

IOA CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

Continuing Professional Development is the systematic maintenance and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional duties throughout your working life.

- **Continuing**, because learning never ceases, regardless of age or seniority;
- **Professional**, because it is focused on professional competence in a professional role; and
- concerned with **Development**, because the goal is to improve personal performance and enhance career progression, which arguably is much wider than just formal training courses.

As a member of the IOA, you are under an obligation to maintain and extend your professional knowledge and competencies under the IOA Code of Conduct. All members of the IOA should take part in this scheme. As well as supporting your career, maintaining your CPD also helps with membership of the IOA. When seeking election as MIOA and FIOA, evidence of undertaking CPD is now required to support your application.

The current IOA scheme aims to encourage members to consider their career and personal development. It is not merely based on collecting “hours” or “points”, but instead requires members to formulate a personal action plan to help them achieve their objectives. However, although the scheme is goal based, as a guide, you should aim for a total of at least 20 hours of CPD activity per year and considerably more for those looking to upgrade membership.

Your personal action plan will be individual and may include both technical and non-technical aspects. Members are encouraged to work with their employers in planning their professional development.

It is recognised that IOA members are often required to complete CPD plans for other organisations or their employers. These can be submitted in lieu of the IOA forms, providing they provide sufficient evidence.

SCHEME DETAILS

The IOA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme is based on identifying and achieving goals. They should relate to the theory and practice of the professional services you offer your clients and customers. Relevant activities include:

- In-house and / or external training courses
- Work-based learning
- Distance learning programmes
- Self-directed private study
- Preparation and delivery of papers, lectures and presentations
- Attendance at relevant meetings, lectures, seminars and conferences
- Relevant voluntary work
- Reviewing technical publications, relevant standards and guidance documents

The IOA has devised some forms to help you record your CPD activity, which can be downloaded from the IOA website. Many of the formats used by other related professional bodies may also be acceptable.

The suggested professional development process is set out below.

1. Review current situation

Before goals can be set, the current situation should be examined. Undertake a self SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis and consider the following:

- your last appraisal, job description, CV
- qualifications, courses, experiences, technical skills
- current and future requirements of your job
- future requirements of your career

2. Identify goals

Identify and prioritise some short and long-term goals, along with a time scale. Short-term goals should be fairly specific and achievable - look at one year ahead in your current job. Long term goals should include aspirations for your future career; say 3 - 5 years ahead. Look at your immediate job requirements and personal targets. Predict how the job is likely to change. Include family and personal considerations. Consider what skills and competencies you need to fulfil your goals.

3. Planning to achieve

After identifying specific goals and the skills needed, a plan should be drawn up to help achieve them. Prioritise the goals. The plan will probably change as you develop. Consider how you learn best and plan to make use of these methods. Think about how to record your learning and who can help you. Discuss your plans where possible, especially with your employer.

In addition to your goals, your plan will need to set out:

- your objectives
- the activities required to achieve your objectives
- the resources (financial and time) that you will need

Review your plan regularly (at least once a year) and make changes where necessary.

4. Record learning

Devise a system which works for you to record development activities whether planned or opportunistic. The IOA can provide you with CPD forms but any system is appropriate provided it can be understood by a third party.

Supplement formal records with notes of what you have learned, especially if you learned them through private study, and note how you will be able to apply your new knowledge. It may also be interesting to note whether a particular type of training or development activity was useful to you.

5. Review progress

Review progress regularly and evaluate what you have learned and how you can use it. Ask yourself whether you have achieved your aims, what improvement is evident, how will you use your new knowledge or skills and whether the goals or plans now need to be changed. Then go back to the initial assessment and make sure that you have your plan in place for the next period of time.

CPD PLAN AND RECORD SHEETS

The Institute has prepared some sheets for members to use to plan and record their CPD. An example of a completed form is also included on the IOA website. Some suggestions on using the record sheets are given below.

Your whole CPD plan and record should be no longer than six pages in total.

IOA Sheet 1 - Profile of Competence and Needs

This sheet is intended to be the baseline reference list for your development goals, based on the new skills you believe you will need in the future. It might be helpful to analyse your current skills and competencies and your future needs in subject groups, for example

- a) knowledge and understanding,
- b) application to practice,
- c) leadership, management and supervision,
- d) interpersonal skills
- e) professional conduct (including codes of practice relating to the environment and risk assessment).

Sheet 1 can be used to determine your development goals, for which you should also provide a goal reference and the priority (high, moderate or low). Be realistic about the number of goals. Ideally Sheet 1 should be contained on one page.

IOA Sheet 2 - Professional Development Plan

Sheet 2 sets out your professional development plan. Using the development goals and the same goal reference from Sheet 1, you should set out how you intend to address these and identify by when. Include both short and long term goals. You should also note the progress made on each goal and identify what follow up is needed – do not leave any blank cells. Sheet 2 should also be contained on one page.

IOA Sheet 3 - Professional Development Record

Sheet 3 can be used to keep a record of activities which have contributed to your professional development. This should include information about the activity; what it was, when it occurred and its duration. Sheet 3 should also include details of what you learned, the relevant goal reference (or if it was general CPD) and how you intend to use the knowledge.

It is important that you record all CPD activity undertaken – some of which may not be relevant to a specific goal but nevertheless is still useful CPD. It is also important to set out the progress you have made on each goal.

Sheet 3 can be up to four pages long and should include your CPD activity for the previous three years. As a guide, you should aim for a total of at least 20 hours of CPD activity per year.

Once you have done some CPD activity and recorded it on Sheet 3, don't forget to update your progress on the specific goals identified in Sheet 2.

Please see below for a checklist (please note that this is the same checklist that the reviewers will use)

Checklist	Yes/No
All 3 sheets completed	
Sheet 1 - 1 page and clearly laid out	
Sheet 2 - 1 page and clearly laid out	
Sheet 3 – up to 4 pages and clearly laid out	
Goals are numbered with same reference numbers used on all sheets	
Evidence of both short and long term goals	
CPD evidence for previous 3 years	
At least 20 hours per year	
Sufficient acoustics related CPD	
Acronyms explained	
Jargon avoided	
Evidence of on the job training	
Evidence of external training / networking with peers	
Evidence of self-study	
All goals addressed	
Demonstrated what has been gained from CPD	
Can document be printed in A4 size and is font legible	

GETTING STARTED – AN EXAMPLE

Below is a fictitious example and should hopefully prove helpful as a starting point for you to formulate your own action plan. Don't forget that once you have prepared an action plan, you should keep a record of your achievements and review your plan regularly. It may also be helpful to involve your employer with any plans.

The following paragraphs provide a brief example for a young acoustic consultant, recently qualified to degree level with a few years experience within an acoustic consultancy firm. Most of the work undertaken is in environmental and architectural acoustics.

Step 1 – Review current situation

A review of their current job requirements reveals that although our consultant generally knows enough to do most of the present workload, there are a couple of weak areas of knowledge; mechanical services noise and aircraft noise. Mechanical services noise is a regular consideration in the current job, whereas aircraft noise occurs infrequently.

Our consultant has no problem talking to clients face to face or in meetings but report writing skills are poor. The consultant is experienced with spreadsheets and some acoustic prediction software but has had little practice using database applications.

A lot of the current workload involves sound insulation so familiarisation with relevant documents is essential including Approved Document E to the Building Regulations. Future requirements of the job include handling larger projects and being responsible for the project budget, deadlines and reporting.

Step 2 – Identify goals

From reading the paragraphs above, some goals for our consultant are immediately apparent.

The high priorities are improving knowledge and application of mechanical services noise systems and prediction methods; improving report writing skills; and familiarisation with Approved Document E. These skills and competencies are required soon, and should be attained within one year.

The moderate priorities include improving project management and time management skills. Our consultant also needs to become more aware of time allocations and invoicing in order to keep future projects within budget. The deadline for these goals is within three years.

The low priorities include increasing knowledge of the measurement, assessment and prediction of aircraft noise and the use of databases. Neither of these skills are immediately required but may ultimately be useful in career advancement.

Step 3 – Planning to achieve

Now that some specific goals and required skills have been identified, a plan can be drawn up to help achieve them. In this plan it is important to identify the objectives and means to achieve them and is also useful to provide a deadline.

For example, one of the development objectives for our consultant is to improve report writing skills. This need could be addressed by becoming familiar with the "house" style, reviewing reports written by other colleagues. The consultant has also discussed the action plan with the employer who has agreed for attendance on a report writing training course. The deadline to improve report writing skills to an appropriate standard is within one year.

Step 4 – Record learning

The consultant is recording time spent in personal study, IOA evening meetings attended, and any other relevant activities using the forms available on the IOA website.

Step 5 – Review progress

As well as keeping records of relevant activity, our consultant is aiming to review and update the professional plan at least every 6 months. The consultant has also agreed with the employer to review the scheme in conjunction with the annual staff review.