

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The following section will give you guidance on the Personal Development Plan, what it is and how you can utilise it in support of your educational aspirations.

3 key questions to ask yourself.....

- 1. *What is a Personal Development Plan(PDP)?***
- 2. *Why Should I have one?***
- 3. *How can I write one to reflect my own aspirations?***

The answers are straightforward.....

- 1. What is a Personal Development Plan(PDP)?*

A PDP is just another name for a plan of action, only this one refers specifically to your aspirations regarding personal development. We make plans every day, but do not always write them down; a PDP allows you to set your own personal targets and find the best way to achieve them.

- 2. Why Should I have one?*

An action plan will help you to visualise what you are doing and keep track of your achievements. To be totally effective, it must be a fluid document that is reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is always accurate, relevant and realistic. Furthermore, certain courses may be eligible for financial assistance, such as the SLC and ELC. In order to qualify for these allowances, you will have to prove your commitment to your studies. You must have a PDP in order to claim the ELC, in accordance with the ELC DCI. Remember, the PDP is your personal document, but with your permission it is recommended that a copy be held in your Personal Educational Folder, the F7269. Access to this will be restricted to the Learning Centre Staff only.

- 3. How can I write one to reflect my own aspirations?*

You now have 2 options. Some of you may feel confident enough to go straight ahead and fill in a PDP, if this applies to you, go to page 2-A-1, consider the example and then fill in the template on page 2-A-3. Please note that the design used for the template is only a suggested format. Any layout will be acceptable, provided it satisfies the 3 questions discussed on the next few pages. Many of you may need a little more time to consider the various factors that will affect your future decisions. If this is the case, take some time to go through the guidance on the following pages. The questions aim to promote thought and consideration of the direction that you want to go in and the methods that you want to use. They also take account of your own personal circumstances before you decide on a course of action.

SIMPLE STEPS TO WRITING A PDP

Ask yourself a further 3 questions.....

Where am I now?

Where do I want to be?

How can I get there?

GETTING STARTED

Where am I now?

Firstly you will need to decide what your current situation is. This will form the lower edge of your "Learning Gap". You may find it helpful to consider the following questions.

What am I good at?

What do I need to work on?

What could help me along?

What might stop me?

Consider the following example and then repeat the exercise to reflect your own circumstances.

<i>Box 1</i> <i>What am I good at?</i>	<i>Box 2</i> <i>What do I need to work on?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Good interpersonal skills▪ Sound IT skills▪ Fair organisational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Limited qualifications▪ Does not like formal exams
<i>Box 3</i> <i>What could help me along?</i>	<i>Box 4</i> <i>What might stop me?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Attending promotion course soon▪ Plenty of exciting projects underway at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Change to organisation imminent▪ Possible detachment▪ Lack of resources (money/time)

- The above example could apply to someone wanting to improve their educational qualifications by concentrating on vocational skills (see box 1) rather than more formal exam-based courses (see box 2).
- They could use this exercise to identify that work-based learning would be an ideal solution as it involves gathering evidence from the many and varied projects that service personnel get involved with on a daily basis (see box 3).
- The skills gained are transferable and learning could continue wherever they are in the world (see box 4).

Where do I want to be?

This is the most exciting but also the most difficult stage to define. Only you can answer this question, but be aware that there are many factors to consider when finding the solution. You may find the following questions provoke thought in many areas.....

What do I like doing?

In my job, as a hobby....

What is my motive for learning?

Promotion, Personal Improvement, Overcome a Learning Difficulty....

What qualifications and/or experience do I already have?

Some of these may be transferable.

What method of study would suit me best?

Part-time, Distance Learning, E-learning....

How much time do I have to complete my learning?

Be realistic, development takes time.

What effect will studying have on my home life?

Consider commitments that you already have.

Are there any imminent changes to my lifestyle?

Marriage, Children, Promotion....

What will happen if I am detached or posted?

Can you study anywhere in the world?

Will the course be eligible for financial support?

SLC/ELC/IRTC.

What is my ultimate goal?

A qualification, personal fulfilment, career development.

How will I measure my success?

Recognised qualifications, personal goals.....

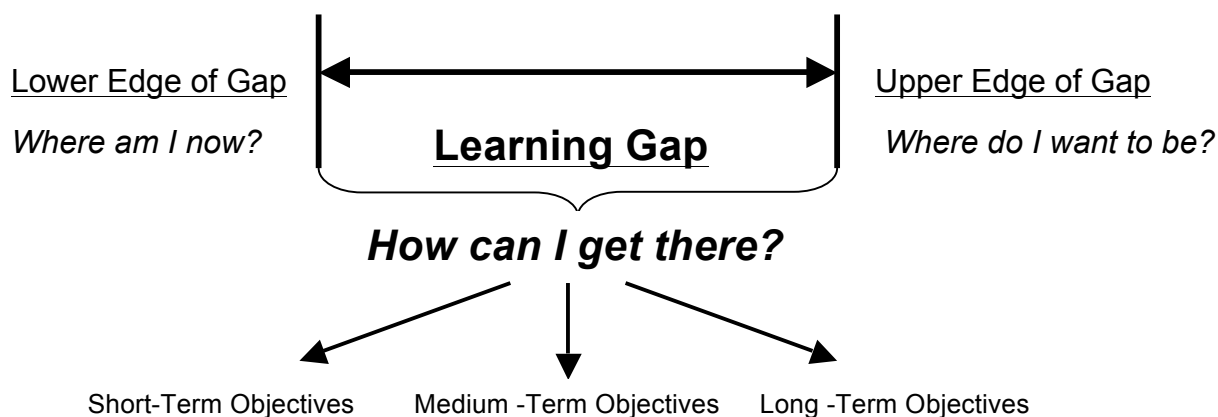
Where can I get help and advice?

Your Personal Learning Advisor (PLA) is trained to guide you. Contact your Learning Centre for more details, or visit the Learning Forces Web Site at www.learning-forces.org.uk.

Once you have considered all of the factors, you will have decided on a future goal. This may be one single goal, or many smaller goals that make up the final solution. Either way, you have now defined the upper edge of your Learning Gap.

How can I get there?

You have now identified your Learning Gap. The question of “How can I get there?” can be answered by splitting your task into "bite-size pieces". This is a good way to plan effectively without losing sight of your overall aim, and will motivate you to continue as you achieve small victories on your way to completing the final goal.

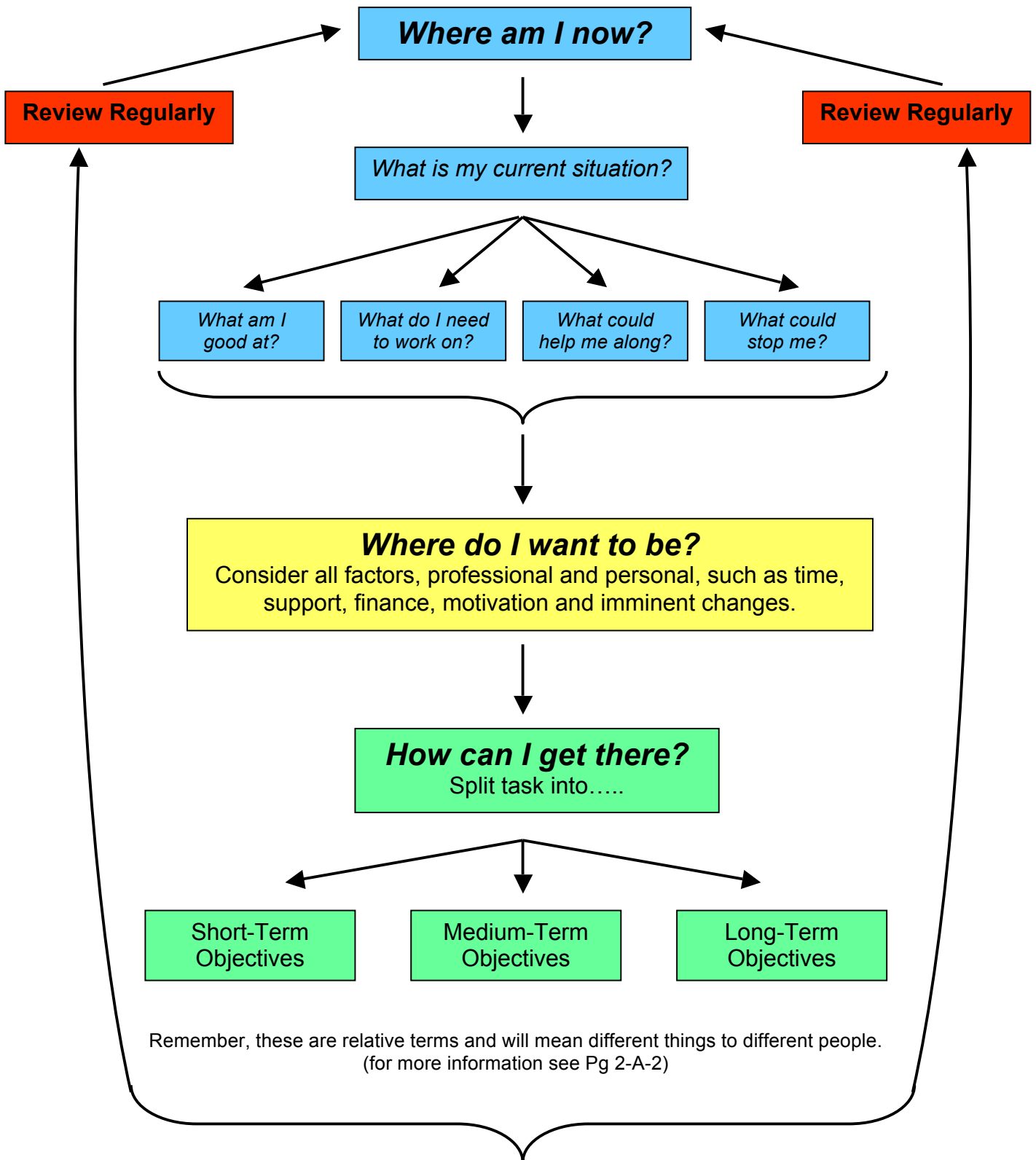


The best way to organise your work into manageable chunks is to set **short, medium and long-term objectives**. Always remember, short, medium and long are all relative terms and will mean different things to different people. Some plans may only last over a 1 year period, others may last up to 6 years, it all depends on you and your own circumstances.

It is also important to remember that these short, medium and long term objectives are fluid and must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are still relevant. If your plan changes, that is OK, just follow the basic principles outlined here, and continually ask yourself the 3 main questions (see diagram above). Your plan will then remain an effective tool to support your personal development.

Now check the summary flow chart before completing your own PDP.

SUMMARY FLOW CHART FOR WRITING YOUR PDP



REMEMBER, YOUR PERSONAL LEARNING ADVISOR IS AVAILABLE TO GUIDE YOU AT ANY STAGE OF YOUR PDP.