



NEW ZEALAND
PLANNING INSTITUTE[®]
Te Kokiringa Taumata

Seven steps to Developing a Professional Development Plan

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”
“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.
“I don’t much care where –” said Alice.
“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go.”

You wouldn’t dream of walking into a professional meeting without any idea of what you want to achieve or starting a project without knowing where you want to go. Why treat your own learning any differently? A plan with explicit goals provides structure and focus for your learning, ensuring you make the most of your learning opportunities.

Use the following guide and the planning template provided to develop your personal professional development plan.

Step 1: Review the components of a good professional development plan

A good professional development: plan:

- Addresses the individuals need to improve practice and grow professionally, but it balances those needs with the needs and issues of the organisation and community the individual serves
- Focuses on improving learning as the overall goal of professional development, and connects the planner’s individual goals with their plans for the future .
- Reflects local, regional and national initiatives.
- Includes reflection as a part of the individual's learning and growth.
- Includes documentation of the outcomes of the professional development activities.

Step 2: Ask yourself these questions to help clarify your goals and begin planning

- What skills/knowledge do I have?
- What skills/knowledge do I need in my current role?
- Where do I want to be in my profession in five years time?
- What skills/knowledge will I need to be effective in that role?

- How will I judge the quality of my work?
- How does my practice impact on the community I serve?
- Based on data, what do I know about my 'communities' needs?
- How do local, regional and national goals/initiatives impact upon my learning goals?
- How can I improve or strengthen my practice?
- How can I work with others to address my goals?
- How will I know I have accomplished my learning goals?

Are my learning goals SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely?

- How can I embed the professional development strategies I choose into my work day?

Do I wish to share/discuss part or all of my professional development plan with the person I report to?

Step 3: Use the template to develop your plan

Keep the above questions in mind as you develop your step by step professional development plan using the template provided.

Step 4: Decide on the activities or strategies you will include in your plan to accomplish your goals

As you select learning goals and activities, bear in mind that your plan should not be built around attending a variety of one-hour sessions with little or no follow-up. According to research, your professional development should be:

- job embedded,
- strategic
- continuous and on-going,
- and include evaluation.

In addition, research indicates that working with others will enhance your learning and promote lasting improvement and change in your professional life and work environment. A few of the many activities or strategies that you might consider are:

- Get involved in formal CPD (link to CPD courses please)
 - Engage in Peer Review activities i.e. being peer reviewed, and contributing as a reviewer
 - Make sure you plan is evidence based
 - Find a mentor or be a mentor through the online mentoring service offered by NZPI- link to video conferencing/mentoring please.
- Write up case studies for publication in Planning Quarterly or Planning Focus – link to PQ on NZPI website
- Undertake professional reading – link to Knowledge Hub
 - [Read the NZPI daily news media](#) coverage on all things planning
 - • Become more involved with NZPI
 - Keep up to date with new technology via your learning activities

Step 5: Evaluate your plan

When your plan is completed, take a step back and ask yourself the following questions:

- Do the goals and the plan reflect your needs as well as those of your organisation and community?
 - Does your plan reflect new learning and growth, not just time and effort?
 - Are your goals clear?
 - Have you used data to determine your goals?
 - Do you include collaborative activities in your plan?
 - Does your plan include reflection on the outcomes of your plan
- Have you included methods of assessment
Have you identified evidence you will gather.

Step 6: Undertake a self assessment

A good professional development plan will be based on your understanding of where you are in your career cycle, what motivates and demotivates you, your values and your skills/competencies. Take the quiz and use the answers to develop that understanding. *Link to Self Assessment*

Step 7: Create your PDP using the NZPI Plan Template

Ready to create your Professional Development Plan? NZPI offers you a PDP template that will help you structure your thoughts and objectives. You are able to complete and save the plan on your computer and online. Alternatively you might choose to use the template that your organisation provides. Either way, the important thing is as one noteworthy politician once said:

“ Fail to plan and you plan to fail”.