Now that you have prepared your personal development plan (PDP), you have to put it into action and actually undertake the objectives that you have established and agreed with your line manager. You will need drive, commitment and motivation to see it through to a successful conclusion.

In Topic guide 2.1 you looked at the planning you need to do before you start to think about the practical details of carrying out your personal development. You will need to think broadly both about your needs but also about the needs of your organisation – and where you want to go next.

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

• carry out activities aimed at achieving identified development needs
• record the activities or tasks that you have undertaken using a suitable format to evidence your progress
• evaluate these activities or tasks to reflect on their suitability in meeting the objectives that you initially established
• review aims and objectives in the light of any changes in personal or organisational circumstances.
Your personal development plan

The development plan that you undertook as part of Topic guide 2.1 will have highlighted several activities that you are now going to undertake.

Carrying out personal development plan activities

These activities may cover or include many of the following.

Learning from others, e.g. mentoring/coaching

In order to learn and develop you may have asked, as part of an appraisal, to be mentored by a more experienced colleague. In this way you can learn while working and be influenced by, and gain experience from, someone who may have already undertaken your role. A mentor has to be carefully selected so that they can work with you effectively. It is a great idea if you are employed on a programme and are working with an experienced mentor who can guide, advise and move you steadily forward in your development.

Learning through research

Undertaking some independent research that has been negotiated with your employer and will benefit the company is an ideal way of developing your independent research skills. This would also link effectively with several of the HAEET pathway units in which research forms a large part of their content.

Self-managed learning

Self-managed learning involves using your PDP and a timeline to manage your developmental learning. This method relies heavily on a detailed development plan so you can manage your time effectively, as you will not be able to rely on a mentor or employer to do this for you or to monitor your progress.

Seminars

Seminars are specific events that are held on a work-related topic. For example, a seminar on wind farm engineering technologies would contain a series of presentations and discussion on this specific topic. They tend to be events that are charged for and you should make allowances within your resources to fund such seminars. Your employer can also be approached to pay for such events providing you can show that they will benefit the organisation and that any materials can be shared with colleagues.

Conferences

Conferences are often held by professional associations or suppliers and manufacturers. They contain current developments that are attractive to attendees and often have demonstrations of new equipment or processes. Conferences are a great way of networking within your career pathway as you will meet a variety of people within your specific area who can help with development work. Conferences can be held that cover new legislation or regulations. For example, changes to the building regulations covering Part P electrical safety or Part L energy efficiency have recently been covered at conferences provided by local authority building control departments.
Secondments

Secondments are in effect ‘job trials’. A secondment means that you leave your current position on a temporary basis and move into another role which might not necessarily be with your current employer. This will help you to learn about another post and to bring back ideas and processes that could be used effectively within your organisation. Secondments need to be carefully negotiated with external organisations in order to protect the confidentiality of the processes and procedures that you observe. It obviously cannot be a competitor, but needs to be an organisation where there are clear benefits for both parties. Secondments are a great way of learning and enhancing your current post and role.

Interviews

Interviewing colleagues who are on the next progression level of management (one you would like to reach) has lots of benefits. You can gain a detailed insight into what qualities, skills and qualifications they needed for their posts. You can also find out which development work benefitted them, and what did not, so you do not waste valuable resources and time.

Using the Internet

The Internet offers many opportunities for enhancement and professional development. Each professional organisation has a members’ area with a variety of CPD resources that can be undertaken using self-directed study. Look at manufacturers’ and suppliers’ websites that have research sections where you can investigate new technological advances in materials, plant and equipment.

Social networks

The rise in this type of media has produced social networks such as Facebook and specific sites such as LinkedIn. It offers an opportunity to join groups that are profession- or industry-specific. This allows a degree of networking and development work to be undertaken using this media. For example, an engineering problem can be posted onto a website so that a solution can be discussed and found. By using this method you can utilise a range of expert knowledge to develop your own understanding of specific topics.

Newsgroups

Similar to social websites, newsgroups allow professional and technical users to interact with new ideas and facts about their industry. All the professional websites have news features, as well as suppliers, manufacturers and engineering associations. Government websites also have departmental websites that contain news on the environment and energy strategies.

Bulletin boards

Bulletin boards allow a topic to be ‘posted’ onto the board to which subscription members can add comments. They can be used to gain information for any development work you are undertaking and are very similar to using a social network.
Qualifications
A range of qualifications can be used to improve your existing skills. With a technical apprenticeship these are delivered through technical colleges and institutions. They are also delivered through awarding bodies and training associations. For example, the Engineering Council website provides details of work-based training and includes a section on professional development.

In-house training events
These are by far the most efficient and economical method of providing development for all employees. If your organisation is large enough, these would have started at the initial induction, followed by a probationary training year and then annual development through appraisal.

External training events
These are not necessarily qualifications but courses that are run with content aimed at improvements to employees or their management. Motivational courses, people management and sustainable energy installations are just some of the many external courses that can be used for personal development. However, remember that external events do tend to involve travel, accommodation, paid leave and/or a fee for the event and its facilities.

Learning styles
Learning styles are important in conducting many of the personal development activities listed above. The way in which you learn will have an effect on the outcome and its effectiveness. Learning styles are influenced by different aspects such as personal preferences.

Personal preferences
How you like to learn will influence whether or not you enjoy the learning. If it rewards you, then you will use the best method that suits the way you learn and produce evidence of that learning. Individuals often like to work alone while others prefer working in groups, some within partnerships. We are all individuals and have our own inherent qualities and emotions that influence our development and direction.

Your style of learning can be categorised into four main areas following work by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford. The four main learning style preferences are:
- activist
- reflector
- theorist
- pragmatist.

These preferences are illustrated in the learning cycle diagram, Figure 2.2.1.
The ‘activist’ part of you works on the first stage and covers those experiences of learning that you have had or are currently taking part in by following your personal development plan. The second stage finds you being the reviewer. Here you have the chance to stop and reflect upon the information which you have analysed, digested, understood, evaluated and then carefully reviewed. Next, the ‘theorist’ part of you draws conclusions from stages 1 and 2 and starts to review if the learning outcomes have been met or not and what could be improved next time. Finally, the ‘pragmatist’ in you plans for future learning using the conclusions from stage 3 as a guide.

2 Record and evaluate the effectiveness of development activities

There are two separate aspects to this learning outcome and its assessment criteria. The first is the ‘record’ element where you need to record in some detail the progress that you have made with your personal development. The second element is the ‘evaluation’ of how effective the development has been when checked against the intended aims and objectives that were written at the beginning of the process.

Recording

You could record your development in a variety of different ways, including:

- a written diary during the development period – this would record in detail the development work that has taken place during the time period when it was undertaken
- work-based assessor comments and logs of discussions – written development sheets can be completed at various stages and signed off by a work-based assessor
- the award of a certificate for a qualification that has been gained – this could be from an awarding body and contain the certificate number and an award date
- a certificate of achievement – this could be an in-house or externally issued certificate to indicate completion of a course or training event
- a record of attendance – this could be a letter or email confirming attendance at a conference or seminar
• a CPD log – a formal document that is completed as part of professional association membership or logged online as part of continuing membership
• a written development record that is witnessed by a supervisor, work-based recorder or line manager
• a work-based appraisal form completed and agreed with a line manager – this would confirm completion of development at various stages
• printouts from online development work – physical documents that record the actual work that you have undertaken
• a secondment diary – recording the work undertaken as part of the secondment period
• conference attendance CPD certificates – this records the attendance at the event by the attendee
• in-house training records and certificates – again the delegate’s name and role will be shown on the certificate confirming that training has been passed
• digital media such as video, Word documents, records of online research – must be evidenced as the individual’s own work and development.

Evaluation

You will need to produce an evaluation of the effectiveness of the planned development activities that you have undertaken. You should complete this evaluation using the individual development courses listed under the planning of your development. This would then build up into a series of evaluation documents that can be collated and concluded upon.

An evaluation should contain a critical analysis of what went well and not so well. This should be a balanced description that includes negatives as well as positives. Evaluations can contain advantages and disadvantages. Elements of justification can also be included within any descriptive text.

Development plan evaluations could be undertaken using the format illustrated in Figure 2.2.2 on the next page.

This allows you to complete the following information.

1 A cross-referencing of the development plan number.
2 A description of the development work undertaken.
3 An outcome in the form of yes or no to its achievement.
4 The date that this was achieved so you can map this against the timeframes on the development plan.
5 An evaluation of the activity that was undertaken.

You can see in Figure 2.2.2 that the four activities are listed and evaluated as to whether the outcomes have been met.

Aims and objectives evaluations could be undertaken using a format as illustrated in Figure 2.2.4 on page 9. This would be completed with the objective number taken from a previous planning document, a description of the objective and a detailed description of the evaluation of the objective. Below this the development plan activity evaluations can be cross-referenced.
Development plan evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development plan number</th>
<th>Development activity undertaken</th>
<th>Outcomes met Y/N</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Evaluation of development activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To gain senior management professional qualifications, commencing with Certificate in Management</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>Successful completion of the Certificate in Management at FE college. Awarded distinction grade overall. Has given me the confidence to take on greater roles within our organisation. Line manager has updated annual appraisal to reflect the additional responsibilities I have taken on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Undertake some duties involving the management and development of trainees to include the monitoring and review of their personal development plans</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>I have managed the four trainees well this year. All have completed personal development plans which are evidenced within my portfolio file. All have completed their objectives within the set and agreed target dates. Line manager aware of the results obtained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To undertake training with our systems’ suppliers to gain detailed knowledge and understanding of how these systems operate and are installed</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To run in-house training for my installation team on updating new systems</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.2.2: A development plan evaluation.

Portfolio activity (2.2)

Record and evaluate the effectiveness of development activities by completing a development plan evaluation.

You will need to put original certificates (or copies of them) and documentation in a filed section and clearly annotate and cross-reference them to your original development plan.

The content of your evaluation

There are a number of areas of feedback that you could cover within the evaluative descriptions that you will add to your development plan evaluation, including:

- what abilities have been improved and how
- evidence of what skill levels have been achieved and how
- feedback from colleagues and line managers
- feedback from events attended as part of the development activity
- grading within a qualification achievement.

Your evaluation needs to reflect upon how well the intended learning outcome has been achieved. This reflection should be personal to you in terms of how you felt, what benefits you received from this development and what did not go so well. It needs to be critically written and be honest about the results that you obtained. Courses and events that you attended might not have met your expectations and if this is the case you should state this so you can correct any gaps in your development.
By producing an action plan as a result of your evaluation, you can record these gaps. In this way they are highlighted, either for inclusion in next year’s development, or as an exercise to close them down and have them signed off. This would highlight any activities that need carrying forward into next year’s development plan that were not achieved. Figure 2.2.3 provides a suitable format to undertake this task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action plan – incomplete development plan number</th>
<th>Why the development was not met</th>
<th>What needs to be undertaken to achieve the development task or activity?</th>
<th>Revised target date for completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course to cover the use of inductors in large-scale solar panel installations</td>
<td>Time constraints due to additional supervision of trainees and timing of course available from SAT Training Services Ltd</td>
<td>Reschedule the training from the organisation Attend and undertake training</td>
<td>January 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.2.3: This format can be used for an action plan to list incomplete development planning.*

### 3 Record evidence of competence gained

Now you need to record in a suitable format any evidence that confirms you have achieved your development needs. This could be in any format, including:

- photographic digital images demonstrating additional skills
- video recording of the demonstration of additional skills
- written reports detailing evidence of development
- work-based records with signed-off achievements
- certificates awarded for achievement/tasks/activities
- witness statements recording what development work has been undertaken with a witness signature and date when achieved
- observation records of a task that involves a practical outcome or activity
- presentations – these could be PowerPoint™ or videos of a presentation
- online logs – detailing a series of development tasks
- essays – a formal written essay
- written reports
- recordings of conversations detailing skills utilised or employed through development
- recordings of telephone calls
- client feedback – formative feedback from a client on a task or activity undertaken by you
- key performance indicators – illustrating a before and after increase in performance rating
- letters
- emails detailing development.

Try to get any evidence witnessed as a true record – this will help to substantiate it. If you have a work-based recorder then ask them to do this, or ask a line manager to acknowledge that you have completed the development task or activity.

### Links

- NVQ Unit 7 Developing working relationships in construction and the built environment Learning Outcome 3 – Assessment Criteria 3.4 to 3.6
- HNC Link: Unit 60 Personal and professional; Development LO3 P3.2

### Portfolio activity (2.3)

Behind the section of your portfolio that recorded your aims and objectives you need to set up an index file that cross-references each achievement evidence against the corresponding development outcome.
4 Evaluate and update personal development aims and objectives

Initially you will have written your aims and objectives for your development work over a suitable time period. You now need to take an overall holistic evaluation of whether you have met those aims and objectives. This should draw upon the initial evaluations that you carried out for each individual development item/task or activity on your personal development plan (see Figure 2.2.2).

A suitable format is illustrated in Figure 2.2.4. You need to be honest when you evaluate each objective and critically evaluate if you have been successful in terms of meeting it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective number</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Objective evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To gain senior management professional qualifications, commencing with Certificate in Management</td>
<td>I really enjoyed the course. It has given me a new set of management skills that I can use within a senior role. Some of it was mathematical which wasn't really relevant to my role. I have provided written feedback to the course tutor (and my line manager has a copy) on the effectiveness of this qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Undertake some duties involving the management and development of trainees to include the monitoring and review of their personal development plans</td>
<td>I have spent a full year assessing, monitoring and reviewing the development of the four trainees who started last year. They have all completed their plans and are on target for completion of their probationary periods. Feedback from my line manager has been positive. Many remarks were made about how much the trainees have achieved this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To undertake training with our systems’ suppliers to gain detailed knowledge and understanding of how these systems operate and are installed</td>
<td>I didn’t get this objective completed and it will have to be carried forward to the next development plan. The additional trainees that I had to manage meant that any available time I had to undertake this training was absorbed with working with their developmental plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To run in-house training for my installation team on updating new systems</td>
<td>See objective evaluation point 3 above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective met:

Signed off by: ___________________________  Name: ___________________________  Title: ___________________________

Figure 2.2.4: An objective evaluation summarises how well the initial objectives have been completed.

Checklist
At this stage you should have completed the following documentation within your portfolio:
>
- a record and evaluation of the effectiveness of development activities
- cross-referencing of development activities against your development plan
- an evaluation of personal aims and objectives.
### Updating your action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action plan – incomplete objective number</th>
<th>Why the objective was not met</th>
<th>What needs to be undertaken to achieve the objective</th>
<th>Revised target date for completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3 To undertake training with our systems' suppliers to gain detailed knowledge and understanding of how these systems operate and are installed | Time management issues with the additional supervision of two extra trainees  
Did not have sufficient time resources to devote to this training | Training can be undertaken when trainees have reached the end of their probationary period  
Reschedule for July 2014 onwards | July 2015 |
| 4 To run in-house training for my installation team on updating new systems | Again, time issues as a result of additional supervision of trainees played a part in failing to meet this objective | Reschedule training to commence from August 2014 when initial guidance has been given from suppliers and it can be fed into staff development | July 2015 |

**Figure 2.2.5**: Complete an action plan to ensure you meet your objectives.

Figure 2.2.5 shows that the two incomplete objectives have been recorded and action planned to ensure something will be done to complete them. The target date for achievement has also been revised.

Any development outcomes that have not been completed will need to be action planned. Development outcomes are sometimes very important because of:

- salary increments that may be associated with the completion of all or parts of the development tasks or activities
- the promotional aspects of the development for employment opportunities
- the benefits associated with self-confidence and self-esteem
- increased respect in your interactions with colleagues.

Preparing an action plan will ensure that you remember the outcomes that have not been met. It also ensures that they will be carried over to the next appraisal or development plan.

### Acknowledgements

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