

Personal development plan – guidance

The GOC personal development plan consists of two elements:

- [The personal development plan](#)
- [Scope of practice](#)

At the start of the cycle, you are required to complete and upload a personal development plan (PDP) to your MyCPD account and answer scope of practice questions.

The purpose of the personal development plan is for you to set your own agenda for CPD, and help you plan your CPD so that it meaningfully reflects both your scope of practice and your aspirations for learning and professional development. It will also be used in the mandatory reflective exercise which you will complete within the last six months of the CPD cycle.

You should review and update both your PDP and your scope of practice questions regularly throughout the cycle. You can upload new versions and archive old ones in MyCPD.

The PDP is for your own personal use. The GOC may ask to view your PDP to ensure that you are planning CPD appropriate for your scope of practice and development needs.

Any information you upload to MyCPD may be viewed by the GOC if you are selected for registrant review, but it will not be used in any fitness to practice proceedings.

Here we provide guidance on how to complete the GOC PDP template and create your plan. You can access a blank PDP template in MyCPD which you can download and use. You do not have to use the template the GOC provide – you could use an alternative template provided by your employer, professional body, or your own template if you prefer. Any template that you use must include:

- [The learning outcomes you wish to achieve](#)
- [A plan detailing how you will achieve your intended learning outcomes through provider-led or self-directed CPD](#)
- [A time frame for completion of each learning outcome you have identified](#)

Scope of practice

To help you understand all aspects of your current professional practice, you should fill in your answers from the scope of practice questions you have completed on MyCPD. These answers will help you to think more widely about your professional role and aspirations when constructing your personal development plan, and to consider what learning outcomes you need to achieve. The GOC PDP template asks for the following information from your scope of practice questions:

Name:	GOC number:	Registrant type:
I spend most of my time in these settings:	I undertake these enhanced areas of practice:	
Professional interests or opportunities I want to pursue:	What will be different in my work in three years' time:	

Personal development plan

Your personal development plan sets out your intended learning outcomes over the CPD cycle. You can consider both clinical and non-clinical outcomes. The GOC PDP template has seven headings. These are shown below with a brief explanation of each heading. The following guidance will help you to create and fill in your PDP template. A blank template can be downloaded from MyCPD.

Learning outcome	Date for completion	How does this relate to my scope of practice?	How will I achieve this?	Why is this learning outcome important?	How will I know when this has been achieved?	How has this impacted my practice?
<i>What is the learning outcome to be achieved?</i>	<i>What is your target date for completion and review?</i>	<i>How does this support my knowledge and skills for my current or aspirational scope of practice?</i>	<i>What CPD activities will I complete to achieve the learning outcome?</i>	<i>What specifics led you to identify that this learning outcome is necessary?</i>	<i>How will you measure achievement?</i>	<i>What do I do differently now?</i>

Creating your personal development plan

There are three stages to undertake when creating your PDP: **Analyse**, **Identify**, and **Plan**.

1. **Analyse**

This stage analyses where you are currently in your professional role and career, and what your development needs are.

Think about your strengths and weaknesses – are there any gaps in your knowledge? To help you fully analyse your areas for development you could use a previous PDP, create a SWOT analysis to consider your strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, or discuss your development needs with your colleagues or line manager. A SWOT analysis grid is provided in the appendix.

2. **Identify**

Once you have analysed your development needs, you need to identify what learning outcomes you wish to achieve, why these are important to your development and how they relate to your scope of practice. Applying **SMART** objectives will ensure your learning outcomes are focused.

Specific – The learning outcome should be specific. If the outcome is too broad, the outcome is often unfocused and can lead to poor results.

For example, a poor, non-specific learning goal would be “to learn more about spectacle lenses”. A more specific learning outcome would be “to learn about advances in technology used in the latest generation of varifocal spectacle lens design and the resultant optical benefits for the wearer”.

Measurable – A clearly defined learning outcome allows you to measure the progress you have made and if the outcome has been achieved.

Achievable – Is the learning outcome attainable and achievable? Would it be more achievable if it were broken into smaller outcomes? Do you have the resources available – time, budget, tools, or support?

Relatable – Does the learning outcome relate to your scope of practice and development needs? Why is it important to you, your role, or your patients?

Time-bound – Can you set a timeframe to complete the learning outcome? A clear timeframe helps you to prioritise your learning and recognise when learning outcomes are still to be met.

You may identify and set as many learning outcomes as you wish. We suggest you should aim for a minimum of 4 or 5 learning outcomes to be achieved in the cycle. The GOC PDP template has 4 rows – you can insert extra rows if necessary. Once you have identified your learning outcomes, you can now enter these in your personal development plan and complete the corresponding “How does this relate to my scope of practice?” and “Why is this learning outcome important?” columns.

3. Plan

The final stage is to consider how and when you will achieve your learning outcomes. People learn in different ways, and it is important that you choose a method of learning or professional development that suits your development needs and preferred learning style. Think about what CPD or learning you have undertaken in the past – what method of worked best for you? Is the learning outcome best achieved through provider-led or self-directed CPD, through hands-on or theory-based learning? You may need more than one learning method to achieve some learning outcomes.

Once you have planned how your learning outcome will be achieved, enter this in the “How will I achieve this” column in your personal development plan for that specific learning outcome.

Evaluating learning outcome impact

The last column of the PDP should be completed when the specific learning outcome has been achieved. It requires you to reflect on how completing the CPD and achieving the learning outcome has impacted the way that you practice. You may find it useful to look at the reflection statement you have completed for the CPD activities related to this learning outcome or create a reflection statement for this if you have not already done so. The following questions may also aid your evaluation:

- What do you do differently as a direct result of achieving the learning outcome?
- Has this learning outcome had an impact on the actions and learning of others?
- How has the learning outcome benefitted your patients, processes, or practice?

Remember to review and update your personal development plan and scope of practice questions regularly throughout the CPD cycle.

Your completed personal development plan should now be uploaded to your MyCPD account. When you have completed and uploaded your PDP and answered the scope of practice questions you will be able to access all areas within your MyCPD account.

Appendix – SWOT analysis grid

Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>What am I good at?</i>	<i>What do I find difficult?</i>
Opportunities	Threats
<i>What resources and opportunities are available?</i>	<i>What barriers might I experience?</i>