



The TPS Professional Development Scheme and the TPP Qualification

Developing and Recognising Professional
Competence in Transport Planning

Transport Planning Society

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Transport planners play a key role in society - identifying needs and opportunities for improving travel by individuals and the transport of goods. They work across modal boundaries, co-operate with many different disciplines, and make use of the latest technology and behavioural thinking. They provide advice on how best to achieve local objectives, and ensure that projects are delivered efficiently and cost effectively. They present their case to stakeholders, the public, and Government, and at Public Inquiries and Examinations in Public.

Given the role transport planners play within both the public and private sectors, their employers need to ensure they have highly competent, professional staff, who have a breadth of vision together with a depth of knowledge to meet the demands placed on them.

The Transport Planning Society is committed to the development and maintenance of transport planning skills together with recognition of professional transport planners and the work that they do.

The TPS Professional Development Scheme

The TPS Professional Development Scheme (PDS) is a structured training scheme, which supports employers and employees in guiding transport planners through the early stages of their career. It has been designed to equip staff with much of the range of knowledge and experience required to become a truly professional Transport Planner, and to satisfy the knowledge and most of the experience requirements of the Transport Planning Professional (TPP) qualification, awarded jointly by the TPS and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT).

Individuals with an interest in transport planning, whether recent graduates, career changers or those with an established career can follow the PDS, which opens up a pathway to the TPP itself, to Chartered membership of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, and (for those with a civil engineering degree) Chartered Engineer. Most importantly, TPS PDS has significant value in its own right, helping maintain and develop transport planning skills of the participants.

'For me, the PDS is a framework within which both the graduate and the employer sign up to a joint objective: training up to a professional standard. As an employer it gives us a commitment from our staff to Continuous Professional Development. Until about ten years ago such structured CPD was hard to define and even harder to implement. And, as in transport planning our staff resources are our main asset, training and development are critical to releasing value from our employees. As a graduate, the PDS ensures that your employer is signed up to the development of your career, and that the training you receive is relevant, comparable between employers and hence valuable. It is a win-win situation.'

Tom van Vuren TPP
Divisional Director, Mott MacDonald

'We strongly recommend all our young professionals to follow a professional development scheme, as this provides a structured route to developing their career and achieving a professional qualification.'

For our graduates, we believe that schemes like the TPS PDS support the attainment of the learning and experience outcomes that are important for achieving professional recognition, and provide the framework for accumulating valuable evidence for the professional review.

For the organisation, we benefit from more rounded professionals who can be more flexible in adapting their approach, and taking responsibility as the business grows.'

Keith Mitchell TPP
Chairman, Peter Brett Associates



How is the TPS Professional Development Scheme structured?

The PDS consists of a set of 18 Units, some of which are mandatory, while others are used to provide a set of choices. Eight of the 18 Units are concerned with management and generic skills (such as communications and inter-personal relations), two are concerned with policies, laws and regulations, and eight with transport planning techniques, such as data collection, assessment, public consultation, plan development and travel planning. Each Unit consists of a set of Objectives.

The PDS is based on four levels of competence – Awareness, Knowledge, Experience and Proficiency - with Proficiency requiring an ability to work unsupervised or to supervise others. Completion requires demonstration of competence Objective by Objective, with Proficiency required for some Units and Experience for others, always with the key underlying knowledge.

Who can use the TPS Professional Development Scheme?

Any organisation that is a Stakeholder member of the Society and has a PDS licence.

Who can participate in the TPS Professional Development Scheme?

Anyone pursuing a career as a professional transport planner who is employed by a Stakeholder member with a PDS licence. There is no charge to individual PDS participants, but they must be members of TPS.

Although most of those on the PDS are graduates, just starting their careers, others are transport planners with several years experience using the PDS to provide a framework to obtain the full set of competences required for the TPP qualification. It can also be used by career changers,

Who uses the TPS Professional Development Scheme?

Since it was launched in 2008, the TPS PDS has become the standard scheme for transport planners across much of the industry, providing a clear pathway towards the TPP qualification.

Organisations with a PDS licence include AECOM, Arup, Atkins, CH2M, Hampshire CC, Hyder Consulting, Integrated Transport Planning, Jacobs, JMP Consulting, Leicestershire CC, Mayer Brown, Mott MacDonald, Mouchel, Peter Brett Associates, PFA Consulting, SAJ Consultants, Systra, Transport for London, VECTOS and WSP.

“There had been an absence of anything that sought to professionalise transport planning in the same way that Chartered status does for other professions. TfL has adopted the TPS Professional Development Scheme to enable our transport planners to gain access to a development framework directly relevant to their skill set and one that offers a route to become professionally recognised.”

Michèle Dix TPP

How is the PDS managed?

Each PDS licensee appoints a PDS manager who is responsible for the operational management of the Scheme within their organisation. Each trainee is assigned a mentor who both advises them and assesses their progress through the Scheme, signing Objectives off as they are completed. All PDS mentors must have been trained by the Society, and attend Refresh sessions

How standards are assured across PDS users?

The Society has a team of independent PDS Reviewers who meet with each trainee, and their mentor, at least twice during their time on the Scheme. When they consider that a trainee has satisfied the PDS requirements, the Society issues a Certificate of PDS Completion.



The TPP Qualification

The Transport Planning Professional, TPP, qualification provides professional recognition for transport planners in the same way that membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute recognises professional town planners and being a Chartered Engineer identifies professional engineers. It is managed and awarded jointly by the TPS and CHIT.

Award of the TPP requires candidates to demonstrate, through documents and a professional review interview, that they have a combination of a broad range and a depth of competence, covering both technical and generic skills. That competence covers knowledge, experience and an ability to manage others.

An increasing number of employers are making award of the TPP or another professional qualification a condition of career progress, and it is recognised as of particular benefit to those giving expert evidence in Public Inquiries and Examinations in Public.

'A professional qualification is a key barometer of expertise in a discipline area that can be highly technical. Having a professional qualification provides clear recognition to the transport planning community and wider environment that you have achieved a defined level of knowledge and experience. Having a professional qualification therefore gives you, as an individual, greater credibility to work as a transport planner'.

Kate Morris
Director, Strategic Planning and Advisory Sector, AECOM

What is needed for the TPP qualification?

For most candidates, there are three key stages to satisfying the TPP requirements.

- The first is learning, obtaining the technical knowledge that underpins a professional career. This can be achieved by one of four routes - completion of the TPS PDS (for graduates), an approved transport Masters, a Portfolio of Technical Knowledge (for graduates) or a Technical Report (for those without an Honours degree or its equivalent).
- The second is obtaining the breadth and depth of experience required to work as a professional transport planner and to supervise other transport planners. The PDS provides a well defined structure to guide both the transport planner and their employer in obtaining most of the experience required.
- The third is demonstrating professional competence across a broad range of modes and contexts through a professional review interview.

In addition there is a Senior Route for transport planners in a senior management position within transport planning and who also have very extensive experience.

For further information

For further information on the PDS go to www.tps.org.uk/main/professionaldevelopment/ where some documents, including a PDS overview, can be downloaded.

Further information on the PDS can also be obtained by e-mailing pds@tps.org.uk.

Further information on the TPP qualification is at www.tpprofessional.org or e-mail pds@tps.org.uk.

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