



INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Procedure defines policies, procedures, and responsibilities for preparing Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for all employees.

2.0 Reference Documents

- a. [The Government Employees Training Act, Title 5, United States Code, Chapter 41 and related guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management;](#)
- b. [Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Part 410, Training;](#)
- c. [Title 5 CFR, Part 412, Supervisory, Management, and Executive Supervisory Development;](#)
- d. [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Departmental Regulation 4040-410, Creating Individual Development Plans \(IDP\);](#) and
- e. [USDA Departmental Regulation 4040-430, Performance Management, Sections 9a\(7\); and 9c.](#)

3.0 Background

- 3.1 IDPs can be an effective tool for the development of USDA employees. As part of long term career planning, employees, supervisors and training managers can use IDPs to outline training and more importantly, create activities that will lead to a more engaged, effective and skilled workforce. IDPs are important parts of succession planning by helping employees develop skills that will be needed in the future. The use of IDPs can help close employee competency gaps. IDPs can help agencies create a culture that encourages, supports, and invests in the short- and long-term development of their employees. Professional development is an ongoing process to ensure employees are staying current—if not one step ahead—in their fields and mission-critical competencies. Planning for continuous development must be anchored to the agency's mission, goals, objectives, and needs, as well as be tied to the employee's work and career goals.

4.0 Policy

- 4.1 It is Quality Assessment Division (QAD) policy that all employees are afforded an opportunity to reach their full potential in the performance of official duties. IDPs



are an important tool to help develop effective and engaged employees. All QAD employees in cooperation with their immediate supervisor must annually discuss and develop an IDP. The supervisor offers input based on the employee's position, performance and the QAD strategic plan. The employee offers input based on familiarity with their own strengths, limitations, and short- and long-range goals. While the supervisor and the employee have joint responsibility for developing and executing the IDP, the responsibility of ensuring completion of the training or experiences that support the plan's objectives is the sole responsibility of the employee.

5.0 Procedures

5.1 As part of the employee performance evaluation, the employee and supervisor should discuss the employee's developmental objectives and specific plans for accomplishing the objectives. After the discussion, the employee and the supervisor should develop an IDP which can be implemented over the next year. The plan can be modified as necessary during the year. The use of "My Plan" in AgLearn is used for development of IDPs. IDP activities are not limited to activities requiring formal training or expenditure of funds. Most informal training and especially self-guided on-line and technical training may be completed during the normal workday. Supervisors and training managers are available to help identify creative activities to assist in meeting your goal(s). If deemed appropriate by the supervisor, time for formal training may be scheduled as workload permits.

5.2 Employee Responsibilities

5.2.1 Prior to the IDP discussion with the supervisor, the employee should compare his/her own ideas and career objectives with QAD mission and strategic plan, then establish tentative, long-range (3-5 year) career goals and short-range (1-2 year) career goals. Employees should also consider the following in preparing the IDP:

- a. Projected skills or competencies QAD may need over the next several years.
- b. The knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to improve or enhance present job performance or meet requirements for a career goal.
- c. His/her present skill level in the desired areas.
- d. The options for developing needed competencies (i.e., job assignments, self-development activities, formal training, etc.).



5.3 Supervisor Responsibilities

- 5.3.1 Determining the knowledge, skills, and abilities the employee needs to improve to enhance present job performance.
- 5.3.2 Reviewing the needs and priorities of QAD.
- 5.3.3 Considering specific developmental assignments and training which might allow the employee to meet or exceed developmental goals.

5.4 Methods for Accomplishing IDP Goals

- 5.4.1 The IDP should reflect an equal commitment by the employee and the Agency. IDPs may include self-development, on-the-job training, formal training, and developmental activities. A good IDP recognizes all four methods as a process for achieving goals, and does not rely only on formal training. In fact, the IDP may not include formal training at all. It is important that the employee keep in mind that all activities appearing on the IDP must be related to improving their performance of official duties.

5.4.2 Self-Development

- a. Any self-directed or self-initiated learning including completing study guides, taking AgLearn courses or other on-line courses. Self-development could also include the employee reviewing completed work for accuracy, identifying any weaknesses and developing a strategy to strengthen weaknesses. Other examples of self-development include viewing on-line videos, listening to on-line books and audio tapes, taking correspondence courses, being a mentor, reading books or articles, updating or preparing new study materials, or participating in off-duty course work activities.
- b. Supervisors and managers will encourage and assist you where possible to keep your skills, knowledge, and abilities current. A number of on-line courses are available via AgLearn and the QAD internal website.

5.4.3 On-the-Job Training (OJT)

- a. Training conducted by the supervisor or designated staff member for individuals or small groups. The employee is counseled and coached while performing official duties of the job. OJT is suitable not only for the new employee, but also for the more experienced employees. This method can be used to teach or expose



employees to new procedures, tasks, technology, standards, instructions, etc. Examples include, computer based tutorials, performing in a detail position, participating in special projects, etc.

5.4.4 Detail Assignments

- a. Short term assignment to develop skills which the employee is unable to develop at his/her duty-point. Examples of detail assignments include certification, auditing, and veal, calf, and/or lamb grading.

5.4.5 Development of Technical or Study Aides

- a. The employee develops a product that will assist in the performance of the job while at the same time serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information. Examples of developmental activities include preparing study guides, preparing or updating instructions, special work projects, or mentoring new employees.
- b. Additional information about IDPs can be found at:

<http://www.idp.usda.gov/>

<http://www.idp.usda.gov/IDPResources.htm>