



Transport Planning Society

Getting Started on the TPS Professional Development Scheme

Advice for Trainees

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The Transport Planning Society's Professional Development Scheme - the PDS - is the standard training scheme for those who want to become a true transport planning professional, particularly for those aspiring to achieve the award of the Transport Planning Professional – TPP qualification, the only professional qualification specific to transport planning.

Why should I follow the PDS?

Because:

- to become a professional transport planner you need have knowledge and experience across a broad range of transport planning skills;
 - a breadth essential if you are to satisfy the requirements for the award of the TPP;
- that knowledge and experience is best obtained, recorded and measured through being on a structured development scheme;
- the PDS is used by most of the major employers of transport planners –with 300 transport planners across the private and public sectors following it;
- if you are on the PDS your employer is obliged to do their best to provide you with opportunities to obtain the skills required to complete it.
- if you don't have a TPP approved transport Masters, completion of the PDS exempts you from having to complete a TPP Portfolio of Technical Knowledge.

Deciding to join the PDS

Before finally deciding to commence the PDS, you should have:

- explored the options for developing your career with your manager / business manager, given your degree, your interests, and the opportunities your employer can offer you;
- agreed that the PDS is the most appropriate development scheme for you to follow;
- reviewed and understood the PDS requirements, and discussed them with your manager, or a PDS mentor.

Be sure the PDS is right for you!

Getting started

To get going on the PDS you need to:

- be accepted by your organisation's PDS manager and be assigned a PDS mentor;
- join the Transport Planning Society;
 - TPS membership is obligatory for all those following the PDS as your subscription contributes towards the costs of running the Scheme;
 - you can join on line at <http://www.tps.org.uk/main/Individual/> ;
 - as soon as you receive your membership number, you should give it to your PDS manager so you can be registered on the PDS with your organisation.
- learn about the PDS documents and where you can find them on your organisation's intranet;
- meet with your PDS mentor to discuss;
 - how to plan your way through the PDS;
 - how you record your progress
 - how you and your mentor will be working together;
- review the PDS Objectives;

- identify any knowledge or experience you have already gained that might enable to start to complete your PDS records. You might, for instance, already have some experience from a previous job or from work experience, and you might have some knowledge, or awareness, from your degree, particularly if you have a transport Masters.

Your PDS mentor

Your mentor is there to help you work towards completing the Scheme, as quickly as suits you and is reasonably possible. They will have been trained by the Society and are required to keep up to date by attending the Society's Refresher training sessions.

Your PDS mentor has four key responsibilities. They are to:

- explain how you progress through the PDS and record your progress;
- help you choose which Units to complete;
- help you find opportunities within your organisation to enable you to gain the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience you need;
- regularly meet with you – at least once every three months – to;
 - assess your progress for those Objectives you have recorded learning or work, Objective by Objective,
 - sign off those Objectives you have completed;
 - help you plan the next few months.

The PDS structure

The PDS is based on a set of Objectives:

- some of which are mandatory and others provide options from which you can make choices;
- some Objectives are about things you need be aware of, or to know about, described as Awareness and Knowledge;
- other Objectives are about things you need to have done, described as Experience or Proficiency – the latter when you are managing others.

The Objectives are grouped into Units, and the Units into Areas.

What documents do I need?

The heart of the PDS is 'The TPS Professional Development Scheme for Transport Planners' document. This contains:

- a description of the Scheme, including what you have to do to complete it;
- a set of Objective Record Sheets ;
 - which describe what you need to know or be able to do
 - for you to record your Progress through to completion of the Scheme.

There is also a series of Advice notes, to help your mentor guide you through the Scheme.

Your mentor will ensure that you are provided with a copy of the main PDS document as a Word file.

What records do I need to keep?

You need to record

- what you have learned and done, Objective by Objective at least once every by quarter;

so your records gradually builds up until you have satisfied the requirements.

If your organisation requires you to keep Quarterly Reports, these can be used to complement your main PDS record.

All your records, whether directly on a PDS Objective Record Sheet or in a quarterly report, must:

- be about you - about what 'I learned' or what 'I did' (they are not about what your team, or organisation did);
- be succinct;
- include;
 - the period when the learning or experience was obtained;
 - the title of the project or course.
 - the level of competency represented

Remember, PDS Knowledge Objectives are about what you have learned, not what you have done.

Who checks what I have recorded and my progress?

Your mentor is required to meet with you at least once every three months or more frequently if either of you think it helpful.

They will assess your progress, and advise you on what more you need to do to complete each Objective. They will also sign off those Objectives they consider you have completed.

In addition, the Society has a team of PDS Reviewers, who you will meet on at least two occasions while you are on the PDS;

- firstly, within the first two years of you being on the PDS, they will;
 - assess your progress through the Scheme and the support you are receiving from your mentor;
 - suggest any changes they think desirable
 - provide advice on how you might progress to PDS completion; and
- secondly, when your PDS mentor considers that you have completed the Scheme.

Once your Reviewer is satisfied that you have completed the PDS, you will be presented with a Certificate of PDS Completion.

What happens if I change jobs?

The PDS is standard across all users; and used by many consultants as well as some local authorities. So, if you move to another user of the PDS you can take your partially completed record with you, and start with your new employer where you left off with the old one.

Your Organisation's PDS Manager

Your PDS manager is responsible for the overall management of the PDS within your organisation, and is the link with the Society.

If you Need Further Information

Your first point of contact is your mentor. If they are not sure they have the right answer to your question, they should seek the advice of your PDS manager, who can always ask the Society.

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