This topic guide will give you some of the tools you need to examine your current position in terms of development of your skills, strengths and abilities and to look into the needs that may be required in the future development of your career pathway. Technology in engineering is expanding exponentially with innovative and brilliant ideas generated every year. Keeping personal development current and in tune with innovation will enhance your position within any organisation.

At the end of reading through all three topic guides in this unit you should have the tools you need to put together your own development plan and with those skills be able to create evidence that you can manage the personal development of colleagues.

On successful completion of this topic guide you will be able to:

• formulate aims and objectives for carrying out your personal development
• assess current skills against organisational standards for your current or projected future role
• define your personal development needs
• create a development plan to achieve your needs in line with organisational requirements.
1 Formulate aims and objectives for carrying out personal development

Before you start
Before you begin work on Unit 2, ask yourself these questions.
• What formal development have you agreed with your line manager?
• Is the human resources department involved with this development?
• Have you been given some work-related targets to aim for over the coming year?
• Are these SMART targets?
• How will you be monitored during the appraisal period?
• What happens if you don’t meet the targets that have been set for you?

Matthew Argent,
Technical Assistant

Where I see myself in five years
In five years I see myself as a senior manager within the company, responsible for the design and installation of energy efficiency management systems that form the basis of ‘intelligent buildings’. This is my goal and I have discussed this with my line manager who fully supports my long-term aim.

I have completed the aims and objectives planning document to show how I can map out the personal development processes in order to achieve my objectives. Examples of completed forms are in each of the topic guides for Unit 2 (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) to show how this might be done.

How I will achieve this goal
I need to work hard to gain some technical qualifications and managerial experience in organising a team of employees to demonstrate that I am capable of doing this effectively. I will need to keep up to date using continual professional development by taking courses on the software and hardware aspects of the equipment that we will install in intelligent systems.

A personal development plan is the key to achieving my goal and success as a senior manager. I need to produce this first and agree it as part of my organisational annual appraisal so all its elements can be discussed and agreed with the company’s human resources department.

The reasons why you are going to undertake any training, qualifications or skills updating are the key to your personal development. By defining the primary reason for such a decision, you can then write your aims and objectives for achieving your personal goals. There are many reasons for undertaking personal development.

• Promotional opportunities – enhancement within an organisation may depend upon the qualifications and training that you have received.
• Technological advances requiring retraining – engineering technology changes continually with the innovations that are developed. In order to use the new technology you will need to be trained to use it correctly.
• Change of employment – changing jobs within companies may require new training on their systems and processes, for example ISO 9000 series procedural manuals.
• Transferring to different departments – moving sideways within an organisation to climb further may require some personal development work.
• Achieving personal life goals – your own motivation in knowing as much as you can about your role and improving it within a company may be a personal goal that you have.
• Career advancement – making advances in your career in engineering and associated technologies will mean taking personal development seriously and planning for your next move upwards within the hierarchy of an organisation.
• Continuous professional development (CPD) logs for professional associations – this is a development programme that must be logged as part of the CPD hours for professional membership of an organisation, for example the Association of Building Engineers and Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers.
• Keeping up to date with industry advances – reading and researching within your career pathway in engineering will keep you competitive and ahead of the other contractors who are bidding for work.

What are aims and objectives?

Aims

Aims are general broad statements that express the direction that you want to go in, for example:

‘To be able to prepare and deliver a presentation on the use of energy-efficient technologies in intelligent building systems.’

This is a statement outlining what you want to achieve but does not detail how you will accomplish this complex task.

Objectives

Objectives drill down into more ‘specific’ statements of how you will achieve the primary aims. For example:

‘To develop speaking skills for presentations.’

‘To understand how pace of delivery affects presentation quality.’

‘To be able to speak fluently.’

These are all statements relating to the aim of presenting to an audience.

Activity

Evaluate your current position and answer the following questions.

• Where do I want to be in five years?
• What role would I want to achieve in this timeframe?
• How will I attain this goal?

Aims and objectives should always be short, concise statements. They should not be complicated. The aim should state what you want to achieve and the objectives show how you will achieve it.

Before writing your aims and objectives for personal development it is a good idea to look at the aims and objectives that may be set by an employer. These are often
2.1: Planning your personal development

You need to be clear about why you are going to undertake this development and what you want to achieve with it. A goal needs to be set that gives you something to aim for and achieve so that you will stay motivated during the PDP process.

**Setting and monitoring performance objectives**

When you set personal objectives they need to be attainable and not impossible to achieve. If the latter is true then you will never reach a performance objective – and that may have a detrimental effect upon your motivation. Personal objectives need to stretch you but be achievable. In this way you will feel the benefit of having attained a personal goal within your life.

**Portfolio activity (1.1)**

By writing a number of drafts, develop an aim for your personal development that is short, concise and targeted at a future goal.

When this is complete, provide three to four objectives that identify how you will achieve the primary aim.

2 Assess current skills against organisational standards

You will need to assess your current skill set. You can do this in a variety of ways, including:

- diagnostic testing
- your curriculum vitae
- an existing personal development plan (PDP)
- skills assessment tools
- a personal skills audit
- an annual appraisal
- a self-assessment/appraisal.

**Diagnostic testing**

There are several software-based diagnostic tools that give an indication of various skill sets. These tend to be behavioural-based, for example a Belbin profile. This gives an indication of how you would perform within a team and what kind of team player you would be. This would then give you an indication of any missing developmental skills that you could address for the future.

**Curriculum vitae (CV)**

This is always a good starting point. A good CV will list all your qualifications and education along with work experience. It may give you an indication of any gaps
that need filling within your skill set. CVs tend to be historical documents and will not list any future development that you are considering.

**Activity**
The following link takes you to the National Careers Service within the direct.gov website. It contains many tools to help you start to build a professional CV.

*www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/cvs/Pages/default.aspx*

Start your CV by entering your personal details and building up your education, qualifications and experience. To save your CV on the site, you will need to create a free Lifelong Learning Account. You can create and download your CV without an account, but you will then need to save it to your computer or memory stick.

**Existing personal development plan**
Many human resources departments will use your personal development plan as the basis for your annual appraisal. It contains all of your information with regard to your employment post in relation to the development work that you have done so far. An approved plan, with your identified training needs, will have been formulated for the year so that you are better equipped to meet the company’s strategic objectives and business plans.

**Skills assessment tools**
Many websites offer online skills audit tools. These give a basic indication of your managerial skills, how you work with customers and how you behave and react. Many of them are career-based tools that give you an indication of what type of career would best suit your current skill set. Other tests can be *psychometric* tests which look at many different aspects of your personal traits and attitudes.

**Personal skills audit**
This can vary from a basic simple questionnaire to a detailed audit. A *personal skills audit* asks you a series of questions about your skills, for example written communication, teamwork, leadership and IT skills, to mention a few. These can be graded on a basis that is numerical and linked to your confidence level for that particular skill. A development plan would build from this, stating how you propose to reinforce and improve those skills which appear weaker than others.

**Annual appraisal**
This is the best method of appraising your skill set against current organisational standards that will have been defined by the company that you work for. Human resources will strategically plan the skill set of their levels of management providing personnel with training opportunities to develop into newer and higher roles within an organisation.

Organisations may use salary levels, performance targets, production data, personnel data, judgemental data and personal ratings, for example ranking, to conduct an individual’s annual appraisal. This will highlight any corporate needs for the personal development of an individual to enhance their performance.
An annual target can be set which, when met, could result in performance pay awards for that individual.

**Self-assessment**

By undertaking a self-evaluation of your strengths and weaknesses, you can formulate an assessment of what you are good at and not so good at. Honesty is the best approach as it will greatly assist the evaluation of the areas of weakness that you need to work on with your own PDP. Self-assessment could evaluate your current skills, including:

- interpersonal
- leadership
- personal management
- self-management
- communications
- financial.

Be honest in your evaluation and balance weaknesses with strengths. This will help your development and successes.

**Organisational standards**

These could be:

- entry requirements for a job vacancy – 5 GCSE A–C grades are initially required followed by A levels for higher vacancies
- entry requirements for a higher education qualification – normally a Level 3 qualification is required as a prerequisite to gaining entry onto a Level 4/5 degree or Higher National
- health and safety minimum levels of training – risk assessment, COSHH, CDM regulations all require the workforce to have a basic level of health and safety training, including a site induction
- legislation and regulation requirements – continual developments from the European Parliament through directives mean that improvements in legislation have to be conveyed by way of training to employees
- corporate strategic compliance – the company that you work for may have a developmental plan for the employees that must be followed. Clearly defined development will be in place for each level of management
- professional status – in achieving a professional membership, qualifications and a professional development diary may have to be prepared to gain full membership status
- continual professional development – as part of a professional institute membership you have to undertake continual professional development and log these hours as part of your membership status.

**3 What are your personal development needs?**

Your personal development needs will have become apparent as you evaluated your PDP and looked at areas of improvement, CPD and preparation for promotion. These development needs can cover a variety of requirements, including:
• training as a result of legislative changes – commercial, personal, environmental and health and safety are just four areas of growth in legislation and regulations that are applied to the engineering and environmental industry
• downsizing of an organisation with managers now having to undertake two roles – this may result in additional training and development for the other role
• market forces which alter the production of different products, for example solar photovoltaic panels and current inductors – changes in the production of a product due to market forces may mean that you need to undertake rapid personal development to meet the new or expected demand for renewable energy technology
• corporate restructuring – new roles mean new challenges that must be supported with retraining
• upgrading of engineering equipment and technology – new processes and equipment will require retraining on their use and operation
• deputy duties within other parts of an organisation – providing cover for sickness or annual leave may require some development
• training requirements for health and safety – work-related changes will require updating
• lifelong learning aspirations – self-directed learning is often a highly motivating quality that many of us aspire to
• financial rewards – personal development will lead to increased financial rewards that match an enhanced skill set.

Having undertaken an audit of your current skills, you should have highlighted any gaps or weaknesses that may need development work from you to improve or fill in missing skills. You now need to establish these personal development needs and formulate an action plan. Figure 2.1.1 shows a representation of what your plan should look like. The figure has been completed as an example. You can see the list of identified development activities along with the basic information.

### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Development</th>
<th>Provider: Internal/External</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course to cover the use of inductors in large-scale solar panel installations</td>
<td>SAT Training Services Ltd Approximate cost £250 Duration 12 weeks Time 6–9 p.m. Monday evenings</td>
<td>Commences 12 March 2014 Completion in July 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate in Management qualification</td>
<td>D&amp;T services Approximate cost £1500 per year – two-year course Half-day attendance per week</td>
<td>Commences September 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of a team</td>
<td>In-house training Cover will be required</td>
<td>Commences June 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photovoltaic systems training</td>
<td>Voltex Ltd – supplier’s free training course Cover will be required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.1.1:** An action plan used to record personal development needs.
You may wish to negotiate personal development needs with your line manager during the annual appraisal that is often undertaken as part of your development within the organisation.

Alternatively, an organisational development plan could be used instead of this format and would fit well with any organisational requirements.

An action plan is a good starting point to begin the development process.

**Portfolio activity (1.3)**

Define your personal development needs and complete an action plan. Arrange for it to be signed off by a supervisor or line manager if appropriate.

4 Create a development plan to achieve your needs

The planning stage of this assessment criterion is evidenced through the production of a personal development plan (PDP). This needs to be very detailed and contain elements of the following topic headings.

**Aims and objectives**

Your aims and objectives can be drawn from the Portfolio activity on page 4. They need to be filled in at the front of the PDP and clearly state the rationale for this development work. Numbering the objectives makes it easier to track and monitor the progress of each one.

**Personal orientation achievement goals**

These differ from employers’ development requirements because they are personal to you as an individual. They can include items such as:
- beliefs – these could be religious beliefs and a goal within them
- aspirations – wanting to achieve something of value just for you
- personal achievements – meeting a goal that means a lot to you
- goals outside of work – sporting, leisure or social
- interests and hobbies – achieving recognition with these.

**Current performance**

You may need to review your current performance to help you to identify areas where development could be achieved during the timeframe you have available. PDP timeframes are normally annual events with initial targets set, an interim review and then a final review. Larger areas of development may take several years to achieve, whereas short bite-sized development can be easily fitted into the workplace. Current performance can of course be provided by your employer through the appraisal system or any system of staff measurement of performance. These could be targets that are set, monitored and then reviewed.
Future needs

Job security and stability is not a reliable commodity in UK employment as it once was. Planning for any potential future needs is therefore essential. Gaining additional qualifications that add to your skill set and that are transferable are a valuable commodity in this highly mobile workforce. This will enable you to react and diversify into other areas if one career pathway ends or diverts. Planning for this is not wasted effort or time but ensures that you are able to react in a positive manner should the need arise.

Opportunities and threats to career progression

A SWOT analysis which examines your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be carried out to establish what areas of development you will need to undertake. A simple table could be completed in order to achieve this. Figure 2.1.2 illustrates what a person may need to complete to develop the areas that appear weaker than others and to identify any threats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Communication skills</td>
<td>● Use of databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Use of IT</td>
<td>● Relationships with some colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Network of contacts</td>
<td>● Higher level maths skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Current qualifications</td>
<td>● Delegating some of my work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Management of apprentices</td>
<td>● Taking time to listen to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Great organisational skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Promotion into design department</td>
<td>● Downturn in industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Bonus scheme</td>
<td>● High level of competition for promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Share scheme</td>
<td>● New graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Senior management privileges</td>
<td>● Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Increased pension rights</td>
<td>● Technology innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.2: By using a SWOT analysis, you can identify the weaknesses within your development.

You will need to undertake the same approach and critically analyse yourself in this way.

Portfolio activity (1.2)

You need to undertake a personal skills audit which examines your current set of skills. This can be done using a SWOT analysis.

Record the outcome from this analysis. You then need to look at it and evaluate what additional skills you could develop that would meet your organisation’s strategy for personal development.

Learning programmes and/or activities

As part of your employment you may be on a training programme. Trainees will have to complete an agreed programme of qualifications relevant to their post. This programme will be catered to the pathway that they are following. For example, civil or mechanical engineering will require an entry qualification onto a
university programme. This training programme will also include aspects of health and safety qualifications relevant to the role. In-house or external courses will also be used to enhance your performance while training.

**Achievement dates**

You will need to plan the dates that you will achieve the qualifications to ensure that:
- prompts are in place for salary enhancements as a result of passing qualifications
- your CV can be updated
- progress and time management can be effectively controlled to ensure success with the development undertaken
- planning for progressive qualifications and training can happen
- opportunities for promotion are aligned as a result of achievements.

**Review dates**

You will need to regularly review your development progress to ensure that it will be achieved. This review may be undertaken:
- through a formal review with your line manager at various stages of the development, culminating in a final annual appraisal
- through individual monitoring and progress, where you will have to track your own progress and estimate percentage completions against the time left of development programmes.

**Action plans**

You may have to insert an action plan if a variation to the development plan occurs for one reason or another. This may affect the aims and objectives and needs to be recorded so suitable actions can be put into place to accommodate changes and/or variations to the original plan. A suitable document used for this process is illustrated in Figure 2.1.3. The two development tasks that need altering in light of organisational changes and activity issues have been recorded.

In this example, the person has clearly thought about his/her development objectives so they meet the goal outlined in the profile.

You can use this template to record any changes that have affected your initial personal development plan. Recording such changes provides an audit trail which is useful when you need this unit to be signed off by an assessor or work-based recorder.

**Figure 2.1.4** shows a completed PDP.
### Development plan item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for change</th>
<th>Action to be taken and resource implications</th>
<th>By whom and when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To gain senior management professional qualifications, commencing with Certificate in Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to commence qualification in September as course is full On waiting list for September 2013 start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development plan amendment Line manager informed</td>
<td>Action by me May 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake some duties involving the management and development of trainees to include the monitoring and review of their personal development plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have added to the number of trainees and now have four in total starting this year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record in development plan Advise line manager No resource implication</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1.3: An action plan for a personal development plan amendment.

### Personal Development Plan

**Name:** S.A. Topliss  
**Date:** May 2013  
**Organisation:** Technic Ltd

#### Aims:
- To achieve a senior manager's position
- To be able to effectively manage a team

#### Objectives:
1. To gain senior management professional qualifications, commencing with Certificate in Management

2. Undertake some duties involving the management and development of trainees to include the monitoring and review of their personal development plans

3. To undertake training with our systems' suppliers to gain detailed knowledge and understanding of how these systems operate and are installed

4. To run in-house training for my installation team on updating new systems

#### OBJECTIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>Description of how this will be achieved and through what activities</th>
<th>Measure of success – how has this been achieved?</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Actual date achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Certificate in Management</td>
<td>Attendance at local further education college to commence the approved management certificate</td>
<td>Completion of the course with a pass certificate</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Management of trainees' development plans</td>
<td>Production of agreed development plans for colleagues and team members</td>
<td>Successful development of the team with completed objectives</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Systems' suppliers training</td>
<td>Contact with suppliers and manufacturers to source some training</td>
<td>Production of service and installation manual for their systems</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 In-house CPD training</td>
<td>Discussions with our suppliers and integration of personnel into their training schedule</td>
<td>Production of attendance records and certificate Approved installer status</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature: SATopliss  
Dated: May 2013

Figure 2.1.4: A personal development plan.
Checklist
At this stage you should have completed the following documentation within your portfolio:
✓ aims and objectives for personal development
✓ personal skills audit
✓ personal development plan.

Acknowledgements
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