Microbiology
KU Medical
Center

Individual Faculty Career Development Plan

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This guide is designed to aid either early career faculty or established tenure-track faculty members in long-term career planning. The guide describes a voluntary process, which is strongly recommended for individuals beginning their professional careers. For mid-career and established faculty members who are considering significant changes in their responsibilities or career goals (eg., assuming substantial administrative responsibilities or significantly changing their research field of expertise), the guide can also assist in thoughtfully and systematically thinking through these important decisions. The Individual Faculty Career Development Plan (IFCDP) should not be confused with the annual performance review for faculty conducted with the department chair. The IFCDP takes a longer career view designed to facilitate career progression, rather than the achievement of annual performance objectives. An effort has also been made to distinguish this process of career planning from the peer review process that contributes to decisions on awarding of tenure and academic rank advancement or the process of post-tenure review. It is hoped that this awareness of the parallel processes of career development and performance review will minimize duplication and facilitate an open process that best serves the faculty member.

Reflection

It may be wise for the faculty member who is considering changes in career plans first to reflect on the following questions:

What do you value in terms of your way of life? Are there personal, family, community and career components of your life that you wish to maintain, decrease or increase? What aspects of each would you like to change in the short- and long-term?

What are you driven to accomplish as an academic scientist, educator or administrator? What do you see in the varied missions of your department or institution that are particularly attractive to you? Are you, your mentor/colleague advisor and chairperson in agreement on how best to balance these aspects of your career? Have you had the necessary conversations about your aspirations?

Is it time to begin doing something new or stop doing something that no longer rewards you? Again, consider the impact of these decisions on all aspects of your life.

Does the way in which you are allocating your time and energy align with your values and goals? Quite often we do not think through whether time- and energy-consuming activities move us forward toward our desired objectives. Sometimes, minor changes in effort distribution can make significant differences in your career and personal life.

Have you seriously evaluated your own professional strengths and areas that need improvement as a means of improving your likelihood of success? How have you systematically set about capitalizing on the former and improving in areas that need some attention? Do you currently have a set of development goals and a timetable that guides your plan to improve? What is the timeline for your desired goals?

Are your goals achievable? Are your goals **SMART** (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**elevant and **t**imely)? What are your benchmarks? Are these standards relevant to your particular setting and personal life situation?

Have you had conversations with others about your career direction or the changes in direction you would like to accomplish? Where have you regularly sought advice in the area of career planning? What is the process by which you effect these changes and how do you monitor progress?

Some of these questions are highly personal in the sense that the answers to them are unique to you as an individual. Others are commonly encountered across careers and may be considered by all faculty members on a regular or intermittent basis. What follows is a process, which is intended to guide you through professional goal-setting and assure the implementation of the changes you have prioritized for your career.

Overview

The process outlined here for developing, implementing and revising a career development plan prescribes roles for the individual, mentor or colleague advisor, and department chair.

	Faculty Member	Mentor or Colleague Advisor	Department Chair
Step 1	Self-assessment of skills and current status	Review of skills self-assessment	--
Step 2	Stating career goals	Review goals and relevant benchmarks	--
Step 3	Implement goals by specifying milestones and timelines	Review plans for implementation and timelines	Review with faculty member and mentor the implementation plan
Step 4	Annually review goals, progress toward goals and need for revisions	Annually review revisions in goals and revised timelines	Review goals and identify opportunities and resources

Because the design, implementation and revision of a faculty career development plan occurs in parallel with the School of Medicine annual performance review as well as the pre- and post-tenure reviews that determine rank advancement, an effort needs to made to assure that faculty members are hearing a consistent message as to where to place their efforts and whether appropriate progress is being made. It is the responsibility of the department chair to assure that these various processes operate independently, but synergistically. At the same time, each faculty member is in a unique position to see inconsistencies in advice he/she is receiving and has an obligation to make those instances known so as to improve each of the processes. Perhaps the best way to think about the differences between these three processes is to consider outcomes. The IFCDP is designed to facilitate long-term career planning and development in collaboration with a mentor or faculty colleague advisor. Annual performance review assures those faculties are setting annual performance goals and making adjustments in effort distribution that are consistent with the missions of the department and the efforts of their colleagues. Peer review for promotion and tenure is a process that recognizes specific stages in career advancement associated with a long-term institutional commitment (tenure) or advancement in academic rank.

Another way by which performance evaluations and career development planning differ is in the direction of the review. The first involves looking back on a performance year or other period of time and planning performance over a comparable future period of time.

Career planning is a process of imagining the future in a broad sense, the goals that will provide the most direct path to that future and holding oneself accountable to certain milestones along the way. Often, those milestones can go beyond a one-year timeframe.

Self-assessment

Faculty members can begin by evaluating their strengths and areas in need of improvement using the following scoring scale:

1 = No improvement necessary
2 = Could use a refresher
3 = Need for specific skills development
4 = Have only the minimum of skills
5 = Need to start from the beginning

You should use the full range of scores and should have some 1 or 2 scores as well as 4 or 5 scores in each category.

Skills Category	**Specific Skills**	**Self-Assessment**				
Research Skills	Designing long-term research objectives and studies	1	2	3	4	5
	Analytical skills, including statistical analyses	1	2	3	4	5
	Problem-solving and trouble-shooting	1	2	3	4	5
	Creativity; recognizing and developing new research directions	1	2	3	4	5
	Developing and working in effective collaborations	1	2	3	4	5
	Data management	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching Skills	Envisioning and designing effective instruction/courses	1	2	3	4	5
	Aligning personal teaching with program goals	1	2	3	4	5
	Teaching in large or small groups	1	2	3	4	5
	Developing personal teaching skills	1	2	3	4	5
	Using educational technology	1	2	3	4	5
	Developing effective assessments of learning	1	2	3	4	5
	Mentoring students and postdoctoral fellows	1	2	3	4	5
Professional Skills	Grant writing and securing research funding	1	2	3	4	5
	Manuscript writing and submitting for publication	1	2	3	4	5
	Serving as a mentor or a mentee	1	2	3	4	5
	Oral presentation and other forms of communication	1	2	3	4	5
	Seeking scientific and professional advice	1	2	3	4	5

	Negotiating difficult conversations	1	2	3	4	5
	Talent recruiting, selection and management	1	2	3	4	5
	Conflict management and resolution	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership and Management Skills	Leading and motivating others	1	2	3	4	5
	Evaluating and managing personnel	1	2	3	4	5
	Organizing and managing projects; setting and meeting timelines and deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
	Managing and motivating a research team	1	2	3	4	5
	Providing constructive feedback	1	2	3	4	5
	Budgeting and controlling expenditures	1	2	3	4	5
	Managing meetings for productive outcomes	1	2	3	4	5
	Anticipating problems	1	2	3	4	5
	Time management	1	2	3	4	5
	Working productively within complex organizations	1	2	3	4	5
	Dealing with and resolving conflict	1	2	3	4	5
	Delegating tasks	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal Skills	Getting along with others; being patient or asserting yourself	1	2	3	4	5
	Working in multidisciplinary teams of colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
	Communicating clearly in conversation	1	2	3	4	5
	Communicating clearly in writing	1	2	3	4	5
	Negotiating effectively	1	2	3	4	5
	Managing time effectively	1	2	3	4	5
	Networking	1	2	3	4	5
	Adapting to organizational change	1	2	3	4	5
Career planning	Capitalizing on strengths	1	2	3	4	5
	Planning for rank advancement and tenure	1	2	3	4	5
	Identifying best career options	1	2	3	4	5

Developing a Plan

Now consider those skills, which you felt greater attention would be beneficial (scores of 4 or 5) as well as those for which some improvement might be desirable (scores of 2 or 3).

Reflect on which of the skills that received scores of 4 or 5 in each skills category would best assist you in becoming more successful at this stage of your career. If there are no gaps in a given category with a score of 4-5, then consider those which received a score of 3

or 2. What are the goals you might set to achieve improvement in the areas you have chosen? State goals that are **SMART** (**s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**elevant and **t**imely)?

Which of these goals in each of the five categories will receive your highest priorities? Select no more than 2 goals per category. What will you do in the coming year to improve in each of these categories? What might take more than a year for which you could set interim milestones? What will be the measurable outcomes that indicate your goals have been achieved and what timetables have you set for addressing these goals?

Skills Goals

	Goals	Measurable Outcomes	Timelines
Research Skills			
Teaching Skills			
Professional Skills			
Leadership and Management Skills			
Interpersonal Skills			

At times, faculty members have the requisite skills, but labor to apply them successfully in ways that assure their success. For example, you may feel that you have adequate writing skills, but recognize that you need to develop better strategies for submitting manuscripts or grant applications more frequently, an achievement goal. If this is an issue, you may benefit by using the same strategy for setting achievement goals using the table below. Again, limit yourself to no more than two major specific goals per category.

Achievement Goals

	Goals	Measurable Outcomes	Timelines
Research Skills			
Teaching Skills			
Professional Skills			

Leadership and Management Skills			
Interpersonal Skills			

Benchmarks

Setting realistic, achievable goals is an important part of planning and can be facilitated by input from your mentor or colleague advisor as well as your department chair. For example, understanding institutional expectations during the pre-tenure period requires candid conversations on a regular basis (at least annually). Determining how many publications, how much extra-mural grant support, how much and what type of teaching and academic service is appropriate at various academic ranks are important for meeting expectations related to advancement and awarding of tenure. If you are planning a non-traditional career objective, it will be even more important to communicate these goals to your colleagues and chair so that all are supportive of your development plan.

Effort Allocation

Before meeting with your mentor or colleague advisor, consider how you currently allocate your effort and the changes you would like to make in that allocation in the future. Be prepared to discuss specifically how you intend your effort allocation will change and why. How well does your current and proposed effort distribution support the goals you have set for your future career vision? What interim changes in effort might you make?

Effort Category	**Current Effort Allocation**	**Proposed Short-term Effort Allocation**	**Proposed Long-term Effort Allocation**
Teaching and teaching preparation			
Research, scholarship, creative achievement			
University service			
Leadership, administration, national service			
Other			

Collegial Advice

Before seeking a colleague with which to discuss your career goals, consider what you seek in a mentor for this stage in your career. What specific expectations do you have of your mentor or colleague and what skills and level of commitment do you expect that will assure you that he/she will invest the time in you? Do you need more than one mentor or colleague advisor (e.g., research versus academic) and, if so, do you believe they can work together for your benefit? A good mentor is an exemplar who shares your values, inspires and pushes you to achieve great things and joins in the celebration when you achieve your goals.

Prior to meeting with your mentor or colleague advisor, you will need to provide them with the following documents:

1. Your updated curriculum vitae
2. Your most recent annual summary of professional activities
3. Your proposed SMART goals for the upcoming academic or calendar year
4. Your estimate of current and proposed short-term and long-term effort allocation

Note to Advisors

The focus of the conversation you will have with your mentee or colleague should be on the following: (a) how any perceived improvements in professional skills (e.g., grant writing, teaching) would be addressed. This may require further consultation with the department chair to identify opportunities and resources; (b) whether the goals set for the coming year are sufficiently specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (appropriate for career stage); (c) whether your proposed effort allocation aligns with your goals. Is sufficient effort available or created to achieve the goals? Will release from some current assignments be required? (d) whether professional standards or benchmarks exist to which milestones can be compared; (e) whether specific career transitions (e.g., sabbatical leave, promotion in rank, changes in career emphasis) are anticipated that affect overall career planning; and (f) whether you have the time to support your advisee in attaining his/her goals in the long-term. Wherever possible, mentors and advisors are expected to assist their colleagues in identifying potential resources (training opportunities, release time, professional experiences) that will help them achieve their goals.

Conversely, some goals may simply not be realistic due to available resources, timing, benchmarks or other factors, and a good colleague will honestly and conscientiously provide that advice as well.

It may be important that progress toward achieving certain goals (e.g., submitting a grant application) be monitored more regularly than annually. Thus, discussing external agency deadlines and setting future follow-up meetings to assess progress should be part of this dialogue.

Ask your mentee or advisee to keep a written record of the main points of your conversation. Good advisors will do the same and mark their calendars for future milestone dates to check for progress.

Appendix I

Tips for Getting Started in an Academic Career

If you are an entry-level or early career faculty member who is new to KU, you may find some of the following to be useful. Established career faculty may benefit from this as well.

1. Within 3 months of your appointment, try to identify a mentor(s) or a faculty advisor(s) who can assist you in orienting to the institution and help you navigate the early phase of establishing your research and academic activities at KU.

2. Discuss with your chair and mentor the process of annual performance review for faculty and the promotion and tenure review process used within the department and the School. As much as possible, seek specific benchmarks that clarify expectations for career advancement related to each KUMC and department mission.

3. Within 6 months, create a professional development plan with your mentor or colleague advisor and chair.

4. Begin as soon as possible to document your professional activities. Regularly record the details as to what occurred and when as well as your role in those activities. You should use an official KUMC curriculum vitae form to collect this information, whether or not you choose to use the document outside of the institution.

5. Request of your chair, mentor or other advisors written feedback on your work. It is a reasonable request that they observe and critique your teaching and research seminars, assist you in interviewing and selecting trainees and hiring laboratory staff, and make introductions to persons within the institution who can assist you in your specific objectives.

6. During your first or second year of appointment, request a formal meeting with your department Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee. This should occur well in advance of your mandatory mid-cycle tenure review and will help orient you to peer review process, which is independent of the annual performance review conducted by your chair. Make note of any activities the committee recommends you sustain, improve or discontinue and candidly discuss these with your mentor and chair. You will benefit greatly by identifying any perceived differences in the advice you are receiving, which should lead all parties to resolve these inconsistencies.

7. Get involved in faculty governance and networking opportunities. You will be expected to provide impactful service to the academy, and actively observing these operations will help you decide where your service interests exist. As a faculty member, you are free to

attend many governance committee meetings (e.g., SOM Research Committee or Education Council) and many other standing committees (IACUC; IRB; Radiation Safety). It is recommended that you contact the chair of the committee prior to scheduling a visit.

8. Volunteer your time. There are numerous opportunities to help your department, colleagues and trainees that will introduce you to more members of the academic family. You can volunteer to assist student organizations or help address faculty concerns on an ad hoc basis. By getting involved, you will broaden your network in ways that will constructively shape your career.

9. Provide creative solutions. When you were hired, there was an expectation that you would bring new perspectives and energy to the Faculty of the School. Don't simply point out problems, but get involved in providing solutions by finding ways to build consensus and implement needed, impactful change. Above all, be creative and follow through on your initiatives.

10. By the end of your first year, you should begin to see how you can contribute in a unique way to the educational mission of the department. You might begin by observing and participating in courses led by more experienced teachers. However, it is expected that you will design and offer your own unit or course(s) within the graduate and medical degree programs of the department. Providing substantive, well-designed and original instruction is the responsibility of all members of the department.

11. Your annual performance review with your chair should include advice you have received from your mentor or colleague advisor. Be sure to address your goals and progress toward those goals in your annual review. This is also a time during which you are expected to make clear how the department and the chair can assist you in attaining your goals.

12. Be aware of the professional norms of academic behavior here at KU. These can be found at the following website locations:

- http://www.kumc.edu/student-services/vice-chancellor-of-student-services/rights-and-responsibilities.html
- http://www.kumc.edu/studenthandbook/graduate.html
- KUMC Handbook for Faculty and Other Unclassified Staff.pdf
- http://policy.ku.edu/KUMC/information-technology/social-media