Australian **Library** and
Information Association

THE ALIA
**CAREER
DEVELOPMENT
KIT**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of a professional development plan is to maintain, improve and broaden the knowledge and skills needed for professional life. The ALIA Career Development Kit is designed to assist you to build your acquisition of professional knowledge. The Kit is designed to help you:

- analyse your professional development needs;
- set objectives for meeting those needs;
- gain input to your development from line managers, colleagues, mentors and training professionals;
- build and maintain a comprehensive record of your knowledge, skills and experience; and
- determine professional development priorities for the future.

While the Kit can be successfully completed independently, you are encouraged to seek the assistance of a partner or mentor, or participate in a facilitated group activity such as a workshop or seminar.

Planning your career development may take several hours — a significant but worthwhile investment in your future.

We hope the Kit is useful to both you and your employer, as you plan your performance improvements in your present job and identify opportunities for growth in your personal and professional life.

STRUCTURE OF THE KIT

The Kit contains a workbook and three work sheets. The workbook guides you through exercises that will help you to consider:

- your primary goals and any barriers or constraints to achieving these goals;
- the skills you will need in order to achieve your goals and overcome barriers to success;
- the level of skills you want to achieve and the priority of these as short, medium or long-term objectives;
- the types of professional development (PD) activities available to achieve your goals;
- the role of workplace learning in developing these skills further;
- planning and recording PD activities;
- building a learning portfolio; and
- re-evaluating PD.

You will need to keep the Kit's work sheets close at hand as you work through these exercises.

ALIA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The ALIA PD Scheme enables ALIA Associate, Technician and Allied Field members to formally record, and be acknowledged for, their participation in PD activities. For further information email pd@alia.org.au.

If you are a member of the ALIA PD Scheme the completion of this Kit may be claimed as a PD activity.
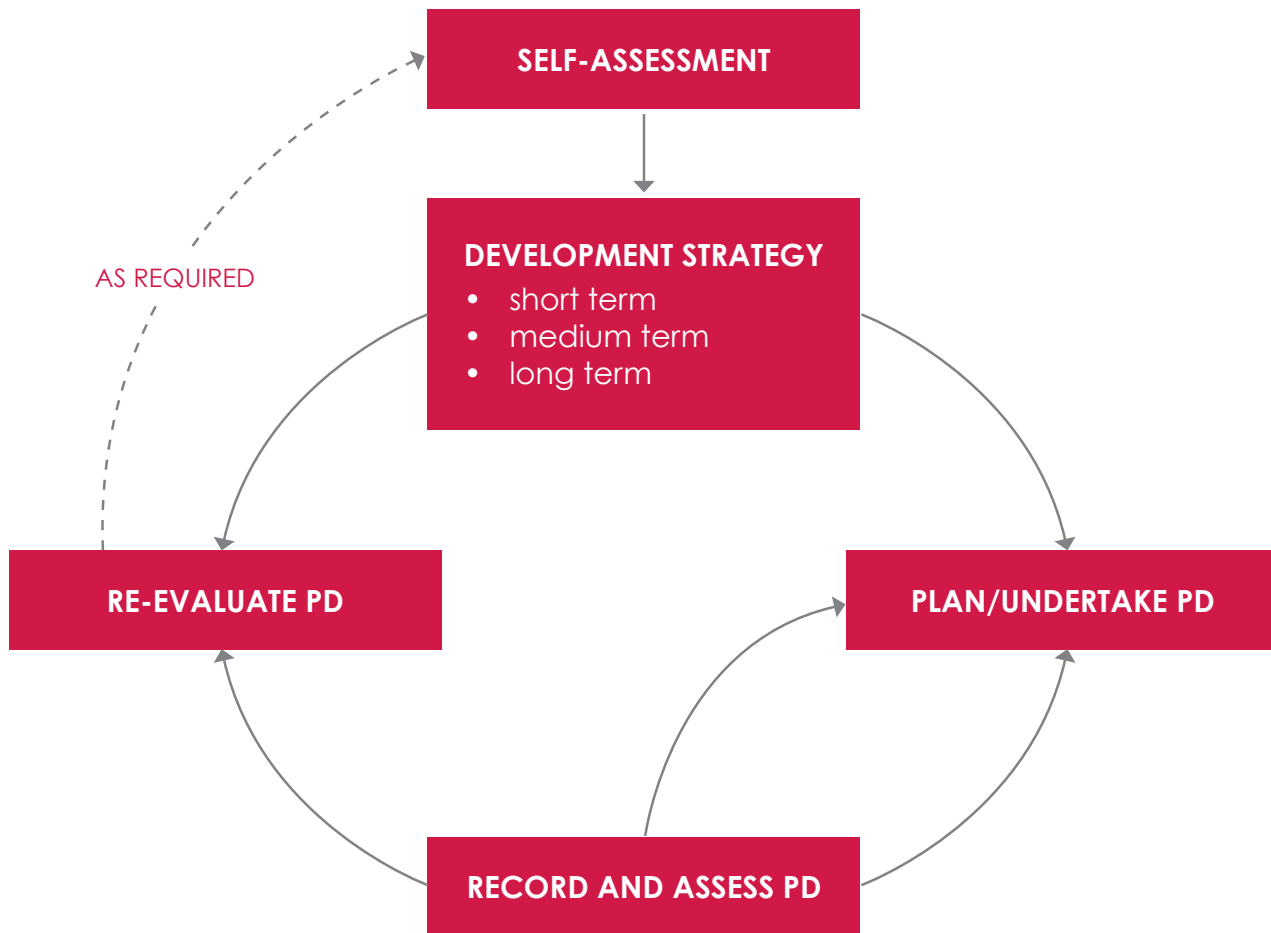
THE LEARNING CYCLE

David Kolb, an American psychologist describes learning as a circular experience with four stages. To be fully effective, all four stages must take place.

- **Do.** Learning begins with an experience. You can learn from all sorts of experiences but some are particularly important for PD, such as: going on a training course, attending a seminar, participating in a workshop, preparing a presentation, trying out a new technique, reading a book, researching and writing a report.

- **Record and assess.** Reviewing the experience is probably the most important stage in the cycle. Without review, the lessons to be learned will be lost. Try to find a few moments for quiet reflection and make some notes. Discuss the experience with colleagues, friends, or your mentor if you have one. Ask yourself some questions:

  - What was particularly interesting?

  - What was new or unexpected?

  - What happened and in what circumstances?

  - What could have been done differently?

- **Evaluate.** Having reviewed the experience it must then be placed in context. A mentor or more experienced colleague can be helpful at this stage to give you the benefit of their wider knowledge and experience. Be prepared to throw away old ideas. One of the biggest barriers to learning is to hold on to particular notions or ideas long after your own experience has told you they are outdated or discredited.

- **Plan next steps.** Learning is of no value to you unless you use it. Plan what you will do with the new knowledge or skill. Decide what you will do differently. Update your development plan and determine what you need to learn next.

These four stages underpin the structure of this Kit.

PD PLANNING PROCESS

SELF-ASSESSMENT

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
- short term
- medium term
- long term

AS REQUIRED

RE-EVALUATE PD

PLAN/UNDERTAKE PD

RECORD AND ASSESS PD

Adapted from the British Computer Society members-only website [http://www.bcs.org/]

HOW THE EXERCISES ASSIST IN THE PD PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING	COMPONENTS	EXERCISES
1. Self assessment	• primary wants • perceived barriers and constraints definition of personal success • current knowledge/skill levels skills gap • prioritise development needs	a. list your personal and professional wants (work sheet 1) b. list perceived barriers and constraints (work sheet 1) c. identify your level of personal success d. list skills needed to achieve aims (work sheet 2): - mark current level of proficiency - identify skill gap e. set development objectives (work sheet 2)
	• short-, medium- and long-term development objectives • support for professional development	a. list target/review dates for short-, medium- and long-term development objectives (work sheet 2) b. list short-, medium- and long-term development priorities in chronological order (work sheet 3) c. identify and record professional development support available (work sheet 3)
3. Plan and undertake PD	• learning styles • training options • PD activities • workplace learning	a. list opportunities for development in workplace for each development priority (work sheet 3) b. list opportunities for external learning (work sheet 3) c. nominate formal/informal training options (work sheet 3) - organise participation and record it - test reality with support person
4. Record and assess PD	• portfolio building • components of a portfolio	a. record PD experience in a learning portfolio eg. MyPD Tracking Tool
5. Re-evaluate PD	• assess quality and variety of activities • re-evaluate development objectives	a. record each PD activity and your assessment of it.

1. SELF ASSESSMENT

This section will show you how to:
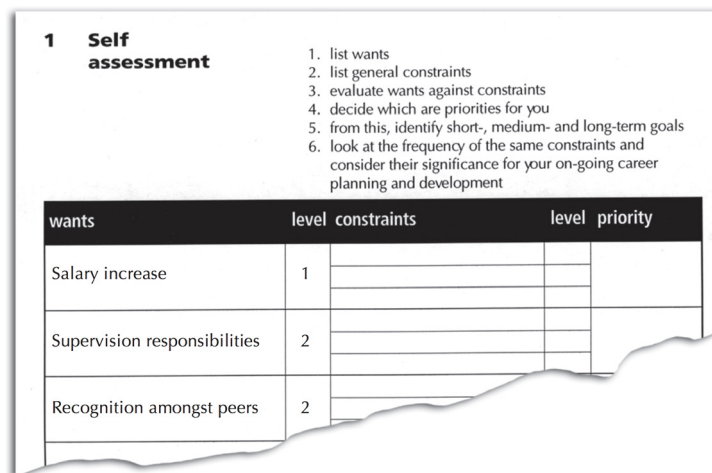
- identify your primary wants;
- identify the general constraints to meeting these wants;
- evaluate your wants against constraints;
- identify your short-, medium- and long-term development goals;
- consider your level of personal success and how it impacts on development goals;
- identify your current and desired levels of proficiency;
- prioritise each skill; and
- set your development objectives

The first step in the self assessment process is to identify the factors which will influence the direction of your professional development plans and which impact upon your ability to achieve these goals.

A)   YOUR PRIMARY WANTS

- consider your personal and professional wants relevant to your career planning.

    ✏   List your personal and professional wants on the 'Self assessment' record sheet.

    ✏   Rank them in order of their importance to you.

FOR EXAMPLE

1	Self assessment		1. list wants 2. list general constraints 3. evaluate wants against constraints 4. decide which are priorities for you 5. from this, identify short-, medium- and long-term goals 6. look at the frequency of the same constraints and consider their significance for your on-going career planning and development		
wants	**level**	**constraints**	**level**	**priority**
Salary increase	1			
Supervision responsibilities	2			
Recognition amongst peers	2			

B) PERCEIVED BARRIERS/CONSTRAINTS TO ACHIEVING SUCCESS

✏️ List your perceived barriers/constraints to success on the 'Self assessment' record sheet;

✏️ Rank them in order of your perceived ability to overcome them;

✏️ Allocate short-, medium- and long-term priorities (include both achievable and challenging goals);

• consider any constraints that occur frequently and think about their impact on your career development.

FOR EXAMPLE

1 Self assessment				

1. list wants
2. list general constraints
3. evaluate wants against constraints
4. decide which are priorities for you
5. from this, identify short-, medium- and long-term goals
6. look at the frequency of the same constraints and consider their significance for your on-going career planning and development

wants	level	constraints	level	priority
Salary increase	1			
Supervision responsibilities	2	education level self-confidence personal commitments	2 1 1	medium
Recognition amongst peers	2			

C) YOUR DEFINITION OF PERSONAL SUCCESS

✏️   Identify your primary level of personal success by ranking (1, 2, 3 ...) the categories listed below according to their relative importance to you at this time.

Consider:

- how does your current definition of personal success impact upon your personal and professional wants?

- how would you like to define your personal success for the future?

- does it fit in with your primary wants and perceived constraints?

- do you need to reassess your primary wants?

LABEL	DEFINITION	RANK
downshift	seek less responsibility at work, leaving more time for personal interests.	
plateau	intentionally turn down (or not seek) promotions for a period of time.	
portfolio career building	develop a wide range of skills that allow you to move easily among a wide range of tasks or jobs.	
dual career management	seek other than full-time work in one occupation with more than one employer in two occupational categories - two income sources which leads to an increase in income safety.	
career change	identify new career field via self-assessment which suits your revised needs and goals.	
flexi-work	negotiate part-time hours, job share, phased retirement, slot pooling (for example, five people share three full-time jobs).	
telecommute	work from home using modern telecommunications technology.	
fast track	seek progressively higher levels of responsibility and accountability, moving upwards within the organisational hierarchy.	

Adapted from Stevens, Paul (1998) My career, my life, myself. revised edition. The Centre for Worklife Counselling, Mosman, NSW, p28

The next step is to identify the knowledge and skills which will become the focus of the plan.

Consider:

- your primary wants, perceived constraints/barriers to success and your definition of personal success.
- what changes where you work are likely to take place and affect the nature of your work?
- what changes in the library and information sector are likely to occur in the next three to five years?
- what new responsibilities have you taken on in the last year and what additional skills and experience have you gained?
- what other skills could you develop to enhance your current position?
- asking your supervisor or mentor to review your list.

D)   SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE AIMS

✎   On the 'Professional development priorities' record sheet, list the skills needed to achieve your primary wants and overcome any barriers to success

✎   On the same sheet, assess your current level of proficiency against each one

✎   On the same sheet, mark your target level of proficiency for each of the skills you have listed;

✎   subtract the current skill level from the target level to reveal the 'gap'. The gap figure is used to illustrate the extent of PD needed to reach the target level.

FOR EXAMPLE

2 Professional development priorities					
Knowledge and skill description	**current level**	**target level**	**gap**	**priority***	**target/ review date**
general skills					
problem solving	2	4	2		
oral and written communication	1	3	2		
teamwork					
technical knowledge and skills					

E) SET DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

✏️ On the 'Professional development priorities' record sheet set priority areas for development by ranking skills requiring further development. Give priority to the development of skills with the greatest gap

FOR EXAMPLE

2   Professional development priorities

| Knowledge and skill description	current level	target level	gap	priority*	target/ review date
general skills					
problem solving	2	4	2	hi short	
oral and written communication	1	3	2	med short	
teamwork					
technical knowledge and skills					

2. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In this section you will:

- review your primary wants and constraints;
- list your current job skills and skill targets;
- define your skill gap;
- determine the priority areas for skill development;
- identify short-, medium- and long-term development priorities; and
- list a target/review date for each development objective.

Your short-, medium- and long-term development plans should reflect the outcome of your gap analysis and the subsequent prioritisation of each skill. They should take account of your personal aspirations, incorporating your definition of personal success, primary wants and perceived constraints, as identified in your self-assessment. For example, a short-term objective will include high priority skills, but can also include a lower-priority skill, the barriers to which may be easily overcome.

Your development plans will also need to consider your preferred style of learning, and the training and development options which are open to you.
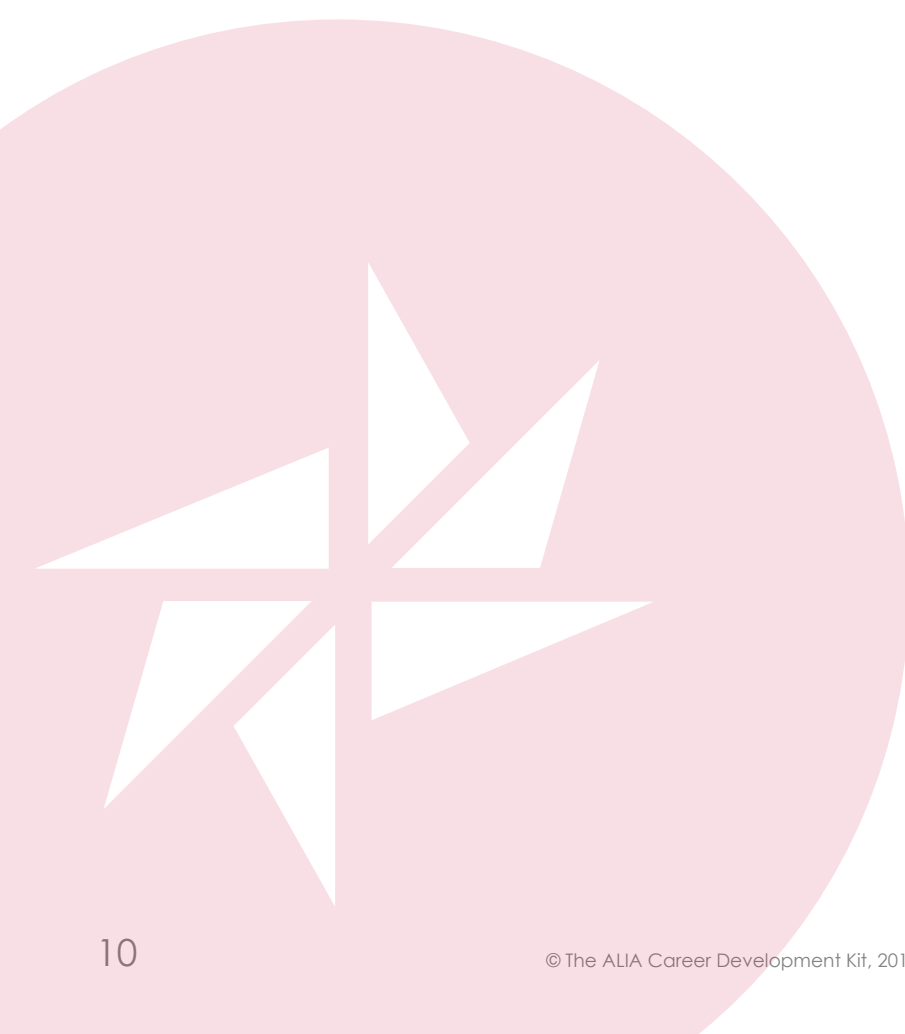
A)   TARGET/REVIEW DATES

Consider your personal and professional wants relevant to your career planning.

- what development options are available?
- how can you learn more about these options?
- how do you test the reality of these options?
- who can you ask for a 'reality check' on these options?

> 🖊 List a target/review date for each short-term professional development objective listed on the 'professional development priorities' record sheet

> 🖊 List a target/review date for each medium-term professional development objective listed on the 'professional development priorities' record sheet

> 🖊 List a target/review date for each long-term professional development objective listed on the 'professional development priorities' record sheet.

FOR EXAMPLE

2 Professional development priorities					
Knowledge and skill description	**current level**	**target level**	**gap**	**priority***	**target/review date**
general skills					
problem solving	2	4	2	hi	short
oral and written communication	1	3	2	med	short
teamwork					
technical knowledge and skills					

B)   DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- plot your professional development strategy on a time-line by listing your priorities chronologically.

> 🖊 On the 'Planning PD activities' record sheet, list all your short-, medium- and long-term professional development priorities as identified on the 'Professional development priorities' record sheet.

C) SETTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

You may want to seek assistance when deciding on professional development priorities. The following table may give you some ideas for people you could approach.

SUPPORT ROLE	LEVEL OF SUPPORT	POSITION
self- assessment facilitator	• assists employees to assess and identify skills, interest and motivations • gives feedback on observed behaviours and exhibited skills	supervisor mentor
information provider	• informs employee about options and barriers • gives employee information	supervisor mentor
referral agent	• refers employee to people who can be of assistance • refers employee to books and other types of information • suggests alternative PD activities • identifies PD providers	supervisor agent mentor people you meet at training courses ALIA members
guide	• encourages employee to focus on an available and realistic goal • gives employee reality feedback on the appropriateness of the goal • conducts a skills audit • determines the knowledge and skills required for a particular job or role • sets development objectives • assesses learning experiences • decides on what should be the next steps • offers encouragement and provides motivation to persist with a PD activity	supervisor mentor colleagues
coach	• suggests and encourages employee to consider suitable options • tutors the employee in writing a professional development plan • coaches the employee through the steps of compiling a plan • coaches the employee in how to manage their career and implement their professional development plan	supervisor mentor colleagues working in other areas of the organisation
companion	• agrees development • promotes/transfers when readiness is demonstrated and opportunity is available • teaches organisational knowledge	supervisor

Adapted from: Stevens, Paul (1998) *My career, my life, myself*, revised edition. The Centre for Worklife Counselling, Mosman, NSW, p42

On the 'Planning PD activities' record sheet record the professional development support currently avail- able to you for each development priority

Will any of the following influence your development plan?

- supply and demand trends;

- technological changes;

- personal commitment;

- learning style; or

- availability of courses.

FOR EXAMPLE

3	**Planning PD activities**					
development priorities	professional development support available	opportunities for development within the workplace	opportunities for development external to the workplace	formal/informal PD options	date of activity
short term: Communication	staff PD				

3. PLAN AND UNDERTAKE PD

In this section you will:

- list your short-, medium- and long-term professional development priorities in chronological order;
- consider the professional development support currently available to you;
- consider the factors which could influence your development plan;
- consider the role of workplace and external learning in adding to your inventory of knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- consider your preferred learning style/s and the types of PD activities that support those style/s;
- identify the main opportunities for achieving professional development priorities through workplace learning;
- list formal/informal training options for each professional development priority; and
- test the 'reality' of the options with the support person/s identified.

LEARNING STYLES

People learn in different ways. Alan Mumford, in his article 'The influence of learning styles on learning', defines four main learning styles:

- **Activists** are action-oriented — they learn by doing. For PD, they enjoy workshops, role plays and problem solving, but get bored reading manuals or listening to seminars.

- **Reflectors** prefer to stand back from experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect and analyse a lot of data before reaching conclusions. They take a back seat in discussions and listen carefully before making their points. For PD they enjoy attending lectures, reading articles, distance learning and private study, but shy away from workshops and making presentations.

- **Theorists** prefer to learn by reading and listening to experts. For PD they are prepared to get to grips with complex theory, undertake further academic study and participate in intellectual discussion but do not feel they get much from workshops or unstructured hands-on experience.

- **Pragmatists** like to be able to see clear links between learning experiences and their practical application. They tend to concentrate on PD which they can put to immediate use.

TRAINING OPTIONS

TYPE OF TRAINING	LEARNING STYLE
formal education and training	
formal face-to-face education	theorists, reflectors
distance education	reflectors
formal on-the-job training	pragmatists
self-paced PD courses	reflectors
informal learning activities	
professional reading (books, journals)	theorists, reflectors
conferences and meetings	
conferences	reflectors
workshops	activists
symposiums	reflectors
meetings	theorists
presentations and meetings	
presentation of material for courses, conferences, workshops, seminars, symposiums etc	activists
service activities	
reviews	pragmatists
workplace learning	activists

Critera for selecting PD activities

In planning your PD program, consider incorporating activities which:

- enhance your library and information knowledge and skills
- enhance your knowledge and skills in other areas relevant to your career development
- offer personal and professional growth
- encompass a range of learning styles.

Assessing the relevance activities to your plan

In assessing the relevance of particular activities consider the following lists as a starting point for developing your selection criteria.

Activities which:

- keep pace with changes in professional practice
- extend your professional knowledge and skills
- extend your generic skills
- complement your employers performance appraisal system
- link theory to practice
- improve individual job performance
- match your preferred learning styles
- have clear set of objectives
- are structured and have explicit learning outcomes
- are delivered or facilitated by an acknowledged expert in the field
- support growth, development and change in professional and practice
- are formally accredited.

A note on accreditation of providers

There are a number of formal mechanisms for accreditation of providers. However, accreditation may not neces- sarily be cost-effective or relevant for all providers and activities, and should therefore be considered as only one of a range of selection criteria. Please note, ALIA does not accredit PD providers or activities.

A)   WORKPLACE LEARNING

Consider:

- your understanding of workplace learning and what it means to you.
- that extended professional learning can and does occur in the workplace.
- that library professionals can provide evidence of, and make sound judgements about, the quality of their own learning.
- that extended workplace learning does not mean experience alone, but the learning that results from experience.
- what experience in your current job has added to your inventory of competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes).
- your preferred learning styles.

> ✎ On the 'Planning PD activities' work sheet list any opportunities for development in the workplace for each of your development priorities, include any workplace learning activities currently being undertaken.

B)   EXTERNAL LEARNING

✏️   On the 'Planning PD activities' work sheet list any opportunities for development in the workplace for each of your development priorities, include any workplace learning activities currently being undertaken.

FOR EXAMPLE

3 Planning PD activities					
development priorities	professional development support available	opportunities for development within the workplace	opportunities for development external to the workplace	formal/informal PD options	date of activity
short term Communication	staff PD		short course or seminar		

C)   PD OPTIONS

✏️   Nominate your formal and informal PD options on the 'Planning PD activities' record sheet and discuss them with the support person/s you have identified.

✏️   Following discussion with your support person/s, formally organise participation in the activity and record the date of the proposed activity on the 'Planning PD activities' record sheet.

4. RECORD AND ASSESS PD

BUILDING YOUR LEARNING PORTFOLIO

John Retallick and Susan Groundwater-Smith describe a learning portfolio as 'a compilation of information which is purposefully selected and which is appropriately annotated and validated to indicate evidence of professional learning', in The advancement of teacher workplace learning.A professional development module for the recognition and accreditation of extended workplace learning of teachers. They outline the components of a portfolio as follows:

COMPONENTS OF A PORTFOLIO

1. **table of contents**
   - quick guide to reader

2. **statement of purpose**
   - take into account context in which it is being submitted

3. **career map**
   - list current job skills

4. **statement of personal philosophy**
   - list your short-, medium- and long-term target levels for skills;
   - list your primary wants;
   - record your definition of personal success;
   - indicate your learning style.

5. **educational goals**
   - record your short-, medium- and long-term goals

6. **description of professional development activities**
   - what was the delivery method?
   - was the activity what you expected it to be?
   - was it pitched at the right level for your current degree of understanding?
   - did you learn anything new?
   - was it relevant to your learning objectives?
   - did it proceed at the appropriate pace?

7. **evidence of professional learning**

(Adapted from Assessment of prior learning: guidelines for assessors of prior learning in Tasmania)

- **authenticity** - have you actually acquired the skill or completed the activity that is being claimed?
- **currency** - is the competency still valid and able to be performed by you?
- **reliability** - has the learning reached acceptable levels?
- **relevance** - is the learning applicable to the competency claimed?
  - was the knowledge or skill put into practice on return to the workplace?
- **transferability** - can the competency be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned?
- **validity** - is there enough evidence to claim as a legitimate PD activity?

Your learning portfolio

Begin to build your own learning portfolio, by recording each PD experience. eg MyPD Tracking Tool.

5. RE-EVALUATE PD

Your learning portfolio will help you to recognise what professional development activities work best for you. Use your portfolio to identify activities which you can get the most from in the future.

Re-evaluate your professional development activities. Consider:

- whether the quality and variety of activities undertaken is adequate to meet your training and development objectives;
- whether you have got the right balance between technical and non-technical training activities;
- whether you are doing activities which suit your learning style;
- whether you are making progress towards achieving your development objectives;
- whether you are applying the knowledge and skills that you have learnt; and
- what PD you should undertake next.

SOURCES

Assessment of prior learning: Guidelines for assessors of prior learning in Tasmania 1994, endorsed by the Training

Authority of Tasmania, Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA), Hobart, Tas. Atton, C (1995) 'Writing the professional report (3)', *Assistant Librarian*, 88(1): 8–9.

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Mumford, A (1986) 'The influence of learning styles on learning', *Training and Development in Australia,* 13 (2): 7–9.

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Retallick, John & Groundwater-Smith, Susan (1996) *The Advancement of Teacher Workplace Learning. A professional development module for the recognition and accreditation of extended workplace learning of teachers, Centre* for Professional Development in Education, Wagga Wagga, NSW.

1   Self assessment

1. list wants and rank by level of importance
2. list general constraints and rank by ability to overcome
3. evaluate wants against constraints
4. decide which are priorities for you
5. from this, identify short-, medium- and long-term goals
6. look at the frequency of the same constraints and consider their significance for your on-going career planning and development

wants	level	constraints	level	priority

wants level of importance

0	1	2	3
not important	desirable	important	essential to maintaining/ increasing job satisfaction

constraints

0	1	2	3
insurmountable	difficult to overcome	able to be overcome	easily able to be overcome

2 Professional development priorities

Knowledge and skill description	current level	target level	gap	priority*	target/ review date
general skills					
technical knowledge and skills					
other knowledge and skills					

*priority
high/medium/low

short/medium/long term

Knowledge/skill levels

1	2	3	4	5
no knowledge or skill	some awareness but not sufficient to use	familiar with and able to use knowledge or skill myself	proficient in the knowledge or skill and able to show others how to use it	expert with a high degree of skill and/or comprehensive knnowledge

3   **Planning PD activities**

development priorities	professional development support available	opportunities for development within the workplace	opportunities for development external to the workplace	formal/informal PD options	date of activity