A quick guide to

personal development

Information for public service pension scheme board members

This guide is for anyone who is a member of a public service pension scheme board. Legislation about the new governance and administration requirements is expected to come into effect in April 2015.

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 requires you to have the knowledge and understanding needed to carry out your duties effectively. Additionally, our code of practice, which sets out how we expect public service pension boards to act, advises you to:

- complete and follow a personal training needs analysis and training plan
- keep records of training activities to help you demonstrate the steps you have taken to comply with knowledge and understanding requirements.

Working towards personal development

There are four stages to learning in the context of your personal development:

1. Plan
2. Complete
3. Record
4. Reflect

Plan your learning

It is important that you regularly review your knowledge and understanding, the tasks you need to do and the skills you need to develop. To help you we have created a training needs analysis template at **www.tpr.gov.uk/ps-knowledge**. The template helps you assess what learning you need and then create a personal development plan (PDP).

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It is important to set yourself clear, simple, written objectives for your learning and development. Using the SMART principle can help you do this.

SMART objectives

It's important to set yourself clear, simple, written objectives for your learning and development:

Specific: Target a specific area for improvement, stating exactly what you need to achieve and defining precisely what you're going to do.

Measurable: Include a quality measure – how you did is as important as what you did – and show tangible evidence that you've accomplished the objective.

Achievable: If an objective is impossible to achieve, you may feel de-motivated. Objectives should be a challenging and achievable stretch towards success.

Realistic: Make sure that you're being realistic - state what results you can achieve, given all available resources and limitations.

Time-limited: Set clear milestones and deadlines for reviewing your achievements.

When creating your PDP it can be useful to ask yourself these questions:

- What can I do to achieve this objective? You could try:
  - reading codes or guidance provided by the regulator
  - other training sessions – internal or external to the board
  - talking to other board members
  - reading scheme or other documents
  - online research
- What is my timescale?
- What might help or hinder me?
- How will I know when I've achieved this objective?

The tool includes further reading for each area, so you can quickly and easily find related learning. There is also space for you to record other learning activities like those suggested above.

Complete your learning

To help you complete the learning we have created an e-learning programme, Public Service toolkit. Register at **www.pensionseducationportal.com**.

Scrutinise each learning and development activity as you do it. It can be useful to ask yourself:

- What am I learning here?
- What will I know at the end of this activity that I didn't know at the beginning?

Record your learning

To help you record and reflect on your learning we have created a downloadable learning log at **www.tpr.gov.uk/ps-knowledge**.

You can keep this for your own records or, if required, provide to the Chair of your pension board as proof of your achievements.

Each time you complete a learning and development activity, record this in your learning log. It can be useful to consider these areas:

- What did I do? (eg courses, e-learning, workshops, video, personal reading, attending events, shadowing)
- Who provided the learning/where did I get this from?
- What objectives did I achieve?
- What objectives do have I left?
- What qualification, assessment score, certificate or record did I receive?

Reflect on your learning

Reflecting on what you have learnt is a key step which is often forgotten.

Reflecting helps you monitor your developing confidence and skills. It can demonstrate your levels of knowledge and understanding and help you consider how you might do things differently in your role.

When completing your learning log, consider:

- How have I benefited from this activity?
- Have I learnt what I hoped to learn?
- How have my knowledge, skills and understanding improved?
- What will I do differently as a result?
- What type of learning and development has delivered the greatest and the least benefit?
- What do I still need to learn?

Most importantly, congratulate yourself on your progress and focus your thinking on your next personal development activities to keep closing any gaps you identify. Seeking to continually improve is a key element in personal and professional development.

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