HOW TO WRITE A USEFUL PDP

All trainees are expected to produce and maintain a Personal Development Plan within their e-portfolio

The PDP is a tool to record the main learning objectives over the following months. The ARCP Panel will expect to see entries that have been maintained and updated.

The PDP can be seen as working at three levels;

- year plan set up with your ES
- placement plan set up with your CS
- day-to-day plan which dynamically relates to your Reflection Log

Learning entries to put into your PDP will arise continuously day-to-day and should be documented in your Reflective Log. Entries can then be transferred to the PDP when these reflections identify learning needs and how you will address them. Your CS may help identify those that are most important so that they can be prioritized and if necessary allocated resources. The ES will also review the PDP.

The PDP to be useful it must be SMART.

Specific: the objective should be not be vague and generalised, but should be well defined with clear boundaries

Measurable: These should be an identifiable outcome that would demonstrate that the objective has been achieved (i.e. an assessment or written protocol etc.)

Achievable: It should be possible to accomplish the outcome within the time parameters stated, taking into account the scope and constraints of the job, availability of study leave, and other factors such as exams, personal life etc.

Relevant: i.e. the PDP for a CMT trainee should relate to the CMT curriculum and/or professional development as a Physician

Time-based: Objectives should state a target date for outcome achievement

1.Examples of non-SMART objectives are given below:

What	How	When	Outcome
To keep up to date with new clinical developments	Attend tutorials	Over the next 6-12 months	Pass exams and assessments
This is not SMART, as the objective is broad and general. There is no measurable or specific endpoint – when does a doctor finish keeping up to date?			
What	How	When	Outcome
Learn about cardiology as needed for CMT	Attend tutorials and ward rounds during Cardiology placement	Next 4 months	Be more confident
This is not SMART for the same reasons as above			

2. Example of a SMART objective

What	How	When	Outcome
Become more proficient in management of chest pain	Practice chest pain histories	Chest pain clinic and on-call	Improve proficiency as shown through a relevant CBD and mini-CEX
The need for this objective was identified during a clinical encounter and recorded in the Reflective Log			

Remember to set your PDP as 'Achieved' as you achieve them.

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Aug 2017