. Talking to mentors, peers, family and friends about their views might be helpful. Ask your supervisor(s) as well if they agree or disagree with your judgement.

The table lists core competences of successful scientists based on the so-called [Researchers Development Framework \(Vitae®\)](#). It is just one approach to group the multi-faceted skills and attributes of researchers. In fact, there are many other ways of clustering these abilities and the list is not exhaustive. However, it may give you an idea how broad the expertise is that you will most likely gain during your doctoral training!

Visit www.geventis.uni-hamburg.de, www.hra-hamburg.de or [Career Development Cycle of the human resources department \(UHH\)](#) and register for courses matching the feedback and your self-assessment.



Hit the mark! Set up target skills.

	--	-	+	++
Knowledge & Intellectual Abilities				
Subject knowledge				
Broad scientific knowledge				
Creative and innovative thinking				
Problem solving				
Analytical and critical thinking				

Personal Effectiveness				
Identifying career opportunities				
Time management				
Networking				
Responsibility and self-reflection				
Keeping documents up-to-date				
Creating a work-life balance				

Engagement & Impact				
Scientific writing				
Taking constructive criticism				
Presenting research				
Leading and motivating others				
Giving constructive feedback				
Teaching				
Public engagement				

Professionalism & Project Management				
Understanding authorship practice				
Understanding data ownership				
Demonstrating responsible conduct				
Identifying/managing conflict of interest				
Upholding commitments/deadlines				
Project planning and delivery				

YEAR 1: ACTION PLAN

1. Communication

What is the best way to set meetings? How often are you going to meet with your supervisor(s) to discuss your research progress?



regularly

on request

once a week

every half year

once a month/year

2. Target Skills

What skills did you identify as important developmental targets for the coming year? Check your self-assessment and point out at least two targets.



3. Activities

What meetings, workshops and conferences do you plan to visit?



Do you plan a research stay abroad during your doctoral project?

What teaching or comparable activities do you plan to do?

What summer schools, soft skill courses and/or seminars do you plan to attend?

What collaborations or internships do you plan to initiate?

4. Funding

Do you need additional financial support for consumables or for your planned activities such as research stays abroad? Are you aware of the many different funding options? Check out the [MINGZ](#) website for further information.



5. Additional actions

There are numerous other options to make the most of your doctorate such as (online) networking, involvement in outreach work, work-shadowing at Universität Hamburg etc. Start to think about these little extras and list things you would like to try.



6. Follow-ups

When are you going to discuss the next level IDP?



7. More

Show your project plan to other doctoral candidates, students or people in the department. Learn to ask for feedback and constructive criticism.



**LOOKING FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT
AROUND YOUR DOCTORATE?**



**YOUR MIN GRADUATE CENTER (MINGZ)
IS HERE TO HELP!**



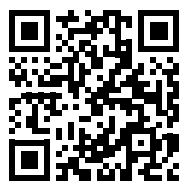
MIN PhD Gateway



MINGZ FAQ



MINGZ PhD Newsletter



MINGZ Twitter Channel

It's time to think about what you have accomplished so far. You are now probably familiar with your specific research topic and quite busy with data collection or analysis. Check again your tasks and aims; this will help you to remain focused despite the distractions of daily work. Compare your personal progress with those goals while updating your IDP. Such a self-referential feedback process allows you to set up new targets and increases your chance to reach your goals.

HOW DO I UPDATE MY IDP?

1. Check, compare and reassess your situation!

It is easy to get lost in details; however, it is essential that you keep the bigger picture in mind. Use the questions in the IDP template to specify key points for yourself and to foster a mentoring relationship with your supervisor(s).

2. Meet with your supervisor(s).

You should initiate requests for advice and criticism. Please contact your supervisor(s) and schedule a meeting for the discussion of your IDP in order to continue the roadmap for your professional development at the start of your second year.

3. Jointly discuss and refine your IDP.

The IDP highlights core issues that will most likely arise during your doctoral training. You may use it to structure and promote an honest and open exchange with your supervisor(s).

4. Establish clear steps and implement your plan.

The last section of the IDP invites you to set specific objectives for the upcoming year. Keep this plan at hand for reference and reflect on your development.

YEAR 2: RESEARCH PROGRESS

What are the central questions and hypotheses for your doctorate?

Check your IDP from year 1 and re-evaluate the project plan according to your findings and expertise.



Which goals were successful? Which were not? Why?

Evaluate the status of your work; identify what you can optimize.



Who may be peers or mentors in the research phase?

Think about who may be interested in your research. Contact peers from your field and scientific community.



Which accomplishments of the past year are helpful for your career development?

List publications, articles, presentations, teaching, mentoring of Bachelor/Master students etc.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- ...

How satisfied are you with your achievements of the past year?

List your target skills from the previous year and evaluate them on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being highly satisfied and 1 highly dissatisfied. Think about what is necessary to increase the score of specific points.



Did you experience unexpected or unusual challenges?

Describe potential difficulties and actions you may have taken to meet these challenges.



Are there any factors that you are concerned about, which may negatively affect your project?



YEAR 2: DEVELOPMENT

What is your long-term career goal?

What would you like to do in 5-10 years?

Only a minority of doctoral researchers stays in academia. There are plenty of other great career options!



What type of career do you desire?

Do you have more than one idea?

List plan A, B, C etc.



Have you started thinking about steps to help you reach these goals?

What are essential requirements for career paths in academia, administration or industry?

List thoughts and questions.



When will you start searching for a job or apply for a postdoc position?

It is advisable to explore favourite career options early!



What training or skillset is required to reach your career goals?

Are you aware of the workshops and trainings for doctoral candidates at Universität Hamburg or the Hamburg Research Academy?



How may your supervisor(s) help you to achieve your goals?

Talk to your supervisor(s) and other mentors about different career options.



YEAR 2: ACADEMIC SKILLS

You gain relevant competences and skills besides scientific knowledge during your doctoral project.

Reflecting on these regularly is important to identify strengths and developmental needs.



Write it down! Make a plan.

Take an honest look at yourself; compare your skills and qualities to those a doctoral candidate ready to defend their dissertation should have. Use the form to the right to evaluate your personal, current ability level from weak (--) to strong (++). You may skip individual lines, if there is no basis for evaluation, or use the blank spaces to add other skills.

The table lists core competences of successful scientists based on the so-called [Researchers Development Framework \(Vitae®\)](#). It is just one approach to group the multi-faceted skills and attributes of researchers. In fact, there are many other ways of clustering these abilities and the list is not exhaustive. However, it may give you an idea how broad the expertise is that you will most likely gain during your doctoral training!

Take the chance and use online resources such as [MyIDP](#) to further analyze and strengthen your professional development or check out these career-planning tools:

MyIDP: myidp.sciencecareers.org/

Researchers Development Framework:
vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development

	--	-	+	++
Knowledge & Intellectual Abilities				
Subject knowledge				
Broad scientific knowledge				
Creative and innovative thinking				
Problem solving				
Analytical and critical thinking				

Personal Effectiveness				
Identifying career opportunities				
Time management				
Networking				
Responsibility and self-reflection				
Keeping documents up-to-date				
Creating a work-life balance				

Engagement & Impact				
Scientific writing				
Taking constructive criticism				
Presenting research				
Leading and motivating others				
Giving constructive feedback				
Teaching				
Public engagement				

Professionalism & Project Management				
Understanding authorship practice				
Understanding data ownership				
Demonstrating responsible conduct				
Identifying/managing conflict of interest				
Upholding commitments/deadlines				
Project planning and delivery				

YEAR 2: ACTION PLAN

1. Timeline

When do you plan to finish your doctoral project?



Disputation:
(Month/Year)

2. Target Skills

What skills did you identify as important developmental targets for the coming year?
Check your self-assessment and point out at least two targets.



3. Activities

What meetings, workshops and conferences do you plan to visit?



Do you plan a research stay abroad during your doctoral project?

What teaching or comparable activities do you plan to do?

What summer schools, soft skill courses and/or seminars do you plan to attend?

What collaborations or internships do you plan to initiate?

4. Funding

Do you need additional financial support for consumables or for your planned activities such as research stays abroad? Do you need to request an extension of your funding or submit progress reports?

**5. Additional actions**

There are numerous other options to make the most of your doctorate such as (online) networking, involvement in outreach work, work-shadowing at Universität Hamburg etc. Start to think about these little extras and list activities you would like to try.

**6. Follow-ups**

When are you going to discuss the next level IDP and your career development?

**7. More**

Is there anything else you would like to point out?



The Individual Development Plan is based on the approach of a classic **Career Development Cycle**, which comprises five areas:



- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Reflect | Clarify your personal interests, values, skills, and motivation. |
| Explore | Explore fields of activity and familiarize yourself with new areas. |
| Define | Define your professional goals and plan the next steps. |
| Qualify | Refresh and expand your knowledge and skills. |
| Implement | Work towards achieving your goals and apply all you have learned. |

The strategic HR department accompanies you in developing your career individually, personally and strategically.

Do you have questions? Get in touch with us via
karriereentwicklung@uni-hamburg.de



Take the time to think about what you have accomplished so far. You are familiar with your specific research topic and you know how your project fits into your research field as a whole. Furthermore, you have probably taken the first successful steps towards completing your dissertation. Check again your tasks and aims; this will help you to remain focused. Compare your personal progress with those goals while updating your IDP. Such a self-referential feedback process allows you to set new targets and increases your chances of reaching your goals. Thinking about your future career at this stage is critical for a smooth transition into academia, industry and beyond.

HOW DO I UPDATE MY IDP?

1. Check, compare and reassess your situation!

It is easy to get lost in details; however, it is essential that you keep the bigger picture in mind. Use the questions in the IDP template to specify key points for yourself and to foster a mentoring relationship with your supervisor.

2. Meet with your supervisor(s).

You should initiate requests for advice and criticism. Please contact your supervisor(s) and schedule a meeting for the discussion of your IDP in order to continue the roadmap for your professional development.

3. Jointly discuss and refine your IDP.

The IDP highlights core issues that will most likely arise during your doctoral training. You may use it to structure and promote an honest and open exchange with your supervisor(s).

4. Establish clear steps and implement your plan.

The last section of the IDP invites you to set specific objectives for the upcoming year. Keep this plan at hand for reference and reflect on your development.

YEAR 3/4: RESEARCH PROGRESS

Do you have a precise plan and deadline for your project?

Try to list all open tasks that are relevant for the finalization of your dissertation. Use deadlines for the individual steps and set a final date.



How satisfied are you with your progress?

Do you think you will be able to complete the project on time? Evaluate the status of your research; identify what you can skip or modify.



Who can be your mentors in the graduation phase?

Share your results and thoughts, promote discussion and open up conversations. All of this will increase the value and impact of your research.



Which accomplishments of the past year are helpful for your career development?

List publications, articles, presentations, teaching, mentoring of Bachelor/Master students etc.



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- ...

How satisfied are you with your achievements of the past year?

List your target skills from the previous year and evaluate them on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being highly satisfied and 1 highly dissatisfied. Think about what is necessary to increase the score of specific points.



Did you experience unexpected or unusual challenges?

Describe potential difficulties and actions you may have taken to meet these challenges.



Are there any factors that you are concerned about, which may negatively affect your project?



YEAR 3/4: DEVELOPMENT

What is your long-term career goal?

What would you like to do in 5 to 10 years?

Only a minority of doctoral researchers stays in academia. There are plenty of other great career options!



What type of career do you desire?

Do you have more than one idea?

List plan A, B, C etc.



Have you started thinking about steps to help you reach these goals?

What are essential requirements for career paths in academia, administration or industry?

List thoughts and questions.



When will you start searching for a job or apply for a postdoc position?

It is advisable to explore favourite career options early!



What training or skillset is required to reach your career goals?

Are you aware of the workshops and trainings for doctoral candidates at Universität Hamburg or the Hamburg Research Academy?



How may your supervisor(s) help you to achieve your goals?

Talk to your supervisor(s) and other mentors about different career options. Try to learn from their insights and experiences.



YEAR 3/4: ACADEMIC SKILLS

You gain relevant competences and skills besides scientific knowledge during your doctoral project.

Reflecting on these regularly is important to identify strengths and developmental needs.



Inform yourself! Seize the opportunities.

Take an honest look at yourself; compare your skills and qualities to those a doctoral candidate ready to defend their dissertation should have. Use the given form on the right to evaluate your personal, current ability level from weak (--) to strong (++). You may skip individual lines, if there is no basis for evaluation, or use the blank spaces to add other skills.

Several institutions in Hamburg offer individual advising sessions, events and workshops for doctoral researchers:

UHH – Department 6: Human Resources

www.uni-hamburg.de/en/uhh/organisation/praesidialverwaltung/personal/karriereentwicklung.html

UHH – Department 4: Research Management and Funding

www.uni-hamburg.de/en/forschung/nachwuchs

UHH – Career Center

www.uni-hamburg.de/en/career-center.html

HRA – Hamburg Research Academy

www.hra-hamburg.de/en/promovierende

UHH – Konfliktprävention

www.kus.uni-hamburg.de/en/themen/gesundheit-familie-soziales-gleichstellung/soziale-beratungsangebote/konflikt-praevention-beratung.html

	--	-	+	++
Knowledge & Intellectual Abilities				
Subject knowledge				
Broad scientific knowledge				
Creative and innovative thinking				
Problem solving				
Analytical and critical thinking				

Personal Effectiveness				
Identifying career opportunities				
Time management				
Networking				
Responsibility and self-reflection				
Keeping documents up-to-date				
Creating a work-life balance				

Engagement & Impact				
Scientific writing				
Taking constructive criticism				
Presenting research				
Leading and motivating others				
Giving constructive feedback				
Teaching				
Public engagement				

Professionalism & Project Management				
Understanding authorship practice				
Understanding data ownership				
Demonstrating responsible conduct				
Identifying/managing conflict of interest				
Upholding commitments/deadlines				
Project planning and delivery				

YEAR 3/4: ACTION PLAN

1. Timeline

When do you plan to finish your doctoral project?



Disputation:
(Month/Year)

2. Target Skills

What skills did you identify as important developmental targets for the coming year? Check your self-assessment and point out at least two targets.



3. Activities

What meetings, workshops and conferences do you plan to visit?



Do you plan a research stay abroad during your doctoral project?

What teaching or comparable activities do you plan to do?

What summer schools, soft skill courses and/or seminars do you plan to attend?

What collaborations or internships do you plan to initiate?

4. Funding

Do you need additional funding? Is the financial support set until the end of your doctorate?



5. Additional actions

There are numerous other options to make the most of your doctorate such as (online) networking, involvement in outreach work, work-shadowing at Universität Hamburg etc. Start to think about these little extras and list things you would like to try.



6. Follow-ups

When are you and your supervisor(s) going to discuss your professional development again?



7. More

Is there anything else you would like to point out?



Final Year: Fix deadlines and announce them to others!

	January	February	March	April	May	June
1	1	1	1	1	1	
2	2	2	2	2	2	
3	3	3	3	3	3	
4	4	4	4	4	4	
5	5	5	5	5	5	
6	6	6	6	6	6	
7	7	7	7	7	7	
8	8	8	8	8	8	
9	9	9	9	9	9	
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26	26	26	26	26	26	
27	27	27	27	27	27	
28	28	28	28	28	28	
29	29	29	29	29	29	
30		30	30	30	30	
31		31		31		

Set dates for specific tasks (e.g., check regulations, get approvals, write sections).

July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
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30	30	30	30	30	30
31	31		31		31

UNIVERSITÄT HAMBURG
MIN GRADUATE CENTER

“The individual development plan (IDP) is a career planning tool that aims to assist PhD trainees in self-assessing skills, exploring career paths, developing short- and long-term career goals, and creating action plans to achieve those goals.”

(F1000Research 2018, 7:1132)

„The IDP helps me to review past, focus on present and conquer future challenges of my PhD.“

(Lisa Amelung, PhD candidate in Biology, Universität Hamburg)

References: This IDP is adapted from resources published by the Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology (FASEB), Science Careers, Stanford Biosciences and the National Postdoctoral Association (USA).

Contact: probe.min@uni-hamburg.de
Info: www.promovieren.uni-hamburg.de/EN/MIN

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www.min.uni-hamburg.de/en/min-graduierenzentrum



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