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**RTPI
Advice**



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (PDP)

What Makes a Good PDP

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RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

What Makes a Good PDP

Introduction

The RTPI has a Continuing Professional Development Policy which is embedded in our Code of Professional Conduct. CPD is defined by the RTPI as

‘The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner’s working life.’

CPD is a structured and planned process to help you maintain and improve your excellence, skills, knowledge, and capabilities and is a commitment that **sets you apart** from non-charted planners. CPD also connects to the more aspirational aspects of planning, for example, as a cornerstone to building thriving communities, ensuring that planning professionals are at the top of their field and ready to plan resilient communities that can face the challenges ahead.

The RTPI CPD scheme is an annual cycle of reflective learning. Each year you need to write or update your Professional Development Plan (PDP) and carry out and record CPD activities to meet your professional development goals and objectives. At the end of each year, you should reflect on whether the CPD you have undertaken has helped you to meet the goals you set yourself and how well you have met them.

This document has been prepared to assist with the preparation of your PDP and should be read in conjunction with the current guidance for the membership route you are applying through, or the current guidance on CPD monitoring if you are an existing member. Please visit the relevant area of the RTPI website to ensure you have the most up-to-date guidance available - this is particularly relevant for membership applications where the PDP is assessed alongside the written submission.

Please see the website www.rtpi.org.uk for more resources around creating successful PDPs as well as the most up-to-date guidance for your circumstances.

This document covers what makes a successful PDP. It is not exhaustive; but it aims to give hints and tips to allow you to create a PDP which can help to supercharge your planning career.

Part 1: SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

- **Address the majority of your weaknesses in your SWOT.** It can be tempting to list a weakness without examining how precisely your CPD can help you improve upon it, but the more carefully you address weaknesses at this point, the more impact your CPD will have on your professional growth.
- **Ensure consistency between your SWOT and action plan.** For example, if you have identified a lack of training budget as a “Threat”, make sure that you list free or low-cost resources in your plan as a realistic way of gaining knowledge and experience. The RTPI offers many free courses, webinars, and other resources which can be found in our Events Calendar [RTPI | Events](#)

Part 2: Goals and Objectives

- **Create Goals and objectives that relate to your SWOT analysis.** For example, state which areas of planning, or personal skills that you would like to develop.
- **Ensure that your objectives relate to your overarching Goals.** Remember that your goals are broader and longer term, and objectives are more specific and aid you in planning how you will achieve your goals.
- **Make sure your Goals are related to your personal development.** Remember that while work or business activities and development may be important to your employer, or to you as a business owner, (for example, completing specific work-related tasks, or increasing fee income and number of clients), these are not related to your personal development.
- **Focus on your longer-term aspirations and your development needed to achieve them.** For example, if you would like to be promoted to a Senior Planner, what skills, knowledge and development do you need to get you to this point in your career. There may be also be steps required that can be included in your Action Plan which can be specified and are measurable and which can give a clear indication of how well you are achieving your Goals and Objectives, e.g. completing a PhD in a specific subject area, or working towards membership of a professional body, if this is required.

Part 2: Action Plan

- **Be specific.** **What, where, why** and **how** is this action happening? Put this information in the 1st column of the template.

<p>I will undertake the RTPI Masterclass – Effective Leadership Skills for Planners to understand my preferred leadership style and to understand the qualities of an effective leader.</p> <p>My attendance on the course has been agreed by my manger and my place booked.</p>	<p>I will develop the skills to set personal and professional goals and to identify the steps needed to achieve them. I will also gain insight into efficient, effective, and exemplary behaviours for a management role and incorporate them into my current role.</p>	<p>7th February 2024</p>
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Include ways to **measure** or **test** the learning or development you gain from the action. Put this information in the middle column of the template. However, remember that undertaking the activity itself is not a sign of success, you should reflect on your learning and how you will be able to implement this to achieve your Goals and Objectives.

- **Give targeted timeframes.** If an action is ongoing, provide a date for review. Put this information the 3rd column of the template.

Other Hints and Tips

- Indicate that **agreement/approval** has been gained for the action.
- Include a **backup plan** for any un-booked/unagreed actions.
- Include actions which are **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**. Every action must help you develop knowledge and skills e.g. specific courses/events to attend.
- List one CPD activity per line of the template, this will ensure you can achieve the level of detail required.
- Keep the actions in a **planning context**. You can have some non-planning CPD; project management, public speaking etc., but they must be given in the context of developing as a planner, and the majority of your actions should focus on developing your planning knowledge, skills and/or experience (i.e. at least 50%).
- Remember that work plans (such as what you are going to do to improve efficiency in the department, the steps in a project, or your day-to-day work) or job hunting are **NOT** CPD and are **NOT** actions which will achieve your Goals and Objectives.

General

- The PDP should cover a 2-year period, which reflects the RTPI's requirement for 50 hours of CPD over 2 years. Your PDP will shape your CPD needs for this period.
- Allow time to work on your PDP. It requires thought and it needs ample time devoted to it to make sure you get it right.
- Remember that the PDP is personal to you. Referring back to your SWOT analysis and thinking about your future development is what sets you apart from non-members and honours the trust that our clients place in us as planners.
- There are example PDPs available to view on the RTPI website to assist you with your preparation : [RTPI | Professional development plan resources](#)



For more information, please
visit www.rtpi.org.uk



RTPI - Royal Town Planning Institute

cpd@rtpi.org.uk

Tel: 0370 774 9494

Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL.

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