

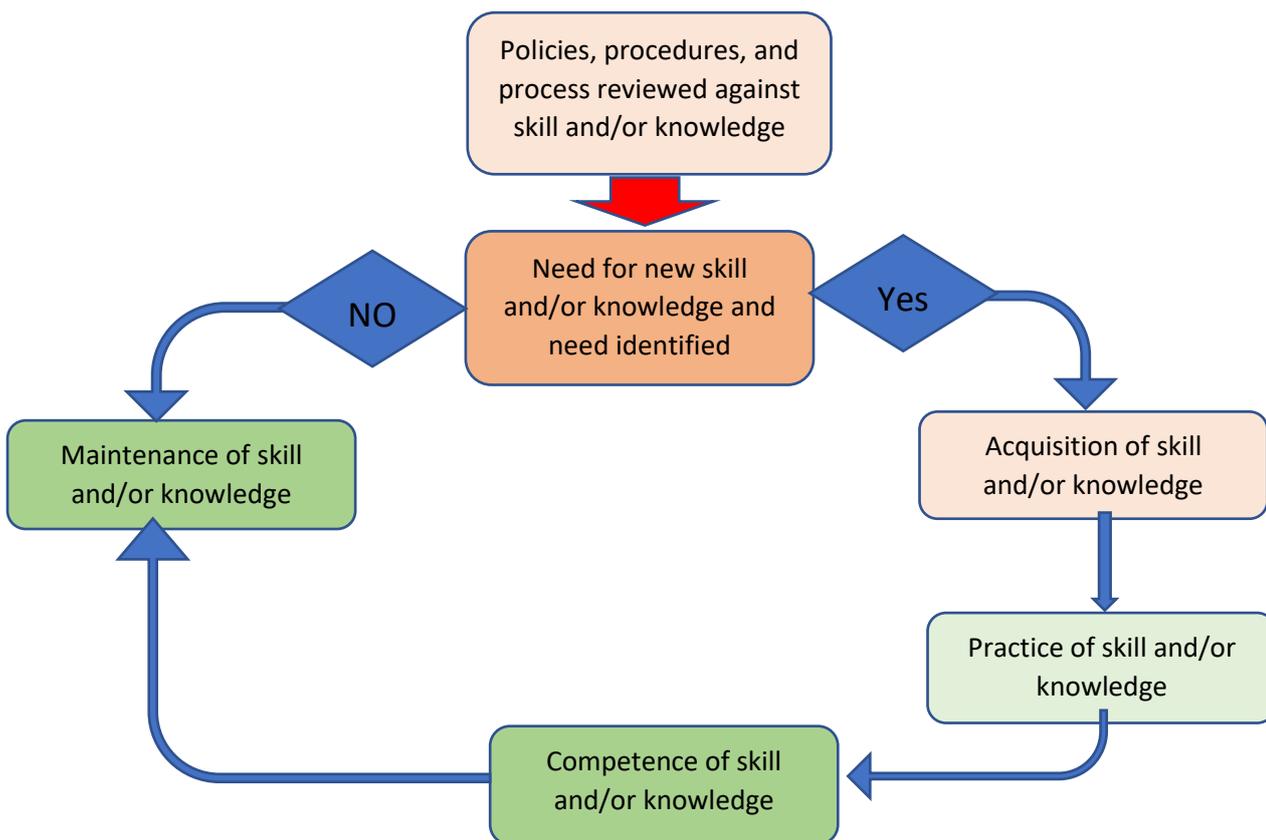
Personal and Professional Development



The aim of personal and professional development is to help you manage your own learning and growth throughout your coaching, leading or guiding career.

It is important that you continue to learn and develop to keep skills and knowledge up to date and ensure you continue to work safely, legally and effectively.

The skill and knowledge cycle



It's about where you are, where you need to be, and how you plan to get there.

Our organisational and personal needs should be identified by review the of policies, procedures, and processes, which are informed by our assessment of risk and its management. Changes occur, new or different activities, type of group, new legislation, different or new types of equipment and best practice changes with knowledge and technology. We may need to undertake personnel development meet the needs of the organisation, group or business supporting its strategic plan. There is also development to meet personal desire to become what you want to be. This could be seen as future proofing yourself.

Where possible you should seek external input to provide an additional layer of development identification. This could come from line management, peer challenge and feedback of your performance from students and clients. This is to ensure we have different viewpoints and perspectives in an attempt to eliminate blindspots in our identified development needs.

Once we have identified a need a method of recording is required. One way is with a Personal Development Plan (PDP); here we record when the need was identified. What the need is - skill, knowledge, or both. Where we are - our current level of performance against where we identified we need or want to be this could be with a competence matrix. How are we going to achieve this development? There are many learning activities that you can take part in such as on-the-job learning (being mentored), courses, workshops or computer-based learning.

Personal and professional development is often also called Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Personal development planning is about peoples review their performance, goals and achievements on a regular basis against their needs and to maintain a personal development plan (PDP). A good PDP is personal to you and is a working document, something you continuously update, it needs to be flexible use it as a guide only - things change. But above all it needs to be reviewed regularly. A good personal development plan will help you achieve your potential as it will help you to identify your skills gaps and improvement areas/learning needs.

Action Plans

Some development needs are huge! Certainly, not manageable in the whole and, unless we break them down, they can be overwhelming. Setting milestones is a check and balance against your progress towards your development need.

When we know the what and the how from our PDP we need to manage the progress. This can be done with an *Action Plan*. Our action plan needs to be SMART: **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**ealistic and **m**easurable.

Your goals should be clear, realistic, desirable and achievable. A first step in building an action plan is to look at yourself – your strengths, your preferences, your available time, your values and your preferred learning styles.

Personal Development Records

Once we have gone to the effort should we not record it? Yes, there are numerous reasons but here are a few. What if something goes wrong and someone gets hurt? Modern culture is to assign blame to obtain compensation. There is an attitude that there is no such thing as an accident. One way of safeguarding yourself is by keeping a development record. It may be more familiar to you being called a logbook. Your record of personal development shows what you did. It is also especially useful when you come to write a job application, a self-profile, or preparing for an interview.

To be of most benefit to you a logbook, or development record, should be reflective. Reflective practice is, in its simplest form, thinking about or reflecting on what you have done. It is closely linked to the concept of learning from experience. You think about what you did, what happened, and decide from there what you would do differently next time.

Thinking about what has happened is part of being human. However, the difference between casual 'thinking' and 'reflective practice' is that reflective practice requires a conscious effort to think about events and develop insights into them. Once you get into the habit of using reflective practice, you will probably find it useful both at work and at home.

5 top tips to manage your personal and professional development

Set a clear goal about what you want to achieve

Once you have a clear goal, you will find it easier to manage your personal and professional development. You will be able to choose the opportunities that stretch you personally and give you the experience you need.

Be intentional and plan your development

One of the best ways to develop yourself and your career is to ensure you keep learning. Carry out a personal performance review regularly. Work out a development plan for each year and aim to complete at least one piece of significant training each quarter.

If your employer only pays for training that gives them a return on their investment, you may need to pay for it yourself. Remember to put this against your tax

Look for and take the right opportunities

Development isn't all about the learning. You also need to find opportunities to apply your new knowledge and skills. But not all opportunities will be right for you and may not fit you personally, so choose carefully. Work with other parties to share, learn and support each other.

Discuss your career plans with your manager, mentor or mate

When it comes to personal and professional development, it helps if your manager, mentor and mates are on board with your plans. Since they should be supporting you in your development.

Set goals and measure your progress

The best way to manage your development is to ensure you go through a regular process of planning, taking action and reviewing your progress. You'll be clear about how you could improve your performance while seeing beyond day-to-day frustration.

Develop yourself, develop your brand

The clearer you are about your brand image, the more easily you'll find the right personal and professional development opportunities. As you take on more demanding roles, you'll overcome your fears and limiting ideas about yourself.

This creates an upward spiral that helps you get where you want to go. If you are struggling to know how to develop your career further, do reach. Seek advice and help.