IDP Policies

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Policy Statements

The official policy on Individual Development Plans is stated on the ORA website. The policies (as of Apr 3, 2015) are copied below:

**IDPs for PhD Students**

1. Brandeis University recognizes that PhD students may further their training by carrying out independent research, teaching, or other activities, which may be funded by a sponsor.
2. All PhD students at Brandeis must have a mentor. At the early stages of training, this may be a faculty member appointed by the graduate program. At later stages, this may be a faculty member or researcher who is supervising and supporting the student's research or training.
3. Brandeis recognizes the importance of planning a course of action that will assist PhD students in identifying and pursuing career opportunities upon graduation, and in developing the expertise and skills to be successful in their future careers.
4. Brandeis recognizes that this approach should be tailored to individual scholars, especially later in their graduate studies. Therefore, Brandeis strongly recommends that scholars and their mentors work together to craft an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The content of the plan should be appropriate to the student’s stage of progress through graduate study. The development of a plan is required for PhD students supported by NIH or NSF funds.
5. Career objectives, and necessarily the plan for achieving them, may change over time. Brandeis recommends that mentors and scholars review progress on the IDP at least annually and make adjustments to it as necessary.
6. Mentors and scholars should individually confirm that the plan exists and has been reviewed as part of the annual review or reappointment process.

**IDPs for Postdocs**

1. Brandeis University recognizes postdoctoral scholars as a class of appointments of limited duration that facilitate the process whereby scholars, having attained the highest degree in their field, continue to further their training by carrying out independent research, teaching, or other activities, funded by a sponsor.
2. All postdoctoral scholars at Brandeis must have a mentor. Under most circumstances, this will be a faculty member whose grant or unrestricted funds sponsor the project.
3. Brandeis recognizes the importance of planning a course of action that will assist postdoctoral scholars in identifying and pursuing career opportunities at the end of their postdoctoral appointments, and in developing the expertise and skills to be successful in their future careers.
4. Brandeis recognizes this approach must be tailored to individual scholars. Therefore, Brandeis strongly recommends that scholars and their mentors work together to craft an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for each postdoctoral scholar. The development of a plan is required for postdocs supported by NIH or NSF funds.
5. Career objectives, and necessarily the plan for achieving them, may change over time. Brandeis recommends that mentors and scholars review progress on the IDP at least annually and make adjustments to it as necessary.
6. Mentors and scholars should individually confirm that the plan exists and has been reviewed as part of the annual review or reappointment process.

Comments

Implementation

- Each individual graduate program may provide additional guidance to students and mentors in how to develop IDPs.
- In general, the Division of Science emphasizes the importance of frank, in-person discussions between trainees and mentors to discuss and refine a plan for each trainee.
- Such discussions should be annual if not more frequent.
- It is up to each office to decide if and how to collect written copies of an IDP for each trainee.

Other Research Staff

With respect to other employees in research labs who are neither postdocs nor grad students (ex. technicians, research assistants, research specialists),

- Other staff are not covered by this policy, however
- Such staff are covered by the Brandeis Office of Human Resources policy on annual performance reviews. A performance review is a good opportunity to discuss career goals with your supervisor.