Revised Policy: Descriptions on the Use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Researchers Required in Annual Progress Reports beginning October 1, 2014

Notice Number: NOT-OD-14-113

Key Dates
Release Date: August 4, 2014

Related Announcements
NOT-OD-13-093

Issued by
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Purpose

The purpose of this Guide Notice is to revise the policy announced in NOT-OD-13-093, issued on July 23, 2013. NIH annual progress reports received on/after October 1, 2014 must include a section to describe how individual development plans (IDPs) are used to identify and promote the career goals of graduate students and postdoctoral researchers associated with the award.

Background

In June 2012, a Working Group of the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director (ACD) issued a report on the biomedical research workforce (http://acd.od.nih.gov/bwf.htm). The Working Group made recommendations to the ACD about the funding and training of graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in order to attract and retain the best and most diverse scientists, engineers and physicians from around the world. One goal of the Working Group was to better prepare students and postdocs to participate successfully in a broad-based and evolving research and research-related economy. The report included the following recommendation:

To provide some structured training experience for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, NIH should require individual development plans (IDPs) for all NIH-supported graduate student and postdoctoral researchers, whether on training grants, fellowships, or research project grants. Assessment of implementation of this requirement should be included in the review criteria of training grants.

In response to this recommendation, the NIH will not require but strongly encourages institutions to develop and use IDPs for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers supported by NIH awards, regardless of their position title. IDPs provide a structure for the identification and achievement of career goals. Therefore, NIH encourages grantees to develop institutional policies that employ an IDP for every graduate student and postdoctoral researcher supported by NIH awards. Beginning on October 1, 2014, annual progress reports are required to include a description of whether the institution uses IDPs or not and how they are employed to help manage the training and career development of those individuals.

Implementation

NIH progress reports using the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) must include a report on the use of IDPs in Section B. Accomplishments, Question B.4. Actual IDPs should not be included. Instead,

grantees will report on whether they use IDPs for all the graduate students and postdoctoral researchers included in Section D. list of Participants.   The use of IDPs as well as the manner in which IDPs are used is expected to be determined by the awardee institution, but the RPPR will include a brief description of how and whether IDPs are used to help manage the career development of students and postdocs associated with that award.   A similar response is required for all T, F, K, R25, R13, D43 and other awards or award components designed to provide training and professional development opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

Reminder, the RPPR is currently required for all type 5 progress reports submitted using a Streamlined Non-Competing Award Process (SNAP), and will be required for all non-SNAP progress reports submitted on/after October 17, 2014 (see NOT-OD-13-035 and NOT-OD-14-092).
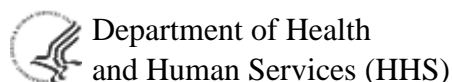
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