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**RTPI
Advice**



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (PDP)

Common Pitfalls

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mediation of space · making of place

Common Pitfalls in Creating PDPs

This document is to be used in conjunction with the current guidance for the route you are applying through, or the current guidance on CPD monitoring. Please visit the relevant area of the RTPI website to ensure you have the most up-to-date guidance available to ensure you are complying with current requirements - this is particularly relevant for membership applications where the PDP is assessed alongside the written submission.

Please see the website www.rtpi.org.uk for more resources around creating successful PDPs as well as the most up-to-date guidance for your circumstances.

This document covers the most common reasons why members have been unsuccessful. It is not exhaustive, it aims to give an idea of what to avoid.

Part 1: SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

- Not addressing the **majority** of the **weaknesses** in your SWOT.
- Not achieving **consistency** between your SWOT and action plan. For example, don't list lots of paid courses in your plan, if you have identified a lack of training budget as a threat.

Part 2: Goals and Objectives

- Goals or objectives focused on **processes** e.g. 'gain membership', 'complete a PhD'.
- Goals or objectives that are **too vague**. Don't state that you want to develop your 'understanding of different areas of planning', tell us what areas they are.
- **Giving actions** instead of objectives or goals. Don't state the specifics of what you will do until you reach action level (see below).

Part 2: Action Plan

- **Being vague**. You must be specific. **What, where, why** and **how** is this action happening? – put this information in the 1st column of the template.
- Not including ways to **measure**, or **test**, the development you gain from the action – put this information in the middle column of the template. Undertaking the activity is not, in itself, a sign of success.
- Not giving targeted **timeframes**. If an action is ongoing, you must give a date for review – put this information in the 3rd column of the template.
- Not indicating if **agreement/approval** has been gained for the action.
- Not including a **backup plan** for any unbooked/unagreed actions.
- Giving a **work plan** instead of a **personal professional development plan**. Don't tell us what you're doing to improve efficiency in the department, or the steps in a project, or your day-to-day work.
- Including actions which are not **continuing professional development (CPD)**. Every action must help you develop knowledge and skills e.g. researching courses to attend or job hunting are not CPD.
- Focusing on **too many actions**. List one CPD activity per line of the template, this will ensure you can achieve the level of detail required.
- Not keeping the actions in a **planning context**. You can have some non-planning CPD; project management, public speaking etc., but they must be given in the context of developing as a planner, and the majority of your actions should focus on developing your planning knowledge, skills and/or experience (i.e. at least 50%).

General

- Not covering a 2 year period. It's easy to find lots of actions for the coming few months but your plan should cover the following 2 years, so **look beyond** the next 6 months.
- Not allowing time to work on the PDP. It requires thought and it needs ample time devoted to it to make sure you get it right.



For more information please visit
www.rtpi.org.uk

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