

IOA CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

GETTING STARTED – AN EXAMPLE

Below is a fictitious example to provide a starting point for you to formulate your own Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plan. Don't forget that once you have prepared an action plan, keep a record of your achievements and review your plan regularly. It may also be helpful to involve your employer with any plans.

The following paragraphs provide a brief example for an early career acoustic consultant, qualified to degree level with a few years experience within an acoustic consultancy firm. Most of the work undertaken is in environmental and architectural acoustics. The consultant is an Associate Member of the IOA (AMIOA) and wishes to apply for MIOA soon.

Step 1 – Review current situation

Three years ago our consultant had a reasonable understanding of the theory of acoustics but little knowledge of its application. The past goals included becoming familiar with the relevant documents (standards, guidelines and regulations), sound measurement techniques and instrumentation, analysis, calculations and noise assessments.

A review of their current job requirements reveals that although our consultant generally knows enough to do most of the present workload, there are a couple of weak areas of knowledge; mechanical services noise and aircraft noise. Mechanical services noise is a regular consideration in the current job, whereas aircraft noise occurs infrequently. Our consultant has no problem talking to clients face-to-face or in meetings but their report writing skills need to improve. The consultant is experienced with calculation spreadsheets but now needs to become more competent with acoustic prediction software as this is occasionally required in their role.

Much of the current workload involves sound insulation so familiarisation with relevant documents is essential including Approved Document E to the Building Regulations.

Step 2 – Identify goals

From reading the paragraphs above, some goals for our consultant are immediately apparent.

The previous high priorities goals included sound measurement techniques and instrumentation, analysis, calculations and noise assessments. As the consultant has progressed these goals over the past three years, these are now completed. These completed goals could now be included as an ongoing, maintaining competence goal.

The future high priorities goals are improving knowledge of mechanical services systems and noise prediction methods, and also report writing skills. These skills and competencies are required soon, and should be attained within one year.

Becoming familiar with relevant British Standards and guidance documents was an initial high priority goal - keeping up to date with these documents is an ongoing high priority, including familiarisation with Approved Document E.

A future medium priority goal now includes improving their knowledge and application of acoustic prediction software. This was a former low priority goal, which demonstrates how goals can change your career. The deadline for this goal is within three years.

A low priority goal now includes increasing knowledge of the assessment and prediction of aircraft noise. This skill is not required immediately but may ultimately be useful in career advancement. The deadline for this goal is also within three years.

You can see that as our consultant's career and competency develops, both the goals and their priorities change; there is also the need to maintain competency.

Step 3 – Planning to achieve

Now that specific goals and required skills have been identified, a plan can be drawn up to demonstrate how completed goals were met and how ongoing and future goals will be achieved. In this plan it is important to identify the objectives and means that were / will be used to achieve them together with deadlines.

One of the completed goals was to improve sound measurement techniques and instrumentation knowledge. The consultant has addressed this by attending in-house training sessions, and also by attending webinar sessions offered by the equipment manufacturer. The consultant has supplemented this training by going to IOA evening meetings about sound level measurements and instrumentation.

One of the future high priority development objectives for our consultant is to improve report writing skills. This need could be addressed by becoming familiar with the “house” style, reviewing reports written by other colleagues. The consultant has also discussed the action plan with the employer who has agreed for their attendance on a report writing training course. The deadline to improve report writing skills to an appropriate standard is within one year.

Step 4 – Record learning

The consultant is recording time spent in IOA evening meetings attended, personal study, workplace training and other relevant activities using the forms available on the IOA website. Their records have included CPD activities over the previous three years on completed goals as well as ongoing ones.

Step 5 – Review progress

As well as keeping records of relevant activity, our consultant is aiming to review and update their professional plan at least every six months. The consultant has also agreed with the employer to review the scheme in conjunction with the annual staff review.