



Australian  
Library and  
Information  
Association

The **ALIA**  
career  
development  
kit

**ALIA**

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For more information about ALIA's Professional Development support and services see <http://alia.org.au/education/pd/>

## **Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Structure of the Kit**

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

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

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

## **ALIA Professional Development (PD) Scheme**

The ALIA PD scheme is a sub-category of membership which enables ALIA associate and technician members to formally record, and be acknowledged for, their participation in PD activities. For further information please go to <http://alia.org.au/education/pd/membership.html> or contact the Professional Development and Careers Manager, Judy Brooker, 02 6215 8216, email [pd@alia.org.au](mailto:pd@alia.org.au).

If you are a member of the ALIA PD scheme the completion of this kit may be claimed as a PD activity.

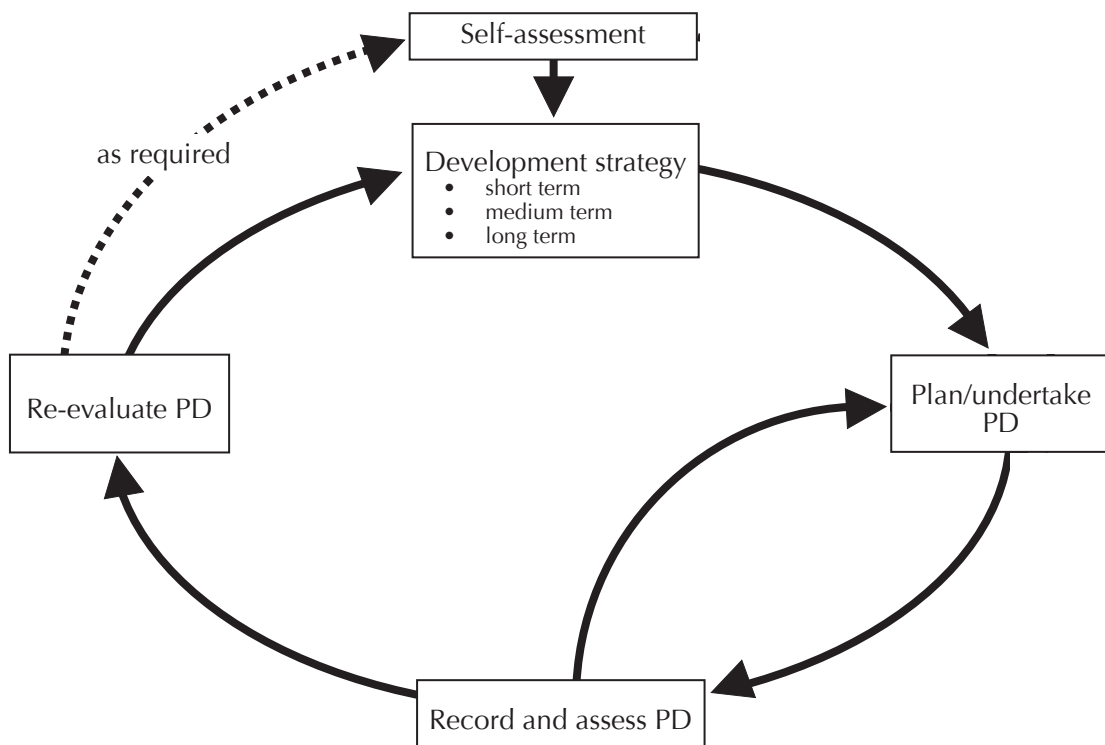
## The learning cycle

David Kolb, an American psychologist, in the British Computer Society 'Continuing Professional Development' members-only website [<http://www.bcs.org/>] describes learning as a circular experience with four stages. To be fully effective, all four stages must take place.

- **Do.** Learning begins with an experience. You can learn from all sorts of experiences but some are particularly important for PD, such as: going on a training course, attending a seminar, participating in a workshop, preparing a presentation, trying out a new technique, reading a book, researching and writing a report.
- **Record and assess.** Reviewing the experience is probably the most important stage in the cycle. Without review, the lessons to be learned will be lost. Try to find a few moments for quiet reflection and make some notes. Discuss the experience with colleagues, friends, or your mentor if you have one. Ask yourself some questions:
  - What was particularly interesting?
  - What was new or unexpected?
  - What happened and in what circumstances?
  - What could have been done differently?
- **Evaluate.** Having reviewed the experience it must then be placed in context. A mentor or more experienced colleague can be helpful at this stage to give you the benefit of their wider knowledge and experience. Be prepared to throw away old ideas. One of the biggest barriers to learning is to hold on to particular notions or ideas long after your own experience has told you they are outdated or discredited.
- **Plan next steps.** Learning is of no value to you unless you use it. Plan what you will do with the new knowledge or skill. Decide what you will do differently. Update your development plan and determine what you need to learn next.

These four stages underpin the structure of this *Kit*.

## PD planning process



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

## How the exercises assist in the PD planning process

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

### 1 Self assessment

This section will show you how to:

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

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

#### a) Your primary wants

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

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

 Rank them in order of their importance to you.




for example

**1 Self assessment**

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

wants	level	constraints	level	priority
Salary increase	1			
Supervision responsibilities	2			
Recognition amongst peers	2			

**b) Perceived barriers/constraints to achieving success**

-  List your perceived barriers/constraints to success on the 'Self assessment' record sheet;
  -  Rank them in order of your perceived ability to overcome them;
  -  Allocate short-, medium- and long-term priorities (include both achievable and challenging goals);
- consider any constraints that occur frequently and think about their impact on your career development.


**for example**

**1 Self assessment**

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

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

**c) Your definition of personal success**

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

Consider:

- how does your current definition of personal success impact upon your personal and professional wants?
- how would you like to define your personal success for the future?
- does it fit in with your primary wants and perceived constraints?
- do you need to reassess your primary wants?

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

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

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

Consider:


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

d) Skills needed to achieve aims

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

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


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

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

for example

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

e) Set development objectives

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

for example

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

## 2 Development strategy

In this section you will:

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


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


Your development plans will also need to consider your preferred style of learning, and the training and development options which are open to you.


### a) Target/review dates

Consider

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

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

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


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

for example

Knowledge and skill description	current level	target level	gap	priority*	target/review date
general skills					
problem solving	2	4	2	hi short	Dec 03
oral and written communication	1	3	2	med short	Jan 04
teamwork					
technical knowledge and skills					

### b) Development plan

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

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



### c) Setting professional development priorities

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

support role	level of support	position
self-assessment facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assists employees to assess and identify skills, interest and motivations</li> <li>gives feedback on observed behaviours and exhibited skills</li> </ul>	supervisor mentor
information provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>informs employee about options and barriers</li> <li>gives employee information</li> </ul>	supervisor mentor
referral agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>refers employee to people who can be of assistance</li> <li>refers employee to books and other types of information</li> <li>suggests alternative PD activities</li> <li>identifies PD providers</li> </ul>	supervisor agent mentor people you meet at training courses ALIA members
guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourages employee to focus on an available and realistic goal</li> <li>gives employee reality feedback on the appropriateness of the goal</li> <li>conducts a skills audit</li> <li>determines the knowledge and skills required for a particular job or role</li> <li>sets development objectives</li> <li>assesses learning experiences</li> <li>decides on what should be the next steps</li> <li>offers encouragement and provides motivation to persist with a PD activity</li> </ul>	supervisor mentor colleagues
coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggests and encourages employee to consider suitable options</li> <li>tutors the employee in writing a professional development plan</li> <li>coaches the employee through the steps of compiling a plan</li> <li>coaches the employee in how to manage their career and implement their professional development plan</li> </ul>	supervisor mentor colleagues working in other areas of the organisation
companion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agrees development</li> <li>promotes/transfers when readiness is demonstrated and opportunity is available</li> <li>teaches organisational knowledge</li> </ul>	supervisor

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



*On the 'Planning PD activities' record sheet record the professional development support currently available to you for each development priority*

Will any of the following influence your development plan?

- supply and demand trends;
- technological changes;
- personal commitment;
- learning style; or
- availability of courses.

for example

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

## 3 Plan and undertake PD

In this section you will:

- list your short-, medium- and long-term professional development priorities in chronological order;
- consider the professional development support currently available to you;
- consider the factors which could influence your development plan;
- consider the role of workplace and external learning in adding to your inventory of knowledge, skills and attitudes;

- consider your preferred learning style/s and the types of PD activities that support those style/s;
- identify the main opportunities for achieving professional development priorities through workplace learning;
- list formal/informal training options for each professional development priority; and
- test the 'reality' of the options with the support person/s identified.

### Learning styles

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

- **Activists** are action-oriented — they learn by doing. For PD, they enjoy workshops, role plays and problem solving, but get bored reading manuals or listening to seminars.
- **Reflectors** prefer to stand back from experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect and analyse a lot of data before reaching conclusions. They take a back seat in discussions and listen carefully before making their points. For PD they enjoy attending lectures, reading articles, distance learning and private study, but shy away from workshops and making presentations.
- **Theorists** prefer to learn by reading and listening to experts. For PD they are prepared to get to grips with complex theory, undertake further academic study and participate in intellectual discussion but do not feel they get much from workshops or unstructured hands-on experience.
- **Pragmatists** like to be able to see clear links between learning experiences and their practical application. They tend to concentrate on PD which they can put to immediate use.

### Training options

type of training	learning style
<b>formal education and training</b>	
formal face-to-face education	theorists, reflectors
distance education	reflectors
formal on-the-job training	pragmatists
self-paced PD courses	reflectors
<b>informal learning activities</b>	
professional reading (books, journals)	theorists, reflectors
<b>conferences and meetings</b>	
conferences	reflectors
workshops	activists
symposiums	reflectors
meetings	theorists
<b>presentations and meetings</b>	
presentation of material for courses, conferences, workshops, seminars, symposiums etc	activists
<b>service activities</b>	
reviews	pragmatists
workplace learning	activists

### Criteria for selecting PD activities

In planning your PD program, consider incorporating activities which:

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

### Assessing the relevance activities to your plan

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

Activities which:

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


### A note on accreditation of providers

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


#### a) Workplace learning

Consider:

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

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


#### b) External learning


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

for example

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

#### c) PD options

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

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

## 4 Record and assess PD

### Building your learning portfolio

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

#### Components of a portfolio

##### 1 table of contents

- quick guide to reader

##### 2 statement of purpose

- take into account context in which it is being submitted

##### 3 career map

- list current job skills

##### 4 statement of personal philosophy

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

##### 5 educational goals

- record your short-, medium- and long-term goals

##### 6 description of professional development activities

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

##### 7 evidence of professional learning

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

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

#### Your learning portfolio

Begin to build your own learning portfolio, by recording each PD experience.

## 5 Re-evaluate PD

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

Re-evaluate your professional development activities. Consider:

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

## Sources

*Assessment of prior learning: Guidelines for assessors of prior learning in Tasmania* 1994, endorsed by the Training Authority of Tasmania, Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA), Hobart, Tas.

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## **Education policy statement 2: Professional development for library and information professionals**

*The phrase 'library and information professionals' refers to those members of the profession who have completed an entry-level qualification in library and information management at either Associate or Library Technician level.*

### **ALIA objects addressed:**

To promote and improve the services provided by all kinds of library and information agencies.

To ensure the high standard of personnel engaged in information provision and foster their professional interests and aspirations.

### **Principle:**

Library and information professionals have a responsibility to commit to professional development and career-long learning. Similarly, their employers and the Australian Library and Information Association have a responsibility to provide opportunities which enable library and information professionals to maintain excellent service delivery.

### **Statement:**

Professional development demonstrates the individual practitioner's personal commitment of time and effort to ensure excellence in performance throughout his or her career. The dynamic and changing library and information environment demands that library and information professionals maintain and continue to develop their knowledge and skills so that they can anticipate and serve the information needs of society and their individual clients.

Professional development includes many learning experiences - within and outside the workplace - which aim to increase knowledge, develop library and information skills and attributes and broaden the range of vocational competencies. Learning activities may relate to an extension of general or specialist areas of library and information management education, development of the body of knowledge underlying professional practice, development of the reflective practitioner, development of research expertise, or studies from another discipline which lead to personal and professional development.

The Australian Library and Information Association expects that learning opportunities will be made available in a number of different formats and offered in a variety of different delivery modes. Learning experiences include but are not limited to formal education at advanced (post-first qualification) level, formal training courses informal learning activities, mentoring, workplace learning, seminars, presentations, research and service activities.

- The Association's commitment to its members achieving their career goals is demonstrated by:
- providing mechanisms which enable members to plan and undertake learning and other development activities;
- offering a mentoring program to assist members in their ongoing professional development;
- organising partnerships with other professional and training organisations to make available learning activities and opportunities in library and information management and other disciplinary studies;
- formally recognising members who participate in ALIA's professional development certification scheme;
- facilitating forums where knowledge can be created, shared and disseminated to enable members to better understand the dynamic environment in which they, as library and information professionals, and their clients operate.

### **Related documents:**

ALIA's role in education of library and information professionals

Courses in library and information management

The library and information sector: core knowledge, skills and attributes

ALIA core values statement

Replaces: Education policy statement no.2

Adopted 2005