

Unit 2: Professional Development for Strategic Managers

Unit code:	F/602/2061
QCF Level 7:	BTEC Professional
Credit value:	5
Guided learning hours:	10

Unit aim

This unit provides the learner with the methods and techniques to assess the development of their own skills to support the achievement of strategic direction.

Unit introduction

This unit is designed to enable learners to take responsibility for their learning and development needs to gain the personal and professional skills needed to support the strategic direction of an organisation. Learners can achieve this through analysing their current skills and preparing and implementing a personal development plan.

This unit highlights the importance of seeking feedback from others to improve performance by continuously reviewing learning needs. The development of appropriate personal and professional skills will allow learners to cope with demanding responsibilities and career progression.

Learners will conduct a skills audit to evaluate the strategic skills they need to meet current and future leadership requirements and then use it to identify their preferred learning style. This will also inform the structure of a personal development plan.

Evidence for this unit needs to be generated continuously throughout the qualification, enabling learners to take ownership of their development needs. Learners will need to demonstrate that they have a regularly updated and realistic personal development plan that fits with their preferred learning style.

This unit will also enable learners to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of their learning against the achievement of strategic goals and their chosen career path.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

On completion of this unit a learner should:

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Be able to assess personal and professional skills required to achieve strategic goals	1.1 use appropriate methods to evaluate personal skills required to achieve strategic goals 1.2 apply techniques to assess the professional skills required to support the strategic direction of the organisation
2 Be able to conduct a skills audit to identify learning style	2.1 carry out a skills audit to evaluate the strategic skills needed to meet current and future leadership requirements 2.2 apply appropriate techniques to identify preferred learning style
3 Be able to implement a personal development plan	3.1 construct a personal development plan that meets leadership development requirements identified in the skills audit 3.2 use suitable methods to assess the outcomes of a personal development plan against personal work objectives 3.3 evaluate the impact of own learning against the achievement of strategic goals

Unit content

1 **Be able to assess personal and professional skills required to achieve strategic goals**

Personal skills: time management eg using time effectively, analysing time spent to improve productivity, setting SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-based) objectives, prioritising work tasks, dealing with time wasters, effective delegation; stress management; problem solving; decision making; effective communication eg active listening, questioning, handling conflict

Professional skills: counselling and mentoring to support staff with their own learning and development requirements; coaching skills; leadership skills; multi-tasking; using occupational standards to identify competencies; continuing self-development to meet requirements for professional bodies eg learning new skills and knowledge, developing in current and future job roles; leading and chairing meetings; delivering effective presentations

Achieving strategic goals: importance eg to ensure that staff can perform their job effectively, to provide opportunities to meet individual learning needs, to improve flexibility and adaptability when responding to change, to ensure business success, to create a learning culture; methods eg using conceptual tools to identify own strengths and limitations, developing personal networks, management development and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes

2 **Be able to conduct a skills audit to identify learning style**

Skills audit: to assess skills and competencies against organisational and personal objectives; personal profile using appropriate self-assessment tools, psychometric testing, personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis – listing strengths, weaknesses, identifying opportunities for improvement or career progression, identifying threats to progress; assessment against relevant National Occupational Standards (NOS) and NVQ competence standards; importance of feedback from others eg peers, line manager, customers; methods of feedback eg appraisal, supervision, performance review, mentoring; defining the gap, identifying learning and development needs to meet strategic objectives

Identify preferred learning style: methods such as learning style inventories and questionnaires, psychometric testing eg Kolb (converger, diverger, assimilator, accommodator), Honey and Mumford (activist, reflector, theorist, pragmatist), Fleming's VAK/VARK model (visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI); criticisms of learning style theories

3 **Be able to implement a personal development plan**

Personal development plan: importance of having a plan – to provide a systematic or structured approach to decisions about what is needed to learn and how to plan to learn it; setting objectives for life and career planning, identifying resources and support needed and available to meet objectives, identifying obstacles to achieving objectives and how to overcome them, reviewing and monitoring plan; the importance of self-review, providing a reflective record of management experience; gaining support from others to achieve goals and work objectives

Monitoring and evaluation: importance of keeping a working document; to help manage learning; to evaluate progress of achievement towards goals; to become a critical, self-directed learner; to develop a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development of leadership skills; review on regular basis; compare achievements against original objectives, reflect on learning, record results, agree whether objectives were achieved or not, set date for next review; set new objectives when others have been achieved

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit gives learners the opportunity to develop the skills needed to take ownership of improving their management or leadership performance to support the achievement of strategic direction for an organisation. The integration of learning with practice, and reflection on own strengths and weaknesses as strategic managers forms an essential part of this unit. Delivery needs to be related to learners' own employment experience.

Where learners do not have relevant employment experience, they can use diverse opportunities to explore their personal development. Activities such as work experience, job shadowing or voluntary work can support the exploration of personal development.

To be of value, the exploration of personal development can be systematic with more than ad hoc and unstructured thoughts. So learners can prepare a personal development plan and review and reflect on their management experience and development. It is recommended that this unit is either delivered first in the programme or integrated with other units on an ongoing basis.

Learners need to plan their learning and development and involve others in the process. This can involve seeking feedback from line managers and colleagues regarding performance and development needs. This will enable learners to review and revise their performance and development needs to meet organisational and personal objectives. This can be achieved through a series of skills-based workshops or a residential training session where learners analyse their personal development requirements.

For learning outcome 1, learners could assess a range of interpersonal skills which are important for strategic managers/leaders to achieve strategic objectives and develop good working relationships. Tutors can show video/DVD clips of ineffective communications, followed by learners using role-play scenarios to practise skills such as body language, active listening, negotiation and assertiveness in a non-threatening environment. Learners can analyse how well they currently manage their time through keeping a time log and reviewing it after a period of say, one week, to identify where improvements could be made.

For learning outcome 2, learners can carry out a personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis against the current and future leadership requirements of their job role. When training and developing staff, it is important to find out how they learn best. This can be achieved through understanding learning style preferences. Kolb's learning cycle is a useful tool to understand how people learn. Learners can complete an inventory or questionnaire to identify their own preferred learning style. There are many free examples that can be downloaded from the internet. Tutors need to emphasise that learning styles are used to suit the learning being undertaken and improve learning in 'weaker' styles. There are many learning style theoretical models that learners could research and compare.

For learning outcome 3, and in order for learners to prepare a development plan, tutors need to explain the importance of having a plan, for example setting SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-based) objectives to meet personal and professional goals and to monitor and assess progress against targets. Tutors could provide a template for a personal development plan for learners to complete. Tutors need to reinforce the importance of keeping the development plan and reflective record up to date so that it can be monitored and reviewed throughout the learning programme. Learners will prepare their plan using the results of the skills audit.

Ongoing review and monitoring of learning against the achievement of strategic goals is essential and learners will need to understand the importance of this in improving performance in order to achieve strategic goals.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and programme of learning
Tutor input on interpersonal skills, showing DVDs of ineffective behaviours
Role-play activities to practise personal and interpersonal skills and behaviours, followed by feedback and evaluation
Tutor-led discussion on time management, followed by learner activities on time stealers and ways to manage them
Learner activities to analyse time management
Learner activities to assess personal and professional skills, contributing to Assignment 1: Personal and Professional Skills Review
Tutor input on importance of conducting a skills audit
Tutor input on learning styles followed by learner activities to identify preferred learning style
Learner activities to complete a skills audit, contributing to Assignment 2: Personal Development Planning
Tutor input on resources needed to support leadership development activities
Learner research on suitable development activities to improve performance
Tutor input on methods for monitoring achievement of objectives of a personal development plan and setting SMART objectives
Learners prepare and implement personal development plan, contributing to Assignment 2: Personal Development Planning
Review of unit and programme of assignments

Assessment

Assessment for this unit needs to be evidenced through a personal development plan that is monitored throughout the programme. It is important that learners evaluate their current skills using a skills audit to identify and inform their preferred learning style. The personal development plan needs to demonstrate learner ability to reflect on their learning and development needs, identify target dates for review, and show how their needs have been met.

For AC 1.1 and 1.2, learners need to use appropriate methods to evaluate personal skills and assess the professional skills needed for effective leadership and management. To meet the strategic goals and direction of the organisation, learners need to link their evaluation to leadership requirements for a specific goal.

For AC2.1, learners will need to demonstrate they can conduct a skills audit, to evaluate current and future leadership requirements. Learners need to benchmark against suitable criteria such as National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership. This can help inform their preferred learning style for AC2.2.

For AC 3.1 and 3.2, learners will construct a personal development plan using the information from their skills audit. They can use a standard template or construct their own plan, but it must include SMART objectives and an identification of the resources needed to achieve the objectives, as well as assessing the outcomes against personal work objectives. To be of value, the plan needs to be implemented for at least six months in order for learners to evaluate the impact of their learning against the achievement of strategic goals for AC3.3.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the criteria in the assessment grid. This is for guidance only and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Assessment criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
AC 1.1, 1.2	Personal and Professional Skills Review	Learners to review skills needed to achieve strategic goals.	Skills review
AC 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Personal Development Planning	Learners to prepare and implement a personal development plan through carrying out a skills audit.	Skills audit and Personal Development Plan showing monitoring and review for at least 6 months

Essential resources

There are no essential resources required for this unit.

Indicative resource materials

Textbooks

Allen M and Adair J – *The Concise Time Management and Personal Development* (Thorogood, 2003) ISBN 1854182234

Gold J, Thorpe R and Mumford A – *Leadership and Management Development* (CIPD, 2010) ISBN 1843982447

Megginson D and Whitaker V – *Continuing Professional Development* (CIPD, 2007) ISBN 1843981661

Owen J – *How to Lead, 2nd Edition* (Prentice Hall, 2009) ISBN 027372150X

Pedler M, Burgoyne J and Boydell T – *A Manager's Guide to Self Development* (McGraw-Hill Professional, 2006) ISBN 0077114701

Journals

Management Today (Haymarket Business Media)

People Management (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

Professional Manager (Chartered Management Institute)

Training Journal (www.trainingjournal.com)

Websites

www.businesslink.gov.uk	Interactive tools for creating a personal development plan through assessment of management and leadership skills
www.cipd.co.uk	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
www.managementhelp.org	Articles on leadership development planning and self-assessments for personal and professional development
www.management-standards.org.uk	Chartered Management Institute
www.mindtools.com	Time-management tools and activity logs