

## Elements of an effective individual development plan

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Accredited institutions must establish annual faculty development plans to enhance faculty expertise in the areas of instructional skills and content knowledge. In most institutions, the individual development plan is primarily used to schedule, record and document an instructor's developmental activities. The development plan is typically driven by planned institutional activities followed by an explanation as why participation in the listed activities meets the instructor's needs.

An effective development plan must start with the identification of individual goals to be achieved. These goals should be performance based and measurable. The established goals should then drive the process of identifying and planning the instructor's developmental activities. This simple but crucial step is often missing in most individual development plans.

Employee development is not a "one size fit all" process. Instructors must take ownership in planning, creating and implementing their own individual development plans. Your role is to provide them with a consistent but customizable format as well as the resources needed to achieve their goals and objectives.

Below are suggested components for an effective individual development plan:

**Goals:** Instructors list the performance goals that they have identified in consultation with their coach. Each identified goal includes a brief description on how accomplishing the goal will benefit the instructor, the students and the institution.

**Activities:** In collaboration with their coach, instructors identify and plan the developmental activities that will help them achieve their established goals. Each entered activity must be linked to one or more goals and the document should allow for categorization (and sub-categorization) of the activities in the areas of instructional skills, content knowledge and personal growth.

**Barriers:** Instructors identify the potential barriers that may get in the way of completing their planned activities and accomplishing their goals. They note down what they can do to manage or overcome the impact of each barrier.

**Sources of Support:** Instructors identify the support resources they need to accomplish their goals and note down how each support will be provided.

**Action Plan:** The entered goals, activities, barriers, and sources of support are used to create a personalized action plan for the instructor. The action plan should not only include the planned completion date for each activity, but allow the instructor to enter the actual completion date as well.

**Progress:** Throughout the year, instructors note the benchmarks that demonstrate progress toward their specific goals. A benchmark is an interim milestone and/or checkpoint such as the completion of a step or task. For each benchmark, instructors note what is working well and what is not.

**Activity Report:** An up-to-date record of an instructor's completed activities must be available to the instructor and his/her coach at any time during the development period.

**Accomplished Goals:** Once all activities linked to a particular goal are completed, relevant information and data must be entered to assess whether or not the goal has actually been accomplished. The assessment process could include self-evaluation, evaluation from the instructor's coach, and a summary of relevant student evaluations. In each evaluation, the outcomes should reflect the performance improvement achieved over the period of the development plan.

The above components work together to create a comprehensive individual development plan and a computerized system can be used to manage the working document. For example, at MaxKnowledge, we have developed a web-based software to create and manage individual development plans. This software is integrated within our employee development solutions at the Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) and includes an export function to output completed forms (in standard PDF format) for submission to accrediting agencies.

Regardless of your document management approach, an effective individual development should serve as a platform to link goals to performance.

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