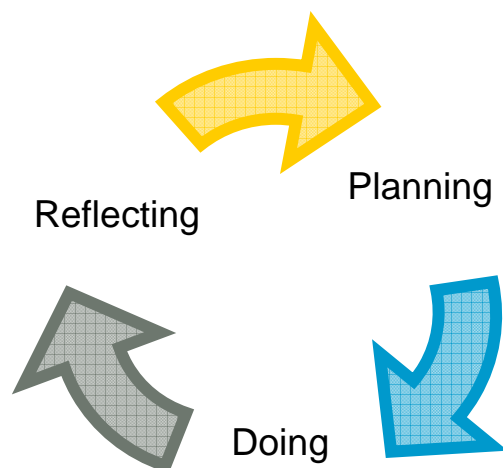


What is professional development?

Professional development is the ongoing enhancement and maintenance of your skills, competencies and experiences.

The professional development Cycle



Professional development is a continuous cycle of reflecting, planning and doing.

- 1) Reflect on where you are now and where you want to be
- 2) Plan development activities to help you meet your goals
- 3) Carry out and log your activities
- 4) Reflect on what you have achieved and where to go next.

What is the difference between initial professional development (IPD) and continuing professional development (CPD)?

IPD is the development you do when you first enter the workplace. This period will last for roughly your first four years in the workplace. After this you should be ready to apply for a professional membership grade with the EI.

After you have achieved professional membership you will need to maintain your skills and competencies at a professional level. This is CPD and a commitment to maintain your CPD is required from professional members of the EI. During this phase you will start participating in activities at a more senior level. You may also wish to work towards a higher membership grade of the EI such as Fellow.

What type of activities count as professional development?

Anything that helps you develop your skills, knowledge or competence in the workplace can count as professional development. The EI professional development scheme encourages members to focus on the learning outcomes achieved activities rather than counting hours or points. Professional development can involve, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- In-house courses

- External courses
- Work-based learning
- Distance learning programmes
- Self-directed private study
- Preparation and delivery of lectures and presentations
- Attendance at lectures, seminars or conferences
- Coaching, tutoring, monitoring, teaching
- Secondments and special projects
- Relevant voluntary work

How do I get started?

Carrying out IPD:

If you are working towards a professional membership grade then you should start by assessing yourself against the criteria for this grade. Think about what evidence you have or examples you could give to show you meet each criteria. Use one of the EI personal assessment sheets to keep track of this.

Where you are not able to demonstrate that you fully meet the criteria you will need to carry out more professional development activities in this area to get to the required level. You can use the assessment sheet to jot down some ideas.

You will probably want to tackle a few criteria at a time. Once you have decided which you want to work on then you can develop a more detailed plan. This can be done using the EI's online professional development system. Continue working through the criteria until you are confident that you can meet each one. At this stage you are ready to submit your application for professional membership

Carrying out CPD:

Once you have achieved professional membership you need to continue to maintain your skills and competence. Assess yourself against the criteria for the membership grade you have achieved. Are your skills and knowledge fully up to date?

You should also be carrying out activities to develop yourself further. If you are not sure what areas to focus your professional development on then think about your current role and responsibilities. Are there any new areas of your job you need to improve your skills around? Are there any new projects coming up you need to be prepared for? You should also think about the future and where you want your career to go. Use your professional development activities to take you in the right direction.

How do I fit Professional development around my work?

Professional development doesn't always have to be additional to your work. Anything that helps you learn something new or develop your skills or competence can count as professional development.

You should speak to your managers about your professional development plans. They may be able to help you fit in professional development activities around your day-to-day responsibilities or suggest new areas you can get involved in to further your development.

Why is professional development important?

- It ensures that you maintain high levels of competence
- It increases your ability to cope with challenges and changes
- It helps you plan your own development and make the best use of resources
- It shows employers that you are serious about your career
- It means you are
- It helps you keep up to date with changes in the sector
- It increases your job satisfaction.

Do I need to complete any paperwork?

To apply for a professional membership grade you need to complete an application. Details of this can be found on the EI website. Once you have achieved a grade you will be asked to submit a professional development record at regular intervals to demonstrate that you are keeping up to date with your professional development. The EI will provide guidance on maintaining professional membership after this has been awarded.

Other than these documents it is not compulsory to complete any paperwork to carry out professional development, however, the EI strongly recommends that you keep a record of your development. The EI's online professional development system allows you to develop plans, save evidence and compile reports of your professional development tracking your progress through the professional development cycle.

What support will I get?

If you would like help with your professional development you may want to consider finding a mentor. The EI can help you find a mentor if you are working towards a professional membership grade or you can select someone yourself. A mentor can suggest ideas for development activities, review your paperwork and help you prepare for your interview.

The EI can provide guidance on carrying out professional development or working towards professional membership grades. For help and advice please contact:

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