

## Personal Review and Development Plan (PRDP) Guidance notes for Early Career Researchers

The Personal Review and Development Plan (PRDP) review is a career development meeting that is conducted as a friendly and confidential two-way discussion with your reviewer. It is an opportunity for you to reflect on your work, your role within Imperial and your future. These guidelines aim to help you prepare for:

Part 1: Review of last year's work, focussing on skills development

Part 2: Personal goals for the year ahead.

For general FAQs around the PRDP process please visit the College's [PRDP webpage](#).

<b>Part 1. Review of last year's work, focussing on skills development</b>	
<b>List your major research achievements during the last year</b>	<p>Keeping your research profile up-to-date is essential, not only for your PRDP meeting. Keeping track of your achievements will make it much easier for you when you need to put a CV together for a job or fellowship application.</p> <p>Examples to illustrate research achievements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles, papers, contributions to books</li> <li>• Patents</li> <li>• Conference attendance and contributions as evidence that you are building up a profile in your field and are up to date with the latest developments.</li> <li>• Invited contributions to conferences and conference proceedings (you could mention inter- and intra-departmental activities here)</li> <li>• Invitations to write review articles and commissioned books/chapters</li> <li>• Refereeing for journals</li> <li>• Formal acknowledgements from other members of the academic community</li> <li>• Participation in committees (e.g. local organising committees of conferences or departmental committees such as Athena SWAN or Health &amp; Safety)</li> <li>• Service on external bodies, including learned or professional societies</li> <li>• Involvement in writing research proposals</li> <li>• External funding obtained (e.g. seed funds, grants, awards, bursaries, fellowships)</li> <li>• Academic visits (UK and overseas)</li> </ul>

<p><b>What do you feel has gone well during the last year? Which of your goals have you achieved and what did you enjoy in the process of doing so?</b></p>	<p>A good starting point might be to review your previous PRDP (if applicable) or your probation report and to reflect on any informal discussions you have had with your line manager since then. Also consider consulting other people you work with and asking for their feedback.</p> <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general how do you think things are going?</li> <li>• What have been the high points for you? Why?</li> <li>• What specific examples can you give?</li> </ul>
<p><b>What hasn't gone so well and what would you do differently as a result?</b></p>	<p>Reflecting on the things that haven't gone to plan and what got in the way can help you identify areas for improvement and sources of further support.</p> <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would have helped?</li> <li>• Are you clear on what support can you access?</li> <li>• What would you have done differently and what is it you need to do now as a result?</li> </ul> <p>It's always helpful to think about what can be improved, but beware of the <i>impostor syndrome</i> (and know that it is especially <a href="#">common in academia...</a>)</p> <p>If you feel the impostor syndrome is impacting on your wellbeing and career progress, do not hesitate to seek help. See for instance the Imperial <a href="#">Health &amp; wellbeing webpages</a> and the <a href="#">Staff Supporters scheme</a>.</p>
<p><b>What opportunities have you had to engage in teaching and supervision? Are there opportunities you would have liked to have been offered?</b></p> <p><b>Have you thought about applying to be an Assistant Supervisor if you have supervised any type of students in your role?</b></p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar/tutorial teaching</li> <li>• Supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate students</li> <li>• Laboratory teaching, practical classes and fieldwork</li> <li>• 'Guest' speaker opportunities and other invited lectures</li> <li>• Development of teaching methods and materials (e.g. developing e-learning materials)</li> <li>• Any involvement in course organisation and preparation</li> <li>• Internal examining responsibilities or other assessment procedures including writing exam questions</li> <li>• Supervision of projects</li> <li>• Other course-related responsibilities (e.g. pastoral care and voluntary activities with students)</li> </ul> <p>Postdocs who contribute towards the research student supervisor partnership can apply for a formal appointment as Assistant Supervisor and/or Co-Supervisor. See <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p>

<p><b>What opportunities have you had to contribute to other aspects of departmental life? Are there opportunities you would have liked to have been offered?</b></p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a Postdoc Rep for your department</li> <li>• Responsibilities within the department for specific lecture courses, degree schemes, groups of students</li> <li>• Involvement in admissions (e.g. open days)</li> <li>• Your role in examining, tutorial work, exam invigilation, etc.</li> <li>• Organisation or involvement in the planning of conferences/research seminars</li> <li>• Service on College committees or working groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>What transferable skills have you developed? (e.g. presentation skills, time management, planning for success beyond your postdoc)</b></p> <p><b>How have you used your 10 development days in the last year?</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.imperial.ac.uk/postdoc-fellows-development-centre/postdocs/plan-to-succeed/">https://www.imperial.ac.uk/postdoc-fellows-development-centre/postdocs/plan-to-succeed/</a></p>	<p>Make a list of your transferrable skills and of the situations and opportunities when you were able to develop and hone those skills.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What am I good at already and what is the evidence for that? Can you articulate it to others?</li> </ul> <p>Looking ahead, think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What skills do I need for my project?</li> <li>• What do I need to be an expert in?</li> </ul> <p>Need to conduct a skills analysis? See <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Has networking and collaboration benefited your work? If yes, in what way?</b></p>	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with others, both internal and external to Imperial</li> <li>• Research collaborations and membership of research groups</li> <li>• Establishing of industrial links/ commercial potential</li> <li>• Use of social media</li> </ul> <p>Were you able to grow your network? How are you maintaining existing links? Would you be able to introduce others who might benefit from being part of your network?</p>
<p><b>How does your experience and practice match <a href="#">Imperial Expectations</a>, and how do you support equality, diversity and inclusion?</b></p>	<p>Showing respect and support for each other in achieving personal goals and the College's strategic objectives is the foundation of how we work.</p> <p>Take a look at the examples given <a href="#">here</a> and share your experiences. What else and what more could you do?</p>
<p><b>Would you consider you have a good work-life balance? If not, what could you do to improve it?</b></p>	<p>Your wellbeing is essential. It is worth taking stock of what charges and what drains your energy and to address issues as soon as possible. You might find the PFDC <a href="#">Wellbeing Resources for Researchers</a> and the Imperial <a href="#">Health &amp; Wellbeing website</a> helpful.</p>

Part 2. Personal goals for the year ahead	
<p><b>What are your main goals for the year ahead? Are they SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)?</b></p> <p><b>List both research goals and personal and professional development goals.</b></p>	<p>Your goals inform your action planning and to stay on track you need to be clear about what is required in terms of outcomes, results or changes.</p> <p>Consider how you can prioritise activities and workloads. What do you see as the most important or significant goals that you should focus on before others?</p> <p>Determine the resources required to complete a task. Once you know the 'what' and 'when', you can determine the 'how'.</p> <p>How will you measure success?</p> <p>SMART action planning examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To research the peer reviewed literature in the area of X and support lead author [name] in producing a review article on current advances in the field of [named specialism] to be submitted for publication in [journal name] or journal of equivalent standing within 12 months.</li> <li>• To co-write a proposal to [named] funding body as CoI and support [name] as lead PI in the response to call for [name of call and specialism] with submission deadline [date] aiming to secure a total value of £ [amount].</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are you aware of the full range of career opportunities available to you? Which future career directions have you explored?</b></p>	<p>If you want to think more broadly about your next career move, <a href="#">this video</a> from the PFDC on setting Career Goals might be a good starting point.</p> <p>The PRDP conversation presents an opportunity to better understand the role you play in the bigger picture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does your role link with Imperial's strategic/operational plan?</li> <li>• How does your work link with the work of others at Imperial, in the wider field and outside of academia?</li> <li>• Where does your work fit in the funding landscape?</li> <li>• Are there industry applications for your research?</li> <li>• What other opportunities beyond academia might you be able to seize?</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is your next career step and where would you like to be in 5 years' time? What have you done this year to help you to achieve this?</b></p>	<p>It's useful to think of professional development planning in 5 steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where am I now?</li> <li>2. Where do I want to be?</li> <li>3. How am I going to get there?</li> <li>4. What might get in the way?</li> <li>5. What actions am I going to take?</li> </ol>

	<p>Of course, in real life it is not quite as simple as this – the process is more organic and stages will overlap or you may change your goals as you progress, and you must be prepared to revise your plan as circumstances dictate.</p> <p>For your action planning it is still vital to have clear SMART objective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify what you have to do now (not in 6 months' time)</li> <li>• Clearly define the steps you will take (Think of everything you could possibly do to achieve your objective. What support and what resources will you need?)</li> <li>• Arrange steps in chronological order and put a date by which you will complete each step (try to set weekly goals or targets)</li> <li>• Decide when you will review progress.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Have you sought feedback on your CV? From whom?</b></p> <p><b>Have you identified gaps in your CV? What can you do to fill the gaps?</b></p>	<p>The PFDC offer <a href="#">one-to-one appointments</a> to all postdoc, fellows and clinicians at Imperial. You can make use of this opportunity to discuss your CV for fellowship applications, lectureship positions, or moving out of academia.</p>
<p><b>What courses would you like to attend in the next year? How do you plan to use some of your 10 development days in the next 6 months?</b></p> <p><b>How will this help your career?</b></p>	<p>Visit the PFDC website for a <a href="#">list of courses and pop-up sessions</a> that are available to you.</p>
<p><b>Would you benefit from having a mentor?</b></p>	<p>Many early career researchers look to mentors as role models, people who have "been there" and "done that" and who are happy to give advice, support and encouragement to their mentees. Mentoring offers an opportunity to gain knowledge and grow your network. The goal is to help you to improve your skills and potentially advance your career.</p> <p>For information on mentoring and how you can find a mentor, please see <a href="#">here</a>.</p>