

# Professional Development Plan

A professional development plan documents the goals, required skill and competency development, and objectives a staff member will need to accomplish in order to support continuous improvement and career development. A professional development plan is created by the manager working closely with the staff member to identify the necessary skills and resources to support the staff member's career goals and the organization's business needs.

Professional development for staff members begins when a new member joins your team. In addition, all staff members should have a "living" professional development plan in place. Planning should not take place only after an staff member is identified as needing improvement. Professional development plans should be reviewed on an on-going basis throughout the year, with at least one interim

<https://hr.duke.edu/managers/performance-management/professional-development-plan>

Professional development for staff members begins when a new member joins your team. In addition, all staff members should have a "living" professional development plan in place. Planning should not take place only after an staff member is identified as needing improvement. Professional development plans should be reviewed on an on-going basis throughout the year, with at least one interim review discussion between the staff member and supervisor prior to the end of the yearly performance review period.

## Professional Development Planning Steps

Use the following steps to create a professional development plan with your employee. Feel free to use the example professional development plans (listed above) to assist you in the process.

- [Step One: Request a self-assessment from the staff member](#)
- [Step Two: Develop your assessment of the individual's skill level](#)
- [Step Three: Assess the department and organization's needs](#)
- [Step Four: Explore development opportunities with the staff member](#)
- [Step Five: Record and analyze the staff member's progress](#)

Step One: Request a self-assessment from the staff member

Have the staff member complete a self-assessment of their interests, skills, values, and personality. Use the sample performance planning and self-assessment forms listed to the right to assist in the process. When evaluating the staff member's responses, keep these questions in mind:

- What skills, career opportunities, technologies interest the individual?
- Do those skills/interests/goals support the organization's needs and goals?
- What are the short and long term steps to get there?

## Step Two: Develop your assessment of the individual's skill level

Based on the staff member's self-assessment, their work record, and your own observations, determine the staff member's skill level in the following categories:

- Technical skills: skills needed to get the job done.
- Social skills: how do they work with others?
- Aptitudes: natural talents; special abilities for doing, or learning to do, certain kinds of things.
- Attitude: outlook, feelings, mind-set, way of thinking, and point of view.

## Step Three: Assess the department and organization's needs

In order for professional development to be successful, the staff member's needs and interests must be applied to address organizational objectives. The staff member's career path must align with the organization's workforce needs. In creating a professional development plan, consider the following goals:

- Big Duke" goals
- Departmental goals
- Team goals
- Individual goals

## Step Four: Explore development opportunities with the staff member

Explore the professional development opportunities available at Duke with your staff member. Some examples include:

- [Professional Development Institute](#) - The Professional Development Institute is a center dedicated to providing professional development training programs and resources for staff that supports identified staffing needs

across Duke. The Institute offers long-term training programs with a tailored curriculum designed to develop skills and capabilities needed to fill identified job opportunities across Duke.

- New Projects & Responsibilities - Explore what new projects and responsibilities the staff member can assist with in their own department. Staff members can use such opportunities to develop new skills such as web design, business writing, and project management.
- [Workshops & Seminars](#) - Learning & Organizational Development offers a variety of workshops and seminars that help an staff member develop their work and computer technology skills
- Educational Opportunities - There are a variety of educational opportunities available at Duke and in the Durham area. For a list of available resources, please refer to [Training](#).
- [Volunteer Opportunities](#) - Volunteer opportunities can present a unique way for an staff member to develop certain professional skills. Search the Duke Today web site for a list of volunteer opportunities at Duke (look under the "Volunteer Opportunities" tab).
- [Mentorship](#) - Interested staff can be paired with mentors for a variety of activities including information interviews, shadowing, tutorials, etc. For more mentoring resources, please visit the Mentoring @ Duke web site. PDI can also provide assistance with determining professional goals before you seek a mentoring relationship. [Click here](#) to schedule an appointment with a PDI representative.

### Step Five: Record and analyze the staff member's progress

Collect feedback from the staff member about their development progress to assist in identifying what the staff member is doing well, build on their skills, correct any problems that may arise, and help them develop new abilities that will improve personal performance as well as organizational outcomes.

Use a Performance Log for tracking, recording and providing feedback from the staff member. Record dates, events, expectations, and the impact of action steps on their development. Make sure to record:

- Observations of enhanced skills or knowledge and how they were applied.
- Progress towards goals and objectives.
- Observations where skills / knowledge could be applied - use for future discussion.

