

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SURGEONS

What is a personal development plan?

A personal development plan is a documented action plan of your aspirations with regards to your development. A PDP allows you to set targets and the best way to achieve them.

Personal development plan model

There are 5 areas and a good PDP includes all 5 components:

- **Reflection.** Think about your performance, successes and failures.
- **Planning.** Personal, professional, academic goals, aims.
- **Analysis.** Strengths and weakness in your personality.
- **Executing.** Put actions into motion to achieve your goals.
- **Evaluation.** Recording and monitoring your progress with respect to your goals.

Writing your personal development plan

Part 1 – personal analysis. Before starting your PDP, you should consider a personal assessment, e.g. what are my strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).

Part 2 – setting your goals. Use the SMART criteria to set your goals.

- **Specific** – target a specific area for improvement.
- **Measurable** – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.
- **Assignable** – specify who will do it.
- **Realistic** – state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.
- **Time-related** – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

Part 3 – personal objectives.

- Short term goals (the next 12 months).
- Medium term goals (2-5 years).
- Long term goals (beyond 5 years).

Simple steps for writing your PDP

Step 1 – personal strengths and weakness.

Ask yourself:

- What am I good at?
- What do I need to work on?
- What would help me?
- What could stop me?

e.g.

Strengths Excellent delegator Fair but firm Knowledgeable Good listener Empathetic	Weaknesses Impatient Abrupt Limited qualifications
Threats Not enough time Not getting the fellowship Not getting time off Financial limitations Family limitations	Opportunities Attending an education course Visiting a centre of excellence Doing a fellowship

Step 2 – setting your goals. Where would I like to be?

Ask yourself:

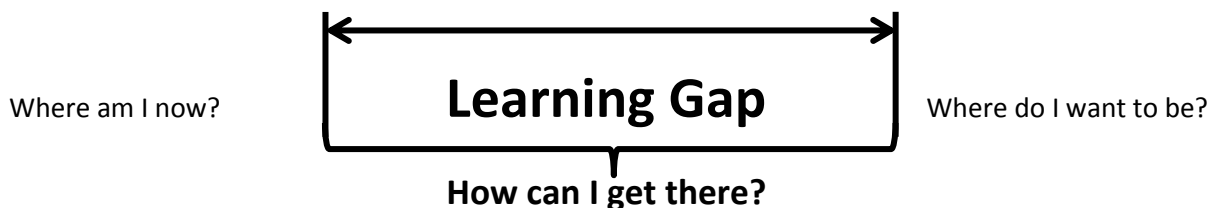
- What do I like doing? Operating, teaching, sailing, making money ...
- What is my motive for learning? Improve knowledge, learn a new technique, recognition...
- What qualifications and experience do I have?
- What method of study suits me? Part-time, e-learning, courses ...
- How much time do I have? Consider your commitments.
- How much time can I spend away from family? Consider partners, children, parents ...
- What will happen to me in the next few years? CCT, marriage, children ...
- How will I get financial support? Deanery, grants ...
- What is my ultimate goal? Teaching hospital consultant with interest in education.
- How will I measure it? Qualifications, feedback, personal goals ...
- Where will I get advice? AES, CS, TPD, deanery, peers ...

Once you have considered all factors, you can decide your future goals and will have defined the upper edge of your learning gap.

How can I get there?

Ask yourself:

- How can I get there by splitting tasks into small chunks.



Tabulate your goal settings, e.g:

What do I want to learn?	What do I need to do?	What support is needed?	How will I measure?	Target date for review?
Endoscopic cubital tunnel release	Cadaveric course. Business case.	Course fees. Time off. Support for business case.	Course assessment. Leave from hospital. Successful business case.	12 months
Widen my understanding of my leadership	Learn from more experienced leaders. Leadership Course (web-based).	Arrange time off. Arrange to spend time with experienced leaders. Join the NHS Leadership Academy.	Mentoring and performance appraisal by clinical lead. Completion of module.	12 months
Improve my state of health	Attend training sessions twice a week.	Join a gym.	Improved personal fitness levels.	3 months
Improve teaching skills	Teaching experience. Teaching course. PG Cert.	Time off. Course fees. Enrol at university.	Feedback. Course assessment. Teaching degree.	3 years
Examination skills	Contact university. Course on examining.	Time off. Examining experience.	Feedback.	2 years

Step 3 – personal objectives

You should now be able to write your personal objectives, e.g:

Short term

- Start an endoscopic cubital tunnel service.
- Become a medical student examiner.
- Improve general fitness.
- Develop leadership skills.

Medium term

- Develop teaching experience.
- Apply for clinical lead role.
- Become an examiner for MRCS.
- Climb Mont Blanc.

Long term

- Leader in my field.
- Gain promotion and recognition as a leader.
- Consultant surgeon with additional NHS duties
- Become an examiner for FRCS.
- Climb Everest!