



RTPI

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Legal Associate Membership Guidance

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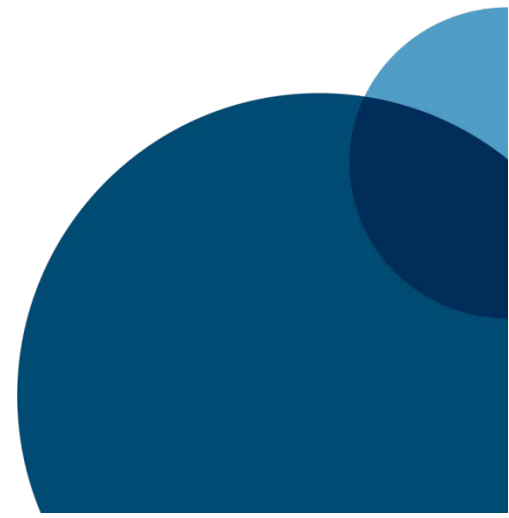


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This document replaces the previous Legal Associate membership candidate guidance document.

This document must be used for any first time applications submitted from January 2017.

Failure to comply with this document from January 2017 onwards will result in your application not being accepted by the RTPI.

1. Overview

The RTPI's vision for planning is as an inclusive activity encompassing far more than traditional statutory land-use planning. The RTPI welcomes into its membership a diverse range of professionals who contribute to furthering this spatial planning agenda, and offers a class of membership exclusively for planning lawyers: Legal Associate.

1.1 What does it mean to be a Legal Associate?

Legal Associate membership is awarded in recognition of the applicant's achievement and demonstrable competence in planning law. The status of Legal Associate of the RTPI, denoted by the post-nominals LARTPI, is an important milestone and a mark of professional recognition. It shows clients and other professionals that the holder has both experience of, and expertise in, planning law.

By joining the RTPI, in addition to their own professional body, Legal Associates become members of an institute whose charitable purpose is to advance the science and art of planning for the benefit of the public. This demonstrates that they share these values.

Legal Associates must abide by the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct (available at www.rtpi.org.uk). This sends a clear signal that they uphold high professional standards within their field of spatial planning.

Legal Associates are also required to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity in accordance with the RTPI requirements. Legal Associates are therefore committed to maintaining and developing their professional competence throughout their careers, supported by the RTPI.

1.2 Eligibility

You must be a qualified legal practitioner (solicitor, advocate or barrister, or Chartered Legal Executive) to apply for this membership class. You will be required to demonstrate proof of this (see [Section 2.1](#)).

You will also need to demonstrate that you have sufficient experience in planning law, as opposed to other types of law, to apply for this specialist membership class. The amount required is:

For candidates who work full-time:

- At least 3 years' experience as a qualified legal practitioner specialising in planning law.
- By specialising, we mean spending 720 hours a year out of an annual average amount of 1,200 hours on planning law. This works out at approximately 60% of your time. Over 3 years, this is a total amount of 2,160 hours.
- This experience must be recent: within 5 years of the date you submit your application.

For candidates who work part-time:

- The 2,160 hours can be spread over 5 years (a minimum of 432 hours a year for 5 years spent on planning law).¹
- This experience must be recent: within 5 years of the date you submit your application.

Queries about eligibility should be directed to the RTPI Membership Team on 020 7929 9462 or at membership@rtpi.org.uk.

1.3 Type of experience required

The table below outlines the different types of experience that can and can't count towards becoming a Legal Associate.

Experience type	Can it count?
Full- or part-time experience. As long as you meet the hours specified in Section 1.2.	Yes
Paid or voluntary experience.	Yes
Experience gained whilst self-employed. As long as you can demonstrate a consistent period of planning law experience at the appropriate level.	Yes
Experience which includes breaks. The experience required does not need to be consecutive, breaks in employment for parental leave, caring, redundancy or travelling are fine and can just be factored into your planning law experience providing your experience is within the 5 year period.	Yes
Experience gained whilst undertaking a full- or part-time degree or further studies.	Yes
Experience gained in the jurisdictions of the UK or the Republic of Ireland.	Yes
Experience gained in jurisdictions other than the UK or the Republic of Ireland.	No
Experience spread over a period of more than 5 years.	No
Periods of employment less than three months in duration.	No
Experience gained while training to become a legal practitioner.	No
Experience that is purely administrative or at a support level.	No

1.4 Who might become a Legal Associate?

In recognition of the diversity of the legal profession, the RTPI welcomes applications from planning lawyers working in the public and private sectors, or employed by charities or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Applications are encouraged from:

- Solicitors
- Barristers or advocates
- Chartered Legal Executives (FCILEx)²

¹ The reduced 432 hours a year over a 5-year period is only applicable to candidates working part time, to take into account flexible working arrangements. Those working full time must demonstrate the full-time hours of 720 a year for 3 years. Those working part time who are able to demonstrate the full hours may do so.

Candidates who initially qualified in a jurisdiction other than a UK jurisdiction or the Republic of Ireland can become Legal Associates. They will need to submit proof of being qualified to practise law in a UK jurisdiction or the Republic of Ireland (for example, through a requalification process such as the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Scheme run by the Solicitors Regulation Authority in England and Wales) and have the required amount of UK or Republic of Ireland experience as set out in [Section 1.2](#). The reason for this is that law is territory-specific and a regulated profession: lawyers are only qualified to practise in a specific jurisdiction.

Candidates do not need to demonstrate that all their experience and practice is in planning law. It is understood that candidates may also practise other areas of law. However, as the Legal Associate class denotes expertise in planning law, those who practise other areas of law but have only an interest in, or limited experience of, planning law, should consider instead becoming an Affiliate or Associate of the RTPI. Becoming an Affiliate or Associate is also an option for planning lawyers who work outside the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Candidates who are in any doubt as to the eligibility of their experience should contact the RTPI Membership Team on 020 7929 9462 or at membership@rtpi.org.uk.

1.5 Nature of eligible experience

Whatever the candidate's background, assessors will be looking for a breadth of experience in planning law, to give confidence to clients and other professionals. Candidates must demonstrate that their experience covers **all the areas of practice in List A** (see [Section 4](#)). Candidates do not need to have spent an equal amount of time on each area, it is understood that candidates may do more work in some areas than in others.

List A

- Planning advice including negotiations with or on behalf of Local Planning Authorities, and with public or statutory authorities (for example, highways authorities) as required.
- Drafting planning and associated agreements.
- Reviewing planning applications and advising on risk (e.g. relating to judicial review and statutory challenges to decision making).
- Advising on the content of reports necessary for a planning application.
- Conduct of planning appeals in whatever form, including instructing and/or briefing counsel.
- Disputes over breaches of planning control, including conduct of enforcement appeals.
- Representation about statutory and non-statutory planning documents.

Candidates may also include areas of practice in **List B**, if applicable. These are additional areas in support of candidates' experience: it is not mandatory to have covered these areas.

List B

- Dealing with planning issues arising from specialist areas, such as:
 - listed buildings;
 - conservation areas;
 - permitted development;

² FCILEx currently exist only in England and Wales (for example, there is a registered paralegal scheme in Scotland but planning is not one of the registered areas covered), but this guidance will be updated should this change in future.

- natural and cultural heritage issues;
- minerals and waste;
- transport, rights of way and highways;
- trees;
- flooding;
- advertisements; and
- Call-Ins.
- Advice concerning development plans.
- Compulsory purchase orders and compensation matters.
- Certificates of lawfulness.
- Actions in the High Court by way of challenge under the Planning Acts and judicial review.
- Time spent on adjudicating appeals.

1.6 The people involved

Many people will assist you in attaining Legal Associate membership. The roles these people will play are explained below.

- **You:** The application process, from start to finish, is about you. You are responsible for demonstrating how you meet the requirements based on your experience, skills and knowledge.
- **Your mentor:** Acts as a critical friend who can help you throughout the application process. More information about mentors can be found in [Section 1.7](#).
- **Your sponsor:** A current Chartered Town Planner who will sponsor your application for membership. Your sponsor must sign the Sponsor Declaration Form. More details on the sponsor declaration can be found in [Section 2.3](#).
- **Your corroborators:** This is someone who has first-hand knowledge of the work you have done and will confirm, in writing, the accuracy of your claims (for example, this may be your line manager or employer). All the work experience used to support your application for membership must be corroborated. The number of corroborators you have will vary depending on your employment history. More details on what a corroborator needs to provide can be found in [Section 2.4](#).
- **The assessors:** RTPI members who review your final submission. Our assessors are experienced planning lawyers who work in pairs and receive training on an annual basis.
- **The RTPI Membership Team:** Any specific queries about the application process can be directed here. The team can also provide additional support to candidates who are resubmitting. You can contact the Membership Team on 020 7929 9462 or at membership@rtpi.org.uk.

Some of these roles may overlap (e.g. your mentor may also be your sponsor if they are a Chartered Town Planner).

1.7 Mentors

Though not compulsory, a mentor can help you get the most out of your submission for Legal Associate membership and will provide you with additional support. Mentors can fulfil a

variety of different roles: a coach, a counsellor, a facilitator of networking opportunities, or simply a friend. However, mentors will generally:

- make themselves available to provide advice and support you either face-to-face, by email or over the phone;
- attend meetings with you at mutually agreed times;
- offer advice in setting specific and measurable objectives;
- offer guidance on the production of a Professional Development Plan (PDP);
- offer advice, where appropriate, on the final written assessment;
- guide you towards becoming more critically reflective of your own practice and progress;
- give you support and advice on professional and professionally-related matters.

Confidentiality is central to the mentoring process.

If you feel that you would benefit from having a mentor, it is your responsibility to find one as this is part of your professional development. Your mentor does not have to be a Legal Associate.

Many people have a stereotypical view of a mentor, assuming they need to approach a very senior person in their organisation, or their supervisor or manager. This is not necessarily so. Ask around your organisation and professional networks. Other avenues for finding a mentor include:

- networking through RTPI networks or forums;
- networking at RTPI regional or national events;
- networking at events for planning lawyers; or
- contacting large planning law firms.

Current assessors are not able to act as mentors, nor comment on specific Legal Associate applications, though they can give general advice on the application process and principles, as well as general careers advice.

2. The application process

2.1 What do I submit?

Your submission must consist of the following:

- a completed application form;
- a personal details and payment form;
- a written submission of 4,250 words (+/- 10%) comprising:
 - i. [Practical Experience Statement \(PES\)](#) – approximately 1,000 words;
 - ii. [Professional Competence Statement \(PCS\)](#) – approximately 1,750 words;
 - iii. [Professional Development Plan \(PDP\)](#) – approximately 1,500 words;
- scanned copies of proof of legal qualification, as below:

Type of legal practitioner	Jurisdiction	Proof required
Solicitor	England and Wales	Admission to the Roll of solicitors, as administered by the Solicitors Regulation Authority
Solicitor	Scotland	Admission to the Roll of solicitors, as administered by the Law Society of Scotland
Solicitor	Northern Ireland	Admission to the Roll of solicitors, as administered by the Law Society of Northern Ireland
Solicitor	Republic of Ireland	Admission to the Roll of solicitors, as administered by the Law Society of Ireland
Barrister	England and Wales	Completion of the Bar Standards Board Authorisation to Practise process and copy of a current, full practising certificate
Advocate	Scotland	Completion of the Faculty of Advocates Authorisation to Practise process and copy of a current, full practising certificate
Barrister	Northern Ireland	Completion of the Bar of Northern Ireland Authorisation to Practise process and copy of a current, full practising certificate
Barrister	Republic of Ireland	Completion of the Bar of Ireland Authorisation to Practise process and copy of a current, full practising certificate
Chartered Legal Executive	England and Wales	Qualification as a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (FCILEX). ³

- a [sponsor](#) declaration;
- declarations from [corroborators](#) which cover the whole period of your employment history;
- a proof of payment of the administration fee either online or by cheque.

³ Other membership grades of CILEX are not eligible to become Legal Associates but would be able to become Affiliates of the RTPI.

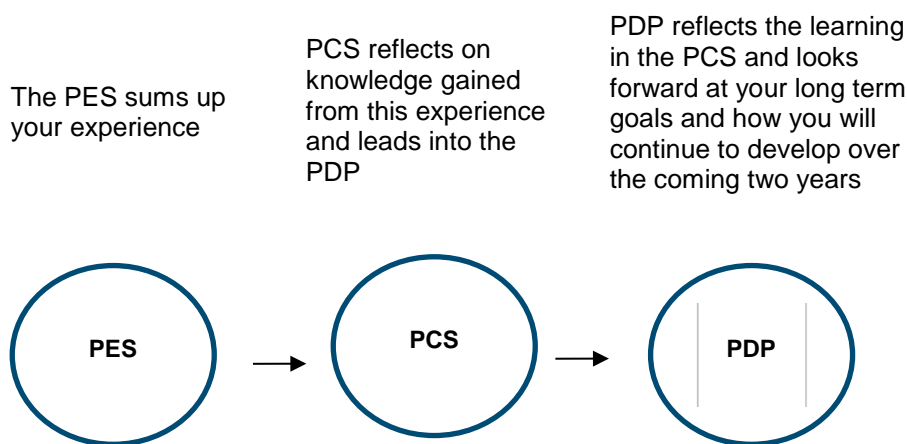
Each of these components should be submitted as a separate Word or PDF file and labelled as indicated in [Section 2.5](#). If you are using a Mac computer please save your document in a Word compatible format.

Top tips on how to prepare your submission can be found in [Section 7](#) of this document.

2.2 The written submission

The written elements of your submission are all interrelated. You should cross reference between them and ensure that each section is consistent with the others. Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this document provide information on each of the elements of the submission (PES, PCS and PDP) and on how to best prepare your submission. **Please ensure you proof read your submission.**

Relationship between the PES, PCS and PDP



2.3 The sponsor declaration

Your application for Legal Associate membership must be sponsored by a current Chartered Town Planner. You must have known your sponsor in a professional capacity for a minimum of six months. The Sponsor Declaration Form is available on the [RTPI website](#). Evidence of sponsorship must be included with your application.

Your sponsor must confirm that they have read your submission, and declare that they support your application and that they consider you to be a professional who reflects the values of the RTPI.

Your corroborator or your mentor can also be your sponsor; however, they must complete the sponsor declaration as well as providing corroboration.

2.4 Corroborating your submission

It is important that you have your PES and PCS corroborated by the relevant supervisor or employer. This is, in part, to ensure the integrity of all submissions. It is also for your benefit. Having someone review your submission will assist you in your reflection. This process will also ensure that your employer is aware of the claims you are making and the work that you have put into your submission. Please note that the RTPI does not require you to have your PDP corroborated.

You should maintain relations with previous employers when you change jobs. This will make it easier to obtain corroboration at a later stage.⁴

Self-employed applicants should include statements from clients or other professionals who have direct knowledge of your work.

NOTE

Any experience that you rely on in your submission must be corroborated.

Corroboration must come in the form of a letter or email from each employer or manager referenced in your submission. Within the letter or email, the corroborator must state:

- your name;
- your role within the organisation;
- their relationship to you;
- dates that you were employed;
- comment specifically on the work you have undertaken; and
- that they have read the relevant parts of your submission and agree with your claims.

The corroboration must be on letterhead or sent from a work email. (For corroborators' convenience, a form has been produced to help them gather the required information and is available on the [RTPI website](#)). It is not adequate to provide a generic letter.

Your corroborators do not have to be members of the RTPI. Your corroborator can also be your sponsor if they are a Chartered Member. Your mentor can corroborate your statement if they are also your employer.

2.5 How to submit your application

You must submit your application electronically as either a Word document or a PDF file. Submitting as a PDF file will ensure that your formatting, such as page layout, will not change so you may prefer to convert your files to PDF. Any letters or emails of corroboration are also best submitted as a PDF file. If you are using a Mac computer, please save your document in a Word compatible format.

Your application form, personal details and payment form, PES, PCS, PDP, sponsorship and corroboration must be submitted as separate files. Please label each file using the following convention:

Contact reference number⁵ – last name – LA – description of file (e.g. 00000 Smith LA PDP)

Email your submission to membership.applications@rtpi.org.uk. The RTPI accepts files up to 10 MB. If your application is larger than this, you will need to divide the application over several emails. Please ensure each email is properly labelled so that RTPI staff can identify all elements of your application. **Please also include your contact reference number and**

⁴ If your previous employer has changed jobs or retired, or the organisation you worked for no longer exists, you should ensure that they declare this within their corroborating statement.

⁵ If you have ever been an RTPI member (e.g. Student, Affiliate), this will be your current or previous membership number. If you have never been a member please use "00000".

'Legal Associate membership application' in the header of your email. (If you are not sure what the number was please contact membership@rtpi.org.uk.)

You can pay your administration fee online, by accessing the 'Membership' pages of the [RTPI website](#). Please include a copy of the receipt with your application. If you are paying by cheque or your employer is paying, please submit a copy of the application form with your cheque. Cheques should be payable to 'Royal Town Planning Institute'. Submissions will only be accepted electronically in the required format detailed above.

2.6 Submission deadlines and results dates

Submission deadlines and results dates are scheduled in advance and published on the [RTPI website](#). You will be advised of the outcome of your application by email and your full results will be posted to your primary address to arrive by the published date. The RTPI will not provide results before the published date.

2.7 How the submission is assessed

Once you have submitted your application:

1. The Membership Team will complete administrative checks to ensure you have submitted all relevant documentation. Your application may be delayed or rejected if there are any issues, so please ensure you undertake the checks yourself.
2. The submission will be sent to two RTPI trained assessors. They will consider whether you have demonstrated all the competencies and whether you have acquired the appropriate knowledge, skills and reflective practices to be elected to the RTPI as a Legal Associate.
3. Initially, the assessors will consider the submission independently of each other and then arrange to confer and agree on a recommendation as to whether you have met the requirements.
4. The assessors complete a feedback report detailing the outcome of the assessment and make a recommendation as to whether you have demonstrated the requirements to become a Legal Associate. You are formally assessed on the PES, PCS, PDP and general presentation.
5. The Membership Team review the assessors' report to ensure that due process has taken place.
6. You will be sent your results and the feedback report.
7. If you have been successful, you will be elected as a Legal Associate of the RTPI. If the assessors feel that some improvements are required for your PDP, you will be elected subject to the criteria set out in [Section 2.9](#).
8. If you have been deferred, you will receive information in your feedback report detailing what you have to resubmit.
9. If your submission has been rejected, you will receive detailed feedback, advice and guidance (including the availability of other membership options).

2.8 Assessment outcomes

There are three possible assessment outcomes – successful, deferral and rejection:

- A successful outcome means you have demonstrated that you have the required experience and meet all the competencies. If you are successful, you will be elected a Legal Associate.
- A deferral means that you have not yet met some or all of the requirements. This is not a failure. You are being asked to provide additional information to demonstrate the relevant competencies.
- A submission can be rejected, but only subject to the following criteria:
 - A submission can only be rejected if the candidate's experience, demonstrated in the PES, is short of the experience requirements by two years or more⁶.
 - A submission cannot be rejected the first time it is made. If the assessors think that the candidate's experience does not meet the requirements, the candidate will be given the opportunity to clarify their experience in a resubmission.
 - A submission cannot be rejected because the PCS and/or PDP do not meet the requirements. If the PCS and/or PDP do not meet the requirements, the submission will be deferred (see above).

You will receive a feedback report with your results. The report has a summary of your results on the front page and addresses each of the three parts of the submission separately.

- If you have been deferred the feedback report will explain the reasons for the outcome. Most importantly the report will give you direction on what you need to do to address the assessors' concerns with your submission. Depending on what you have been deferred on, the assessors will request either a full resubmission of the relevant section or a supplementary statement. Where possible, resubmissions are sent to the same assessors who determined the outcome of the original application.
- If your submission has been rejected, you will receive detailed feedback, advice and guidance (including the availability of other membership options).

NOTE

If you are required to resubmit, you will not be reassessed on any part of the submission or competencies that have already been considered successful, except general presentation.

2.9 PDP advice

The PDP is an important part of being a reflective practitioner. The assessors may feel that your submission is successful, and that you have demonstrated your competence, but there are elements of your PDP that could be improved. In this event, **you will be elected as a Legal Associate** and you will be required to submit another PDP to the RTPI for further comment. You will be informed of this process in your results letter and feedback report. You

⁶ See Section 2.10 – candidates have up to two years from the date of their original submission to gain more experience.

will also enter Continuing Professional Development (CPD) monitoring. This means that after two years you will be written to and required to submit:

- i. Your current PDP
- ii. PDPs for the two year period
- iii. A CPD record showing 50 hours of CPD in the previous two year period.

CPD is a requirement under the Code of Professional Conduct. If you fail to submit a PDP or fail to comply with the RTPI's CPD monitoring request, this will constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct and disciplinary action would be taken against you.

2.10 Resubmissions

If you have not met any or some of the competencies you will be asked to resubmit either the full section or provide a supplementary statement. If you have not met the experience requirements you can wait for the appropriate future submission date, bearing in mind you will still need to comply with the requirements in [Section 1.2](#). You may wait with your resubmission up to two years from the date of your original submission, after this period you will have to submit a new application with at least one recent case study.

Further details about resubmission are on the [RTPI website](#).

2.11 Appeals procedure

Candidates who have resubmitted their application at least once, and are still unsuccessful, can submit an appeal, if they feel that they have a reason to presume that the assessment of their submission was not carried out in a thorough and professional manner. For any queries about appeals and the process, please contact the Membership Team on 020 7929 9462.

3. Format of the written submission

3.1 Structure

The submission should be broken down into the three sections:

- [Practical Experience Statement \(PES\)](#)
- [Professional Competence Statement \(PCS\)](#)
- [Professional Development Plan \(PDP\)](#)

There is a PDP template on the [RTPI website](#) and it is compulsory to use this.

3.2 Professional standard

Candidates must ensure their submission is of a high professional standard. You are formally assessed on general presentation. You must check your submission to ensure:

- it does not contain spelling mistakes (spell check does not always give the right outcome so do not rely on it);
- the grammar is correct;
- it is laid out clearly;
- it meets the guidelines on formatting as set out below; and
- it is professionally presented.

Build time into your application process to ask someone to read your submission. Badly presented submissions are likely to be unsuccessful. This is well within your control and a hastily put together submission is not going to get you the outcome you want. Ask a lay person to read your submission to see if they can understand what you do.

Legal Associate membership is a professional qualification and submissions that include inappropriate information, or breach confidentiality, are likely to be unsuccessful.

3.3 Presentation

Consider how your submission is presented. The submission must be Word processed in Arial 11pt font and double spaced for easier reading. The submission must be in English and composed to a high professional standard.

Referencing, where required, must be to the Harvard style (e.g. author, date). **Paragraphs and pages of your submission must be numbered** – this enables the assessors to provide specific feedback on your submission. Include your full name and contact reference number on each page.

3.4 Additional materials

Candidates are permitted to include illustrations in their written submission, though this is not a requirement. It is unlikely that more than two illustrations would be needed.

Appendices, including any additional materials, such as reports or cuttings, are not permitted to accompany the written submission. Assessors will not base their decision on examples of the candidate's professional work other than that described and reflected upon within the written submission and will not take into account opinions of a third party (manager appraisals, references, performance reports etc.).

3.5 Confidentiality, plagiarism and ethical consideration

You are required to demonstrate an appreciation of the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, and your submission should be written in the spirit of this Code. Therefore, you should be aware of professional confidentiality and ensure you have your employer's consent before disclosing any material that may be considered to be professionally sensitive. In the event that this consent cannot be obtained, you must either omit or disguise this information by anonymising names and locations.

You should avoid specifically naming colleagues or other professionals, regardless of whether this is in a positive or negative light. If that proves to be difficult please contact the Membership Team to seek advice. All submissions are treated as confidential and our assessors are bound by a confidentiality agreement.

Your submission must be all your own work. In the event that a candidate is found to have plagiarised, appropriate action will be taken by the Membership Team.

3.6 Word count

The word limit for submissions is 4,250 words +/-10% (i.e. 3,825 – 4,675 words). The submission itself is indicative of the candidate's research, analysis and report writing skills. You should include the word count at the end of each section of the submission.

The submission should be divided, approximately, in the following proportions:

PES – 1,000 words
PCS – 1,750 words
PDP – 1,500 words

Write the word count for each section after the final paragraph. Introductions, headings and sub-headings must all be included in the word count.

The PDP template (instructions, column headings etc.) is not included in the word count. Exceeding the word limit will result in delay and possible rejection of your submission so please double check the word count before sending the submission.

3.7 Footnotes

Footnotes must only be used for cross referencing (e.g. to your submission or other documents) or explaining abbreviations. Footnotes are not included in the word count.

Footnotes should not normally take up more than the equivalent of four lines of text. Excessive use of footnotes, or using footnotes to include additional information, and therefore increasing your word count, will result in you being asked to review your submission. Competencies or experience demonstrated only, or predominantly, in footnotes will not be deemed successful.

4. Practical Experience Statement (PES)

This is the first of the three sections of your written submission. The recommended word count for this section is 1,000 words.

4.1 The purpose of the PES

The PES is used to assess whether you have undertaken sufficient practical experience at the relevant level to justify your election to Legal Associate membership. In the PES, you are providing the assessors with an overview of your eligible experience (see [Sections 1.2-1.5](#)). This experience must be gained after qualification, within the last 5 years and be current up to a month prior to your submission.⁷

If you only just meet the experience requirements you may wish to wait longer before submitting. It is best to make a professional judgement yourself about your experience.

4.2 How to structure the PES

In the PES, you need to describe the planning law experience you have gained over the period of practical experience. You must cover **all the areas of practice listed in List A in [Section 1.5](#)**.

You should provide coverage in chronological order. For each position you have held, the statement must include:

- the name and type of employer;
- the nature of the business (law firm, local authority, multi-disciplinary practice etc.);
- the size of the organisation and where you sit within the organisation;
- your own job description: a summary of the main role and responsibilities;
- the nature of the work you undertook in the role; and
- dates and time periods covered.

The PES must focus specifically on your **own** professional responsibilities. It is a factual description of roles and responsibilities and does not need to focus on competencies.

Where you have been involved in group tasks or cases, you must describe your own role and responsibilities and how you personally contributed. Some cases you have been involved in may not have reached completion when you are finalising your submission.

If your job has changed or evolved within a single organisation over the period of practical experience, you should clearly indicate this.

NOTE

If you do not clearly articulate what **you** did in your roles, you may be asked for a supplementary statement or to resubmit a section of your submission which will delay your election. Spending the time defining your contribution in the PES will make preparing your PCS easier. Your PES must show that you have gained the relevant amount of experience and that it is recent.

⁷ If you are not currently in employment, please indicate in your PES how you are keeping your planning law skills and knowledge up to date.

4.3 What do the assessors look for in the PES?

The assessors will use this part of the submission to determine whether you have the right amount and the right type of experience. Assessors may disregard parts of your experience if:

- you only describe the function of your organisation or department rather than the work you have done;
- they have difficulty identifying what part of the work outlined was done by you;
- you have included work done while training;
- you have included work that is not recent (within the last 5 years);
- you have not covered all the areas of practice in List A (see [Section 1.5](#));
- you have described roles that are predominantly administrative, or generic management, and not planning law; or
- they are not convinced you have gained the required amount of experience.

5. Professional Competence Statement (PCS)

This is the second section of your written submission. The recommended word count for this section is 1,750 words, and 1,000 of these words should be allocated to Competency 16.

5.1 The purpose of the PCS

Planning lawyers rarely encounter standard problems needing standard solutions and it is thus the ability to learn in a reflective manner, through taking action, that is the hallmark of the true professional.

You need to show an understanding of the context in which you operate, that you are aware of the factors that impact on your work and that you can analyse and criticise your work to develop and improve performance.

There are 5 competencies in total that you will need to demonstrate in the PCS. Information on how to demonstrate each competency can be found in [Section 5.3](#).

NOTE

It is important that the PCS is not too descriptive. It is not only about what you did, but also why you did it in a particular way and how you went about it.

5.2 Using case studies

The PCS is not simply an extended PES. You are expected to demonstrate your experience and competence through the use of case studies and you should:

- **Use one to two case studies to demonstrate you have met all the competencies.** The most effective way to demonstrate your professional competence is by discussing one to two case studies or projects drawn from your experience. Identify which aspects of your experience demonstrate each of the competencies outlined in [Section 5.3](#). Carefully select your case study or studies and determine how you will divide the word limit.
- **Use language that shows your own personal awareness.** Use language such as: “I contributed to this by...”; “I was responsible for...”; “I learned...”; “this project helped me to understand...”; “the tensions resulted in...”; “this was a challenge for me because...” or “as a result of changing circumstances, I...”.

Keep in mind that:

- **You must not structure your submission around the competencies.** You will not be able to present an effective submission if you adopt a tick-box approach using a short example of how you met each competency or if you use the competencies as sub-headings. The competencies are interrelated and describe what you would do to manage an activity within the planning environment.
- **You do not need to only use case studies where the outcome was successful or where your decisions and actions were successful.** It can sometimes be easier to show reflective thinking when something was unsuccessful or where the

anticipated outcomes were not achieved. The assessors are not judging you on the outcome of the case study project but on your contribution and learning.

- **You are not being judged on the size of your case study.** It is better to choose a smaller case study where you have had considerable involvement and input, over a larger case study where your contribution may have been limited.

One way to structure a case study is to include the following elements:

- problem definition – briefly describe the issue and provide enough background to provide the assessors with the context of the situation;
- the challenges and issues that arose and how they were addressed; and
- a conclusion which summarises what you learned from the experience and how it relates to the competencies.

NOTE

You should ensure your submission only refers to information in the public domain and does not breach professional confidentiality. Your submission should not refer to individuals by name or make references which could make individuals easily identifiable.

5.3 The competencies required to become a Legal Associate

Your PCS will be assessed against 5 competencies which are all equally important and integral to becoming a Legal Associate. The competencies are interrelated and linked to one another.

The Institute has set out the minimum type of evidence you are required to demonstrate for each competency. Some candidates will have achieved more in their career and are encouraged to demonstrate this.

The types of evidence required range from ‘awareness’ to ‘core’ and are defined below..

1. **Understanding** – Demonstration of how the competency applies to your case study from a theoretical or observational viewpoint. Whilst your personal experience of the competency is not essential, your understanding of how and why the competency applies to your case study should be apparent.
2. **Application** – Demonstration of how the competency applies to your case study from a personal practical viewpoint. Your personal experience and evidence of depth of knowledge of the competency are essential.
3. **Core** – Demonstration of how the competency is integral to your actions as a professional. This is more than just the application of your knowledge, it should be core to how you operate and be imbedded throughout your case study.

For each competency there is an accompanying descriptor, guidance statement and prompts to aid your thinking. The descriptor defines the competency, the guidance statement explains how to demonstrate the competency and the prompts are an indication of how you will be assessed.

For more information on each competency, please see Section C1.

You must demonstrate all competencies for your PCS to be successful. Please note, if you use more than one case study, you do not need to demonstrate all of the competencies in both the case studies. You are free to select those case studies you consider best demonstrate your achievements.

The assessors will assess your PCS against each of the competencies ensuring that you have demonstrated the **minimum** type of evidence required, as stated below. For reference purposes, this table also includes competencies that are featured in the routes to membership for other RTPI membership classes. This is to explain the numbering used and to show the distinctive nature of the Legal Associate class.

Competency	Type of evidence for Legal Associate membership
C1. Professionalism and the RTPI Code of Conduct	Core
C8. Ethical challenges	Understanding
C9. The political framework	Understanding
C11. Reflection and review	Core
C16. Identifying and analysing legal issues and risks, and recommending a course of action	Application
<p><i>The following competencies are required for the Associate class and routes to Chartered membership only. They are included here for information:</i></p> <p><i>C2. The spatial planning context</i></p> <p><i>C3. Identifying and analysing issues</i></p> <p><i>C4. Gathering appropriate information</i></p> <p><i>C5. Identifying and analysing a course of action</i></p> <p><i>C6. Initiating and implementing a course of action, or, for academic applications, dissemination of knowledge</i></p> <p><i>C7. The legal framework [for planners]</i></p> <p><i>C10. The economic context</i></p> <p><i>C12. Sustainability</i></p> <p><i>C13. Engagement and participation</i></p> <p><i>C14. Specialist knowledge and its relationship to spatial planning</i></p> <p><i>C15. Leadership in spatial planning</i></p>	

C1. Professionalism and the RTPI Code of Conduct (Core)

Descriptor

The Legal Associate class gives planning lawyers professional recognition. In line with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, Legal Associates should demonstrate their commitment to good practice, including respect, tolerance, confidentiality and honesty.

Part of being a professional includes liaising and cooperating with others and may require the use of different communication methods tailored to the audience. Legal Associates should also show an understanding of equality and diversity in all their activity. Negotiation, mediation, influence and advocacy are also key attributes.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency, professionalism and adherence to the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct must be evident throughout your case studies. You must also provide a specific example in at least one of your case studies as to how the Code of Professional Conduct applies to your work. You should evidence a clear sense of professional responsibility for your own actions and how your performance impacts on others. This may be in relation to conflict of interest, disclosure, professional conduct, discrimination, fees or any other issue covered by the Code of Professional Conduct.

For example, you might show an understanding of equality and diversity when giving legal advice to planners. You might explain how you responded to a potential conflict of interest at work, dealt with commercial confidentiality or responded to complaints. Or you might explain how you advised a client on the need to instruct a planner because the work they required was outside the scope of your professional competence as a lawyer.

Just mentioning the Code without explaining the context and its implications will not result in a successful application. While demonstration of this competency may overlap with other competencies (in particular ethical challenges), you are still expected to demonstrate this competency separately.

Please remember, professionalism also relates to the standard of your submission and quality of your work as set out in [Section 3.2](#). This will be formally assessed under 'general presentation'.

Prompts

- Have you demonstrated professional characteristics including the importance of upholding the highest standards of behaviour?
- Have you demonstrated how the Code of Professional Conduct impacts on your work in professional practice and why it is important?
- Is this competency integral to your approach throughout your case study?

C8. Ethical challenges (Understanding)

Descriptor

The nature of planning work means that planning lawyers are faced with ethical challenges. They must understand and act appropriately given the sometimes conflicting requirements of their employer, the needs of the individuals affected, the collective needs of the community and their own personal views. All planning lawyers need to understand how to behave in situations where their ethical and moral behaviours are tested.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you need to show an understanding of ethical challenges and how these can impact on your work. You should either consider a situation where you have observed and reflected on, or have experienced, an ethical challenge within your work and have acted appropriately. Ethical behaviour is, of course, closely aligned with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct and professionalism but it is also a very distinctive trait of the accomplished practitioner and one which builds trust in the individual. You do not necessarily need to reference the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct for this competency.

You may want to consider a situation where you had to balance your personal and professional views and navigate the situation using purely your professional judgement. Most importantly, you need to explain why this was an ethical dilemma for you and how you overcame the problem.

For example, it could be a situation where you or a colleague have been offered a personal inducement to support a particular outcome on a planning application. Or how might you deal with a situation where you uncover technical errors in a colleague's work?

Prompts

- Have you clearly explained why the situation you observed or experienced was an ethical challenge for you?
- Have you explained how your personal views came into conflict, or could come into conflict, with your work?
- Have you explained how the situation was resolved?
- If you observed, rather than experienced a situation relating to your case study, have you explained what you would have done if you were in that situation?

C9. The political framework (Understanding)

Descriptor

The planning process and its outcomes often come under scrutiny, nationally and locally, on account of the level and range of impact and what it can achieve. New jobs, additional housing, or an alternative use for a plot of land whose openness is valued by members of a community are examples of this. Planning lawyers need to understand that whilst professional planners apply technical skills to inform judgements, ultimately, they have to balance a range of conflicting demands in the use of land, including differences between varying public opinions. Consequently, any practitioner involved in planning should see the need for a clear and ongoing understanding of the political framework in which planning operates.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you need to show an understanding of the political environment within which planners and planning lawyers operate and how this can impact on your work. You should refer to the role and impact of the political framework that can influence and shape planning policy and its outcomes. You should show an understanding of how particular influences on the case study you have been involved in, may have affected the outcome.

For example, you might explain a situation where you had to give legal advice to a planner weighing up local concerns or reservations, perhaps contrary to wider national or regional policy. Or you might explain how you might adapt an argument to suit a particular political audience.

Prompts

- Have you explained the political nature of the area of planning you have been working in?
- Have you explained how planners and/or planning lawyers work effectively within this structure?

- Have you demonstrated how the political framework informed your approach to the case study?

C11. Reflection and review (Core)

Descriptor

Reflective practice is a distinguishing feature of a professional and is defined as “the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning” (Schön 1983, p26). A process of reflection and review ensures that professionals evaluate their work outcomes, are aware of how their work can be affected by external changes; and use that reflection to influence the success of future practice. It also means taking a critical look at your own learning as well as performance. The RTPI requires Legal Associates to regularly reflect on learning through the Code of Professional Conduct and its CPD requirements.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you must reflect on and review your work throughout your case study. You must provide a specific example of how critical reflection impacted on subsequent practice or how, as a result of your reflection, you might do things differently in future. You need to explain how you reflect on and review both your professional practice and your own personal development. This is not about demonstrating that you are a perfect lawyer but rather highlighting what you may do differently and areas for development.

Prompts

- Have you evaluated how successful a course of action was?
- Have you explained how critical reflection on a piece of work impacted on subsequent practice, or how you would do things differently in the future?
- Have you demonstrated the benefit of reviewing your behaviours, actions and performance?
- Have you demonstrated a commitment to continuous reflection in your ongoing development of professional skills and knowledge?
- Is this competency integral throughout your case study?

C16. Identifying and analysing legal issues and risks, and recommending a course of action (Application)

NOTE

This competency is unique to the Legal Associate class, and is designed to bring out the specialist expertise of candidates. You should therefore allocate 1,000 words of your PCS (out of 1,750) to this competency.

Descriptor

A professional planning lawyer must have the ability, based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of planning law, to reach appropriate, evidence based legal decisions and to appraise all options with potential solutions in mind. They should be able to identify and analyse the relevant legal issues and risks themselves rather than under instruction from

others. Once they have a full understanding of the legal issues and risks, supported by appropriate information, they will recommend a course of action to address these issues.

Analysing legal issues and risks is a key competency of the RTPI Legal Associate. It demonstrates the distinction between planners' and planning lawyers' roles. Planners weigh up evidence, consult, analyse information and advise accordingly. Planning lawyers look at planners' reasoning and advice, evaluate whether it is legally correct, assess the legal risk involved and recommend an appropriate course of action.

Guidance statement

To demonstrate this competency you must show how you analysed legal issues and risks in the context of planning law. You need to demonstrate effective analytical, evaluative and risk assessment skills and the ability to reach appropriate, evidence based decisions on which you recommend an appropriate course of action.

You must clearly explain what the issues were and how you identified them, how you weighed them up and how this affected the direction of your case study in question. You must demonstrate that you are capable of reviewing relevant information and evaluating risk, and can articulate why the recommendations you made were appropriate.

It is vital that you explain your thinking here and do not rely simply on a narrative of what the team or department did. If you are using a team example, you must demonstrate how you approached your role in this and what factors you personally considered.

Examples could include:

- Reviewing planning applications to assess compliance with the relevant development plan and whether other material considerations are sufficiently explained.
- Assessing whether a planning decision is challengeable and advising accordingly.
- Assessing and advising on the possibility of judicial review.
- Assessing and advising on the possibility of planning enforcement action.

You could also explain a situation where, following the above actions, you took recommendations back to a planner and explained their implications, faced any particular barriers or objections to your original course of action or responded to issues arising from additional information that has come to light.

Knowing the context is essential in order to give professional advice, so is a key part of analysing the issues and risks. A planning lawyer is unlikely to be asked to advise on a discrete point of law without knowing and understanding the context, so you must address this as part of the competency. This must include referring to relevant Acts or statutes. This context may also include, for example, the commercial implications of the advice given in terms of costs and land values, or the fact that while a particular course of action may be legally feasible it might have adverse consequences for the person or organisation carrying out that course of action.

Prompts

- Have you clearly explained the process you used to identify the relevant legal issues and risks and how you considered them?
- Have you demonstrated your personal contribution in identifying the relevant legal issues and risks?
- Have you shown how you build risk analysis into the recommendations you make as a planning lawyer?

- Have you demonstrated how the advice you give as a planning lawyer references the context?
- Have you identified and evaluated a range of possible recommendations?
- Have you clearly articulated your thought process and explained why you chose the recommendation you did?
- Have you explained why you rejected the alternatives?

NOTE

Go back over your PCS and check (for your own reference) where you have addressed each of the competencies. If you can't find the reference, don't expect the assessors to.

6. Professional Development Plan (PDP)

This is the third section of your written submission. The purpose of the PDP is for you to demonstrate the ability to analyse your professional learning needs and develop a plan to cover any gaps in your knowledge and skills. The recommended word count for this section is 1,500 words.

6.1 Why is the PDP important?

The RTPI believes that one of the most useful pieces of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) you can do is to carefully prepare a PDP. CPD is the way in which professionals maintain and develop their expertise via an ongoing process of learning through planning and reflection ([Section 6.5](#) contains a list of types of CPD activities).

All members entering the profession are required to begin a habit of lifelong learning and CPD. Qualifying to enter a profession does not mean that you remain competent to practice for the rest of your life. All professions change, requiring all practitioners to continue to learn, debate, discuss and update skills or knowledge on an ongoing basis. The PDP represents the planning stage of the CPD cycle.

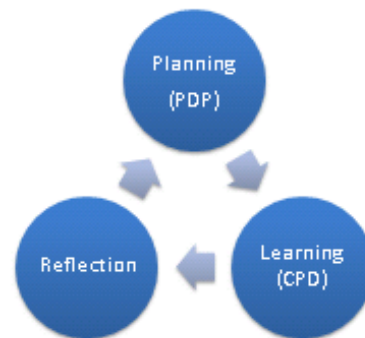
This focus on lifelong learning that leads to a reflective and analytical professional is embodied in the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct, by which Legal Associates are bound. The Code states that members should:

- a) at least once a year prepare a PDP for the next two years identifying their personal professional development needs;
- b) in any two year period undertake a minimum of 50 hours' CPD activity related to the undertaking or managing of town planning;
- c) maintain a written record of their CPD activity.

It is a requirement to continue the reflective practice of preparing a PDP throughout your career and the assessors are looking to see that you understand this process.

Please note that every year we carry out an audit of PDP and CPD records from a randomly selected sample of our membership. For more information on CPD monitoring please visit the [RTPI website](#).

CPD cycle



NOTE

Don't treat your PDP as a last minute add-on to your submission. It is as important as the PES and PCS and more candidates are asked to resubmit this section than any other. Give this part of your submission equal consideration. The Code states that members should prepare a PDP at least once a year.

6.2 Structure and scope of the PDP

The PDP structure starts with a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis looking at your current personal strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats that could impact on your ability to meet your career goals. The SWOT is followed by an Action Plan that consists of a hierarchical structure of a goal, objectives and actions:

- A goal is the overarching, long-term and strategic outcome for the plan. The goal should outline what you will be able to do or be as a professional in two years' time, as a result of carrying out your plan.
- The objectives then narrow down and identify the developmental areas of knowledge and skills you will need to gain to achieve your goal.
- The actions are the specific details of the CPD activities you will carry out to gain the skills and knowledge needed to meet your objectives. They need to include what you will do, where, when, why and how, what you will gain from it and how you will measure that development (meeting the SMART model outlined in [Section 6.4](#)).

The RTPI has produced a PDP template (explained in detail in [Section 6.4](#)) that you must use to ensure that your PDP follows the correct format.

Goals can be career aspirations, like developing a specialism, moving sector or gaining a promotion, as long as the planning law context is clearly explained and the associated objectives are focused on furthering skills and knowledge.⁸ It is better to explain what level you expect to be working at in terms of the level of responsibility you will have and the type of work you will be doing.

Some of your objectives may be the same as those identified in any work-based staff development scheme. However, your overall ambitions are likely to be wider than meeting the requirements of your current role and you should use your PDP to plan your own professional development. Note that your PDP must focus on your own professional development and not on developing the business or organisation. Your PDP is not inflexible and should not prevent you from taking advantage of (and recording) valuable but unexpected CPD opportunities. However, it does allow you to evaluate all your CPD activities against carefully identified needs.

6.3 Checklist for the PDP

Your PDP will be assessed on the following elements:

- That there is a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis which can be seen to be clearly connected in the main to the PES/PCS. However, this does not mean that every item in the SWOT must be linked to the PES/PCS.
- That the majority of weaknesses identified in the SWOT are addressed in the Action Plan, however, it is recognised that not all weaknesses can be addressed in the timescale of the PDP.

⁸ Updating your CV or applying for jobs would not be appropriate actions or objectives as they are processes and do not directly result in you furthering your skills or knowledge.

- That one to two goal(s) are identified. These must relate to the PES/PCS. Each goal must have two to four objectives which focus on skills and knowledge and two to four SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based) actions per objective.
- That the PDP has a balance of planning law and non-planning law skills, with at least 50% being planning law. Objectives may be directly related to planning law skills or knowledge. However, they do not have to be exclusively focussed on planning law skills. Improvements in professional skills such as negotiation, presentation or management are acceptable as long as these are within the context of your planning law career aspirations.
- There is an Action Plan which must be SMART (explanation in the template in [Section 6.4](#)).
- That the PDP template which is available on the [RTPI website](#) has been used.
- That the PDP covers the period two years onwards from the date of your submission. It must be forward-looking. For example, if you submit at the end of April 2017 your PDP should run from the start of May 2017 to the end of April 2019.
- That the PDP is within the word limit for the submission (guide of 1,500 words)⁹.

Each of these points must be met for the PDP to pass, otherwise you may be asked to resubmit your PDP or be required to enter a supplementary support phase.

NOTE

You are not required to get your line manager to corroborate your PDP although you should indicate that you have line manager support for any actions which require it (e.g. attendance on a training course in work time).

6.4 PDP template outline with guidance notes

In this section, a copy of parts of the PDP template is provided in order to give examples, along with guidance notes. The full template is on the [RTPI website](#).

PART ONE – SWOT ANALYSIS

NOTE

You do not need to give an overview of your role at the start of the PDP, this has already been covered in the PES and PCS.

Develop a SWOT analysis based on your written submission. Your written submission looked back at your achievements over the past few years while the SWOT analysis is looking forward.

⁹ The word count for the PDP **only** includes the text you enter into the template.

<p>Strengths</p> <p><i>Be confident about what you're good at – use them to inform your goals in part two.</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area of strong planning law knowledge and understanding • strong transferable skills and competencies • commitment to personal and professional development • good contacts or successful networking 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p><i>Most “weaknesses” that you identify should be used to form goals, objectives and actions in part two. You are expected to address the majority of the weaknesses you have identified.</i></p> <p><i>There should be a clear link between your “weaknesses” and the goals, objectives and actions identified and the majority should be based around planning knowledge, skills or experience.</i></p> <p><i>List only 3-5 weaknesses – this is enough. You need to justify which weaknesses you are taking forward into the action plan and why.</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas of weakness in planning law knowledge and understanding • underdeveloped transferable skills and competencies • understanding that there is more to planning law than your current experience
<p>Opportunities</p> <p><i>Consider what opportunities can be integrated into a goal in part two.</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities within the industry • opportunities within your organisation • training and professional development opportunities • support of RTPI (Regions & Nations, Young Planners, Networks etc.) • opportunities to volunteer 	<p>Threats</p> <p><i>What threats could affect your ability to meet your career goals?</i></p> <p><i>You might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry downturns • negative changes within the organisation e.g. downsizing or restructuring • better qualified competitors • limited training opportunities

Please use the information from your SWOT to identify goals and objectives for Part Two.

PART TWO – GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTION PLAN

For each goal you intend to achieve, you need to develop objectives and an Action Plan which must be fully SMART. Please ensure you are familiar with SMART planning before starting your Action Plan.

Please complete one to two goals; two to four objectives per goal; and two to four SMART actions per objective. *You may delete the goals, objectives and actions in the template as necessary.*

You are not expected to get your line manager to corroborate your PDP but you should gain their support for actions beforehand, if required.

GOAL

Where do I want to be professionally?

Your goal should be a high level strategic statement of what you want to achieve. Your goal should be clearly set in the context of furthering planning law skills and knowledge. It should specify the end result, the output of completing the action plan. What will you be able to do or be as a result?

Consider the question: as a professional, what direction do you want your career to move in over the next two years?

For a goal, you might like to think about where you would like to be working (perhaps in terms of organisation, sector or even country); the nature of the work you would like to be doing and/or the level you would like to be working at. Be aware that a goal such as 'to obtain a promotion' is, by itself, too broad. Instead, identify what type and level of work you will be doing.

You must identify between one to two goals.

OBJECTIVE

What outcome will help me achieve this goal?

Objectives are sub-goals with measurable outcomes that you expect to help you achieve your goals. They are therefore a way of breaking down your longer term goals so that you can begin to work towards or prepare for it. The objectives should define the areas of knowledge or types of skills that you will need to gain to meet your goal. They must relate to your goals and/or the areas of development identified in your SWOT.

Achieving your long term goal might depend on improving your performance in certain ways or addressing areas of weakness identified in your SWOT.

While you are encouraged to set a goal that reflects a longer time frame, objectives should be more focused and contribute to your overall long term goal and are likely to be addressed in the next 6-18 months. It is therefore important also to break down the longer term goal into shorter term objectives, and in turn identify realistic Action Plan activities to achieve these in a set time-frame.

For each goal, you must identify two to four objectives.

ACTION PLAN:

You must ensure that your actions are specific, measurable, time-bound steps that can be taken to meet your goal. Every action must conform to the SMART model, failure to do so will result in an unsuccessful plan.

S – specific (be precise in the ‘Action’ column below)

M – measurable (see examples under ‘How will I know if I have achieved it’ below)

A – achievable (can you achieve this or is it an unrealistic goal, given time and other pressures?)

R – relevant (to you in your work setting)

T – time-based (specific dates)

Include constructions such as:

In order to..., With a view to ..., So that I can..., Which will allow me to....

Your Action Plan shows a list of actions you will take to achieve each objective. They will answer questions such as:

- *What will be done?*
- *How will it be done?*
- *Who will do it?*
- *When will it happen?*
- *Do I need senior officer approval?*
- *Is there a budget for this training?*
- *Do you have permission to work shadow someone?*
- *Does it impact on your existing role?*

Activities and tasks do not need to be sequential. You can carry out two or more activities concurrently. While your PDP is a two year plan, the majority of actions can take place within the first year of the plan, if appropriate. An indication of a good Action Plan is if it is detailed enough for someone else to implement.

For each objective, you must identify two to four SMART actions in the columns below.

Action	How will you measure your learning?	Start and end dates
Clearly identify what action (CPD activity) you will undertake to achieve your objectives in order to achieve your goal.	Some examples of how you might measure your learning are listed below:	Give specific months and years.
Work based learning is acceptable, but you must highlight what it is you will learn from it (e.g. how taking on a new area of work will develop specific knowledge and skills).	I will discuss results of my research with colleagues at a team meeting and ask for feedback.	Be more specific than simply “ongoing”.
Ensure that you have done the relevant research into your actions (e.g. what further reading can you access, what volunteering opportunities will be available).	I will feel more confident doing X and this will be noticed by my manager.	
Link your action to your awareness of lack of knowledge and/or skills identified in part one, if appropriate.	I am able to use my new knowledge of X to advise clients on Y.	
If you are listing a course, be specific about which course, where, who is paying for it, what you hope to learn from the course and what you will do with this learning. Consider if you need your manager’s approval or your organisation to fund the action.		

6.5 Sources of CPD

The RTPI accepts an extensive range of activities as appropriate CPD, which can be free or very low cost. This means you have a great opportunity to select activities that are appropriate to your needs. Some examples of valid development activities include:

- online learning modules;
- attending planning enquiries or hearings;
- formal events such as conferences, seminars or workshops;
- short courses;
- formal qualifications;
- structured targeted reading on a particular topic e.g. journals, online, policy papers;
- volunteering;
- work-shadowing or placement;
- mentoring or coaching;
- supervised academic research;
- preparation of materials for training courses, technical meetings or the technical press;
- involvement in a professional group;
- secondments;
- project work (beyond your day-to-day work);
- involvement in RTPI Nation or Region, chapter or network.

7. Tips for a successful application

- Read the guidance: understand what you need to demonstrate in your submission.
- Use the resources available to you: other professionals, mentors, colleagues, online resources and events.
- Check off all the competencies: have you addressed each competency in your submission?
- Select your case studies carefully: which case studies best demonstrate how you meet the competencies?
- Be critical: don't be afraid to explain how you would do things differently if you were doing a task again.
- Remember your PDP: refer to the PDP checklist to make sure you meet all of the requirements.
- Prepare: don't leave your submission until the last minute before the deadline.
- Review your submission: give it to someone who has never read it before – how do they think it reads?

Thank you for taking the time to read this document and good luck with your submission.

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