



Learning and Development Plan Guide

This guide offers best practices and tips to help with the development of Learning and development plan. It is intended to provide food for thought when planning your learning activities.

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**Inspire excellence & engagement
Foster learning, talent & development
Recognize our team members**

Introduction

The Learning and Development Plan (LDP) identifies a range of learning and development activities to help an employee be successful in their current position and prepare for a potential career moves. The plan can reflect long-term goals, but on an annual basis identifies learning activities and goals that can realistically be achieved within the time and resources available.

Both the employee and the supervisor or manager have a shared responsibility to ensure that a realistic and achievable LDP is established and implemented. A LDP is not a “wish list”; it is the employee’s detailed learning path that supports successful performance in their current job and their development toward achieving career goals that align with the Agency’s business needs.

Who should have a Learning and Development Plan?

We encourage every employee to have a Learning and Development Plan.

The plan identifies and tracks completion of any mandatory learning for their position, and learning to support the introduction of any new work processes, tasks or tools. The employee and manager should also consider learning activities that can help the employee to stay current in their field, engaged and motivated. This could include activities such as attending a conference, participating on a special project or coaching new or more junior employees.

What’s in it for you and for the Agency?

For employees, a Learning and Development Plan (LDP) identifies and supports their learning and development.

For the manager, a written LDP for each of their employees allows them to prioritize and plan for implementation of learning activities, and to monitor their employees’ progress toward achieving their learning goals as well as better planning of human and financial resources.

For the Agency, the implementation of realistic LDPs that reflect current and upcoming business needs helps ensure that work objectives will be met and job opportunities can be filled with competent individuals.

Developing and implementing a Learning and Development Plan

Step 1 - Analyse learning needs

Employee	Manager
<p>Look at where you are now and where you want to go.</p> <p>What skills and knowledge could you acquire or expand to enhance your performance in your current role?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider what aspects of your work you found challenging over the past year and the feedback you have received on your performance. - Identify any mandatory training applicable to your role. - Look ahead 1-3 years, to identify any changes that may be coming to your role in the future, that you should prepare for. <p>What skills and knowledge will you need to succeed in the future role that interests you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk with someone who is currently doing work you are interested in. - What are the gaps in knowledge and skills between where you are now and what is needed? <p>If you're content in your current role and performing well, what activities would help you to stay engaged and motivated?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think about new ways of contributing, such as participating in a special project or coaching new or more junior employees. <p>Hint: If you aren't sure of the competencies you currently possess ask your manager or your colleagues. They will often have useful insights about your strengths as well as areas for you to consider developing.</p>	<p>Look at how the employee is performing now to identify strengths and areas for improvement, as well as potential for future roles.</p> <p>What skills and knowledge could the employee acquire or expand to enhance their performance in their current role?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider what types of performance feedback, coaching or support you provided to the employee in the past year. - Identify any mandatory training applicable to their role. - Look ahead 1-3 years to identify any coming changes to their role for which they should prepare. <p>What skills and knowledge would help the employee reach their stated career goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does their career goal align with expected opportunities in the PCA and/or public service? - Do you see other potential future roles for the employee, based on their areas of strength? <p>If the employee is content and performing well in their current role, how could their skills and knowledge be shared more broadly, for a greater contribution to the Agency and to help the employee stay engaged and motivated?</p> <p>Hint: Be prepared to talk to the employee about their competencies, using concrete examples that demonstrate their strengths and areas for improvement. Also, be prepared to discuss career opportunities within your organization and the PCA.</p>

Step 2 - Define learning objectives: "What I want to learn is..."

Employee and Manager				
<p>Based on their analysis at Step 1, both the employee and the manager should draft learning objectives for the employee's LDP.</p> <p>What types of learning objectives should be included in the Learning and Development Plan (LDP)?</p> <p>The LDP should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory learning – include any learning activity that is mandatory across PCA, across the Branch or for the employee's function; • Job-specific learning – includes learning activities to help strengthen the employee's performance in their current job and/or prepare for upcoming changes in the current job; • Career development learning – includes learning activities to help the employee prepare for future, potential career moves. <p>Write each learning objective to describe what you (the employee) will learn.</p> <p>Hint: It helps to complete the following sentence: "What I want to learn is..."</p> <p>Defining "SMART" learning objectives is a way to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • link individual learning to organizational objectives; and • establish a means to monitor progress in meeting learning objectives 				
Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Time specific
Make sure objectives are focused and identify a tangible outcome.	Define what success looks like or detail how you will know when the objective has been achieved.	Objectives should be challenging, but reasonable to achieve with time and resources available.	Determine how this objective is aligned to business objectives and/or priorities.	Set a realistic time frame to achieve the objective, taking operational requirements into consideration.

Step 3 - Choose appropriate learning activities - "How I will learn it"

Employee and Manager
<p>Identify one or more learning activities appropriate for each learning objective listed in Step 2.</p> <p>Learning activities can take many forms, including but not limited to learning through concrete examples, learning through hands-on practice, learning through lectures, learning through discussion groups, learning through self-direction.</p> <p>Each of us has our own preferred ways of learning. Learning styles are the way a person takes in, understands, expresses and remembers information. However, even if we have a dominant profile, this does not mean that our other senses are not alert in certain situations.</p> <p>To illustrate some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visual learner learns best with visual aids, by highlighting texts, etc.; - kinesthetic learner learns best by doing, following tutorials in the laboratory, etc.; - auditory learner learns best in lectures, discussion groups, etc.

Employee	Manager
<p>Keep your preferred learning styles in mind when selecting learning activities, to focus on those that work best for you. Effective learning does not have to be in the classroom. You might also want to stretch yourself by trying some activities outside of your primary preferred style.</p> <p>Example: If you want to develop your skills in creating Microsoft PowerPoint presentations and you learn better through hands-on activities, you might choose to dive in and develop practice presentations using the "help" feature or looking at on-line tutorials rather than sitting and reading the manual through first. (Keep the manual handy too!)</p>	<p>Look at various options for the employee's learning activities to support each of the learning objectives, considering operational requirements and the time and budget available. Effective learning does not have to be in the classroom. Perhaps your employee's learning objectives could be met by participating in a special project or being coached by a more experienced colleague.</p> <p>Be prepared to discuss various options with your employee and to consider their preferred learning style.</p>

Step 4 – Set target dates for completion of learning activities

Employee and Manager	
<p>Are there deadlines for any of the learning activities on the plan? For example, a date for completion of mandatory training may have been set by senior management. Or a deadline for learning may be imposed by the timing for introduction of a new procedure, work tool or learning path.</p> <p>A LDP can include activities that will take place in more than one fiscal year. Setting target dates for completion, this year or in a future year, helps to chart the employee's learning path and provide milestones that can be monitored.</p>	
Employee	Manager
<p>For learning activities with no deadline, when can you reasonably expect to complete each activity? Be realistic and take current and anticipated demands – both on a professional and personal level – into consideration, to propose an achievable target date for each learning activity.</p>	<p>You have a broader perspective, to be aware of upcoming work demands, changes in procedures, budget constraints, etc., that could affect when learning activities can take place. Take these factors into consideration to establish a target date for each learning activity with your employee.</p>

Step 5 – How will you know that you have learned?

Employee and Manager
<p>Measure of Achievement: "I will know I have met my learning objective when..."</p> <p>Identify a way to assess if the learning objective has been met. If "SMART" learning objectives were established, the measure of achievement may have already been identified.</p>

Step 6 – Identify the investment (cost and time)

Employee and Manager	
<p>Mandatory and job-specific learning is normally fully supported by PCA – the Agency funds the learning activity and provides the employee with time to complete the activity. Career development learning may be a shared responsibility, with both parties contributing time and/or funding.</p> <p>Make sure you get the necessary approval before registering for a learning event that involves costs to the Agency.</p>	

Step 7 – Discuss the proposed plan

Employee and Manager	
<p>Now that the employee and manager have both considered and prepared input for the LDP, schedule a time to discuss it. Some questions that may guide the discussion include:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the learning objectives clear, understandable, and attainable? • Do the learning objectives align with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ areas of improvement identified for the employee? ○ employee’s current work requirements and/or future career goals? ○ upcoming opportunities within PCA and/or the public service? • Are the learning strategies appropriate for the employee’s learning style and the constraints of operational requirements, time and budget? • Are there other strategies that should be considered? • Is the time frame realistic, considering factors such as operational requirements, planned leave, and the broader team context? • Does the LDP represent an appropriate commitment in learning for this employee, in the context of learning requirements and plans for other members of the team? • Are both parties willing to support this plan with time and/or money? 	

Step 8 – Document the plan

Employee and Manager	
<p>Once the employee and manager are in agreement, the information should be recorded in the Learning and Development Plan. This does not make it a formal contract, but it does show that there is a shared commitment to employee learning goals and activities.</p>	
Learning Objective:	Describe the specific learning objective, preferably as a SMART objective, as described in Step 2. Also include how you will determine that the learning objective has been met, as described in Step 5.
Learning Activity:	Describe the learning activity. If there is a specific course name and/or code, enter it here.
Category:	Select from the following category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory learning – include any learning activity that is mandatory across PCA, across the Branch or for the employee’s function;

Employee and Manager	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job-specific learning – includes learning activities to help strengthen the employee’s performance in their current job and/or prepare for upcoming changes in the current job; • Career development learning – includes learning activities to help the employee prepare for future, potential career moves.
Investment – Time	Enter the time, in hours, for the activity. If you do not know the exact time, enter an estimate and update the field when the information is available.
Investment – Cost	Enter the cost of the activity. If the cost of this activity is being shared between the Agency and the employee, enter the portion of the cost paid by PCA. If the employee is paying the full cost but PCA is providing the employee with time to complete the activity, enter zero (0).
Status:	Select the status (In progress, Completed, Postponed, No longer requires). Update this field for each learning activity throughout the year, to track progress on completion of the learning plan.

Step 9 – Put the plan into action

Employee	Manager
<p>Once your LDP is finalized with your manager, make sure you schedule time for these learning activities in your individual work plan and calendar. Your LDP is your commitment to make your best effort to complete the agreed-upon learning activities and acquire new knowledge and improve your skills.</p> <p>Once your training/learning activity is complete, remember to update your LDP to indicate that the activity has been completed.</p> <p>Let your manager know about goals you have met or challenges that you face and indicate what further support you need.</p> <p>Looks for ways you will be able to apply your new learning, promptly and frequently after you complete the learning activity – practice makes perfect!</p> <p>You may be expected to contribute to other employees’ learning, for example by sharing your learning materials, or making a presentation on a course or conference you attended.</p>	<p>Once your employee’s LDP is agreed upon, you have the responsibility to make your best effort to ensure it can be implemented within the established time period. Monitor your employee’s progress on completing their learning activities and discuss any delays or barriers to completion as they arise.</p> <p>Approve employees’ learning requests, in accordance with their learning plan, as well as any leave or travel required. Consider changing work schedules or approving a flexible work arrangement, where necessary for an employee to complete learning activities.</p> <p>Discuss the completed learning activity with the employee – was the learning activity worthwhile and do they feel they met their learning objective? Would they recommend the learning activity to another team member?</p> <p>This will help you determine if further learning activities will be needed to meet the employee’s objectives and if the learning activity should be recommended for other employees.</p> <p>Look for opportunities where the employee will be able to apply what they have learned – to</p>

Employee	Manager
	verify that they have achieved their learning objective and to reinforce their learning through practice. You may also establish an expectation that they will share their learning with others.

Remember: Establishing a LDP is not just a once-a-year event. It is an ongoing process and the LDP should be reviewed, discussed, updated and revised, as required, throughout the year.

Learning Styles

What are the ways of learning that come naturally to you?

Heredity, life experiences and the demands of our present environment influence how we learn.

Researchers have discovered that people **learn in three main ways**:

- by seeing (visual learners);
- by hearing (auditory learners); and
- by feeling, touching or moving (tactile/kinesthetic learners).

Each person uses a combination of all three learning styles, but there is usually one learning style that is dominant or preferred. By identifying your preferred learning style, you can select learning strategies that you are more likely to find enjoyable and effective.

Ask yourself: How do I learn best? Is it:

- When I look at something (visual learner)?
- When I listen (auditory learner)?
- When I do things with my hands (kinesthetic)?

Example: If you wanted to learn a new computer program, would you read the manual before you sat down at the keyboard (visual)? Would you rather have someone talk you through it, step-by-step (auditory)? Would you prefer to jump right in and try it first (kinesthetic)?

Using this information, you can:

- select learning strategies that suit your style; and/or
- shape the learning situation to suit your style.

Visual learners might enjoy videos, field trips and reading. In a classroom setting, they would benefit by rewriting their notes using colours and underlining, making the information easy to remember.

Auditory learners might enjoy audio recordings, consulting with an expert and group discussions. In a classroom setting, they could listen attentively to the lecture and then explain it verbally to a friend to test their own understanding.

Kinesthetic learners might enjoy job sharing and improving their knowledge by teaching others. In a classroom setting, they could take notes to enhance retention and look for opportunities to apply new ideas as soon as possible.

Learning Strategies (Ways to learn from A-Z)

There are many ways to learn besides taking a course!

This is a list of formal and informal learning strategies to consider when creating a Learning and Development Plan. Use these or any others you think of. Be creative! Remember to keep your preferred learning styles in mind when selecting appropriate strategies. **For example;** you may determine that the best way for you to learn more about preparing for a staffing process is by individual reading and attending a workshop followed by practicing interview skills with a co-worker or friend.

Action Learning	Learning through performing an activity in a small group and then studying it in order to improve performance. Learners gain experience by repeatedly performing actions and obtaining feedback through the analysis of those actions.
Apps	Learning through the use of applications for such activities as language learning, searching maps, dictionaries, taking photos and note taking
Assignment	Being temporarily assigned new duties or a special project within the Agency.
Blog	Following or creating a regularly updated website or web page, typically one run by an individual or small group, written in an informal or conversational style.
Coaching	Having someone demonstrate a skill and provide feedback.
Computer-based Training	Receiving instruction and feedback from a learning program delivered on your computer.
Committees	Meeting regularly with a group to solve problems, discuss new information, etc
Consultation	Asking for an expert's opinion about a situation.
Debriefing	Learning by discussing what happened as soon as possible after an event
Demonstration Project	Implementing a project on a trial basis to showcase and test a process or idea.
Discussion Group	Members sharing information and learning from each other's experience.
Distance Learning	Learning from someone or a facility that is physically located elsewhere (for example, via correspondence, Internet, audio conferencing, video conferencing, etc.).
Field Trips	Going out on location to see how something is done.
Formal Education	Taking credit courses from a recognized educational institution.
Group Discussion	Getting together with others to discuss a topic.
Group Research	Team member collecting information on one aspect of a topic and bringing it back to the group.
Independent Study	Researching and learning about a subject on your own.
Informal Learning	Learning from the daily activities whether it be work-related, from family or leisure. Informal learning activities can include discussions, talks or presentations, information, advice and guidance, and are carried out in a flexible and informal way.

Interchange Canada	A temporary assignment arranged between the PCA and a department or agency in the core public administration that is governed by the Public Service Employment Act (PSEA).
Job Enhancement	Employee is given additional responsibilities to provide an opportunity to master new skills.
Job Shadowing	Spending time with someone who does a specific job to increase your understanding of the skills required.
Job Sharing	Two people sharing one job.
Job Swapping	Exchanging jobs for a period of time to learn new skills.
Journaling	Writing thoughts down in a personal learning journal.
Learning Circle	Participate in a highly interactive group of like-minded people whose goal is to build, share, and express knowledge through a process of open dialogue and deep reflection around issues or problems with a focus on a shared outcome.
Mentoring	Learning from a well-respected employee or manager.
Multi-skilling	Increasing the number of skills you possess by rotating through a variety of jobs at the same level.
Off-the-job Course Work	Participating in courses designed to enhance attitudes, knowledge or skills that relate to a specific topic.
Online Learning (eLearning)	Learning formally or informally through any networked device (such as computer, laptop, tablet, cell phone).
Partnering	Two or more people/teams/units sharing an activity or responsibility.
Peer Learning	Learning from a co-worker, or in peer learning groups.
Podcast	Listening to a digital audio file made available on the Internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device, typically available as a series, new instalments of which can be received by subscribers automatically.
Reading Resources	Using printed or online material to acquire information.
Symposium/ Conference	Attending an organized gathering to review latest research and new practices.
Team Learning	Members of a team sharing their knowledge and experience to develop a new approach to a problem.
Training	Improving your own knowledge or skill by teaching others.
Tutoring	Learning new concepts through one-on-one teaching.
Videos	Learning new skills or improving knowledge by watching a video on DVD or through YouTube or a streaming service.
Volunteer Work	Learning new skills by working as a volunteer.
Webinar	Participating in a seminar conducted over the Internet.