

Guide to Preparing a Learning & Development Strategy



CIVIL SERVICE
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
CENTRE

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Acronyms

CoPs	Communities of Practice
CRE	Comprehensive Review of Expenditure
CSTDC	Civil Service Training and Development Centre
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRS	Human Resource Strategy
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
L&D	Learning and Development
LGMSB	Local Government Management Services Board
MAC	Management Advisory Committee
ORP	Organisational Review Programme
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
ROI	Return on Investment
TNA	Training Needs Analysis

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PART 1

Overview

OVERVIEW

Background

A Steering Group comprising a number of Personnel Officers, a representative from the Local Government Management Services Board (LGMSB) and representatives from the Civil Service Training and Development Centre (CSTDC), Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, developed a high-level Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service covering the period 2011–2014. The purpose of this Framework is to give direction and support and to make recommendations to Departments, Offices and Agencies on their approach to staff learning and development in a rapidly changing environment over the medium term, having regard to the current economic climate.

Under the Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011–2014, Departments¹ are required to prepare a Learning and Development (L&D) Strategy internally which sets out the key learning and development objectives and actions as proposed under the Framework which include:

- Prioritise business needs & align Business, HR and Learning Strategies
- Analyse L&D needs
- Develop strategies for addressing L&D needs
- Evaluate L&D
- Strengthen Ethics and Governance
- Promote strong Financial Management

These guidelines were developed by the CSTDC to assist Departmental HR/Training Units to prepare their own L&D Strategy and implement the recommendations set out in the Framework. They are not prescriptive and some Departments may find it more efficient to review and update a previous Strategy document rather than develop a new format. This is acceptable provided the key objectives and actions in the Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011–2014 are reflected.

Target Audience

This document is aimed at:

- those responsible for developing and implementing a Learning and Development Strategy as set out in the Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011–2014
- Personnel Officers and those ultimately responsible for Human Resource Management (HRM) Units, Learning and Development Units and Strategic Planning Units

The L&D Strategy

The L&D Strategy is a forward looking document setting out how L&D will support the achievement of the Department's HR and strategic goals and contribute to Departmental effectiveness over the coming years. The primary objective for developing the Strategy is to explore and select options for addressing learning and development needs.

¹ All references to Department should be taken to include Offices and Agencies

L&D Strategy Development Process

Choosing the most appropriate vehicles for addressing learning and development needs involves an iterative process of research, consultation and analysis. It is essential to plan in advance about what research needs to be conducted and who should be consulted or engaged in developing the Strategy. In addition, consideration should be given at an early stage to the techniques, methods, approaches and timetables that will be used for gathering information and exploring the issues. The data and ideas that are gathered through research and consultation should be analysed as part the decision-making process and incorporated in the Strategy as appropriate.

Developing the Strategy

As part of the process of developing an L&D Strategy, Departments should take a critical look at the current L&D policies and practices that are in place across all business units. This should be followed by an examination of the level of joined up thinking in the L&D and HR areas and the extent to which outputs/outcomes from L&D activities can be traced to some specific aspect of the overall corporate strategy. To be effective, the L&D Strategy should be internally consistent and be mutually reinforcing with other strategies across the Department. It should be vertically and horizontally integrated.

Vertical integration means integrating the L&D Strategy with the overarching HR Strategy and with business strategy at corporate and business unit levels.

Horizontal integration means integrating L&D activity with other HR practices so that there is consistency across the whole HR area with all its activity supporting Departmental goals.

The L&D Strategy should also be aligned with the L&D Framework for the Civil Service 2011-2014. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of strategic alignment.

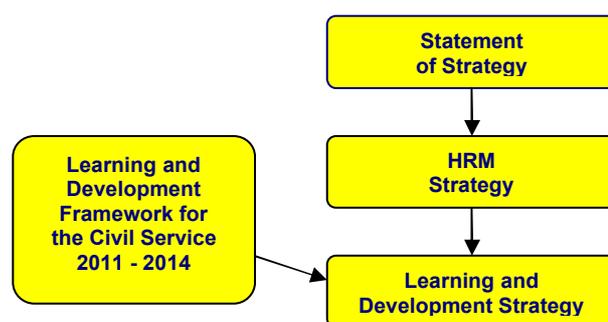


Figure 1: Strategic Alignment

Key Documents

The Department's Statement of Strategy and the HR Strategy are key documents which should influence the development and content of the L&D Strategy.

In addition, the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) setting out the specific L&D requirements of the Department should be taken into account in devising the L&D Strategies. The TNA findings should be referred to in the Strategy.

Any other relevant documents in the Department should also be considered to ensure horizontal integration. These may include:

- Divisional Business Plans
- Section Plans
- Customer Service Plans
- Corporate Procurement Strategy/Plans
- IT Strategy/Plans
- Training Plans

Learning Theory

Learning theory should be taken into account in developing L&D strategies. David Kolb² is renowned for his theory that learning is based on a four-stage experiential learning cycle. This learning cycle starts with the learner having a 'concrete experience' i.e. being actively involved in a task. The second stage in the cycle is that of 'reflective observation'. This means stepping back from the task and reviewing what has been done and experienced. The third stage, 'abstract conceptualisation', is the process of making sense of what has happened and involves identifying patterns, connections and relationships in different situations. The final stage of the learning cycle is putting the learning into practice through 'active experimentation'. This active experimentation creates new learning experiences and so continues the learning cycle.

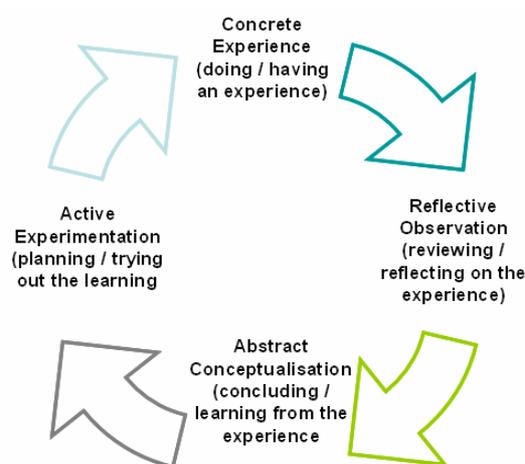


Figure 2: Kolb's Learning Cycle

According to Kolb's model, the ideal learning process involves the application of all four stages in response to situational demands.

² Kolb, David (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Key Stakeholders

There are key people and groups who can influence the Strategy and others who will be affected by it. Senior management have a particular role to play in approving the Strategy and by supporting its roll-out throughout the Department. Staff can make a significant contribution in identifying and agreeing mechanisms to facilitate their learning and development, and by co-operating with the opportunities provided as the Strategy is implemented. The participation of key stakeholders is essential in securing support and buy-in for the implementation of the Strategy. Therefore, representative groups should be identified at an early stage so that they can be actively involved in developing the Strategy.

Consultation

Consultation helps to get a collective view on the key learning and development issues to be addressed in the L&D Strategy. While everyone in the Department need not be involved in the consultation process, those consulted should be representative of the various stakeholders identified at 4.1. The partnership structure may be used in this regard.

The effort put into stakeholder consultation will be very worthwhile in the long term. Consultation enhances the quality of the decision-making process and can shape and improve the Strategy. A shared ownership of the Strategy results in greater commitment to its implementation. The consultation process also raises awareness of L&D generally and can help to promote a learning culture within the Department.

Training Cycle

The Training Cycle represents a best practice approach to training, learning and development. It is a widely used model which involves a series of stages which are necessary to ensure that the training is effective. The Training Cycle is reproduced at Appendix A.

This guide takes account of the stages in the Training Cycle in suggesting what might be included under various headings.

L&D Strategy Template

The template in Part 2 can be used to assist Departments in developing content for the L&D Strategy. To aid drafting, some basic text is suggested which is highlighted in green boxes. In some cases this text will need considerable modification to take account of the specific mission and goals of the Department, and the strategic options which are available to achieve its business objectives.

Completing the Template

The template is divided into four parts.

Section 1 - Introduction: The first section introduces the L&D Strategy. It provides essential information on how the L&D Strategy is aligned with other strategies and how it takes account of the environment in which the Department is operating. For the most part, the information required for this section can be gathered through documentary research and other secondary sources.

Section 2 - Identifying Learning and Development Needs: This section sets out how the L&D needs of the Department are identified. It should be noted that in order to complete this section, a TNA will need to have been conducted and a TNA report produced containing the findings. If this work has not yet been carried out, it should be commenced immediately. This will require both secondary and primary research.

Section 3 - Addressing Learning and Development Needs: Section 3 sets out how the L&D needs will be addressed, including evaluation. Departments will need to consider what strategies are appropriate to address their specific needs identified in the TNA.

Section 4 - Implementation: The fourth section addresses implementation arrangements.

Five appendices are included at the end to provide supplementary information.

Ensuring Conformity with the L&D Framework

The template is designed to ensure conformity with the L&D Framework. In systematically completing and implementing the Strategy in accordance with this guide and template, the first four objectives will have been addressed:

- Prioritise business needs & align Business, HR and Learning Strategies (section 1)
- Analyse L&D needs (section 2)
- Develop strategies for addressing L&D needs (section 3)
- Evaluate L&D (Section 3)

The final two objectives will need to be addressed at various stages during the process. These objectives are:

- Strengthen Ethics and Governance
- Promote strong Financial Management

In section 2, as part of the TNA, these areas should be included when considering L&D needs. This will ensure that they are taken into account in section 3 when strategies are being selected to address the needs.

Structure of the L&D Strategy

The L&D Strategy is presented in a report format which is the documented output of the process. It should be structured in an easy to follow format. A suggested format is set out at Appendix B.

PART 2

L&D Strategy Template

L&D STRATEGY TEMPLATE

SECTION 1 - Introduction

The first section in the L&D Strategy can cover a number of areas such as introduction, current environment, purpose, audience, drivers, commitments, principles, etc. This guidance note sets out these elements individually under various headings for the purposes of clarity. Departments may select and tailor those areas which they wish to include. They may also wish to highlight other matters relevant to their Department which are not included here. The text may be presented in paragraphs or subsections with or without headings.

1.1 Introduction

Introduce the L&D Strategy by stating what it is, how it is aligned with the HR Strategy and Statement of Strategy, who was consulted in its development and if it was approved by senior management.

It should state

- a. which individual is assigned responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy, e.g. the Personnel Officer
- b. that regular interim reports on progress will be made, e.g. on a quarterly basis

SAMPLE TEXT

This Learning and Development Strategy sets out the learning and development strategies which will be implemented in the period 2011-2014. It supports the achievement of the goals set out in the Statement of Strategy (period of strategy) and is in line with the objectives contained in the HR Strategy and the Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011-2014. It has been developed following consultation with (insert text e.g. business units, the Partnership Committee, senior management) and has been agreed by the Management Advisory Committee (MAC, or equivalent). (Specify) is responsible for implementing this Strategy. It will be subject to periodic review (specify).

1.2 Current environment

This section provides some context for the development of the L&D Strategy. It identifies external and internal factors that impact the Department's operating environment. The various factors can be mentioned collectively or they can be separated out and addressed individually.

External factors which will be relevant in most cases will include: government policy, the current economic environment and EU requirements. A useful tool for identifying these external factors is the PESTEL analysis. This involves the study of the Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors.

Common internal factors will include the Statement of Strategy and HR Strategy. Other internal factors may include organisational capacity and policies.

SAMPLE TEXT

This Strategy has been developed against the backdrop of a rapidly changing operating environment. A number of factors both externally and internally have emerged which impacts the way we provide services and manage our business. These include:

1.3 Purpose of the L&D Strategy

Stating the purpose of the Learning and Development Strategy clarifies why it is being done and what it will be used for. One or more of the following may be relevant to address this point:

- It is part of a Department strategic planning process that requires a set of coherent integrated strategies from all activities, including learning and development
- It is being used as a vehicle for consultation/discussion with line management about learning and development issues
- It is a means of linking learning and development activities systematically with business needs
- It will serve to establish priorities and plans for activities and resources
- It will be an approved and authoritative framework for learning and development policies and activities
- It will help secure budgets and resources
- It will provide integration across disparate units

SAMPLE TEXT:

This Learning and Development Strategy is part of the strategic planning process. Its purpose is to link learning and development activities systematically with business needs and to establish priorities and plans for activities and resources.

1.4 Audience

The Learning and Development Strategy may be aimed at several different audiences, for example:

- Senior Management
- Personnel Officer/HR Director
- Strategic Planning Units
- Line Managers
- HR Units
- Learning and Development Units

Specific strategies may be needed for different target groups. The following target groups are examples of groups which may be considered in developing the strategies:

- Senior management
- Individual grades
- Technical/specialist staff
- Professional staff
- Team leaders
- Line managers
- Operational staff
- New recruits
- ICT staff

SAMPLE TEXT

This Learning and Development Strategy is aimed at the HR Unit and line managers. It covers learning and development for all staff in the Department.

1.5 Key Drivers

This heading sets out what is driving the production and content of the Strategy. The drivers may include:

- Strategy statements
- Learning and development needs
- Change programmes
- External factors

Strategy statements: The driver for any strategy is the statements around the mission and strategic goals that can be found in the Statement of Strategy. In the case of learning and development, more specific information can be found in the HR Strategy. Learning and development supports the achievement of the strategic goals and HR objectives by ensuring that relevant staff have the know-how and expertise to achieve them.

Learning and development needs: All Departments need staff with the requisite knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes (competencies) to enable it to fulfil its mandate and achieve its objectives. To establish if the current competency level is adequate to meet current and future business needs, a TNA is conducted to identify gaps and any learning and development needs. The findings in the TNA can be a key driver for the Strategy.

Change programmes: Any major change programmes that need to be supported by the Learning and Development Strategy should be stated, for example

- Implementation of the Public Service Agreement 2010 – 2014
- Organisational Review Programme (ORP) findings/recommendations
- Government decisions arising from the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure (CRE)
- Central Expenditure Review findings/recommendations
- Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) reports/ Internal Audit

Achieving the desired results will be challenging and may need a considerable investment in effort, time and resources. If so, this driver should be referred to in the Strategy.

External factors: An obvious external driver is the Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011 – 2014. Individual Departments will have their own individual external drivers influencing the shape of the Strategy.

The above list is not exhaustive and Departments may find that there are other drivers not referred to that they should include. The drivers may be set out individually in detail or a single paragraph could encompass the main drivers as set out in the sample text. Please note that the sample text does not include specific drivers relevant to individual Departments.

SAMPLE TEXT

This Learning and Development Strategy is required under the Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011 – 2014. It will seek to meet the obligations of the Framework and, in so doing, will reinforce top management’s commitment to “Developing People” as set out in the Statement of Strategy and the HR Strategy, and as prescribed under PMDS. It outlines strategies for meeting identified learning and development needs that will support the major change initiatives/programmes currently underway

Consider quoting directly from any references to “Developing People” contained in the Statement of Strategy/HR Strategy.

1.6 Commitment about Learning and Development

This paragraph articulates the commitment of the Department to developing people. To provide some context, the text from the Training and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011 – 2014 may be restated here if desired.

SAMPLE TEXT

The Government is committed to the ongoing training, up-skilling and development of the staff of the Public Service to ensure that the changes envisaged by the Public Service Agreement 2010 - 2014 are implemented. This commitment is part of its long term policy of supporting the development of staff across the Public Service thereby enhancing the overall level of core workplace skills and in turn the performance of organisations

Reference should also be made to any statements contained in the Statement of Strategy/HR Strategy which relate to Developing People. Where possible use direct quotes as they draw attention to the linkage between staff learning and development and the business of the Department.

Some Departments assign specific responsibility for Learning and Development to a nominated member of the MAC to ensure that Learning and Development features

regularly on the agenda at MAC meetings. Details of these arrangements should also be included where relevant.

1.7 Underlying Principles

Departments may wish to set out the underlying principles that underpin the L&D Strategy. The following sample text lists a number of principles which may be considered for inclusion.

SAMPLE TEXT

This Strategy is based on the following key principles:

- L&D will be based on identified needs following a training needs analysis
- L&D will be fully integrated with the PMDS process
- L&D will take account of the Department's business objectives
- L&D measures will be in place informally in the workplace through on-the-job training, coaching and self-managed learning
- L&D will be delivered on a value for money basis
- The use of shared resources will be maximised – human, financial, software and physical resources
- L&D will be delivered on a "just-in-time" basis.
- Best practice will be applied to evaluation of training. A selective, focused and practical approach will be taken in assessing the impact of learning
- Learning will be focused on the development of the necessary competencies to enable individuals to perform to the best of their ability.

SECTION 2 - Identifying Learning and Development Needs

This section relates to the first stage of the cycle – analysis of needs.

To help build Departmental capability over the medium and long term the identification of needs should be directly linked to the achievement of the Departments goals as well as on the broader career development needs of individual employees.

This section sets out how these learning and development needs will be identified and prioritised. The text used in this guide may also be used in drafting the L&D Strategy where it reflects what is actually happening in practice in the Department.

2.1 Identifying L&D Needs

To enable staff to operate to their optimum performance level and to meet business objectives, an effective approach is needed to identify and prioritise learning and development needs for the Department as a whole as well as for individual staff. Learning and development needs should therefore be identified through the twin approach of a formal TNA³ and the PMDS.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA): The TNA should be used to check on the necessary Departmental capability levels, i.e. those needs that have been identified as necessary for the Department to manage its current business effectively and to be capable of meeting future challenges. The TNA should also identify the gap that exists between what is needed and what is currently available. This involves conducting a skills audit to uncover the current situation on what skills the workforce currently has.

Performance Management and Development System (PMDS): The PMDS should be used to identify individual job holder's needs through discussion and agreement between the individual and their line manager. This is by means of identifying and comparing his/her existing level of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes with the requirements of their role or job, having due regard to the competency framework and the business needs of the Department.

The output of both processes should be integrated so that a composite set of priority needs are identified. These needs should be further aligned with the key L&D objectives set out in the L&D Framework.

The L&D Strategy should be based on the key findings of that analysis, with priority needs for the period ahead being established. While the level of detail from the TNA provided in the Strategy is a matter for individual Departments, it should be consistent with the key objectives set out in the Learning and Development Framework 2011 – 2014.

³ The CSTDC developed a TNA Toolkit to assist organisations in conducting a Training Needs Analysis.

All information sources and background documents which inform the development of the Strategy should be collated so that management can examine the basis of the proposed actions in the Strategy.

SAMPLE TEXT

A TNA/skills audit was conducted in (insert date) with a view to identifying current and future performance gaps and capability deficits at Departmental, occupational and individual level. Data was collected from corporate and business unit plans, and role profile forms. Further information was obtained through questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with staff at all levels. The outputs from the TNA identified gaps in competencies which could be addressed through learning and development interventions, as well as performance gaps which needed other management solutions. The following are the key priority Learning and Development needs in the Department as identified in the TNA.

-
-
-

The detailed findings can be found at Appendix X (*NB not included in this guide*)

This Learning and Development Strategy reflects the findings of the aforementioned TNA, while taking account of the Key Objectives and Actions set out in the Learning and Development Framework for the Civil Service 2011-2014.

2.2 Training Plans

Following from the TNA, training plans should be developed detailing the specific training requirements and delivery arrangements. The training plans may be attached in the Strategy as an Appendix.

SECTION 3 - Addressing Learning and Development Needs

This section sets out how the learning and development needs, identified in Section 2, will be addressed and evaluated by the Department. There should not be an over reliance on classroom training. A number of possible strategies should be considered so that those that best fit the needs of the Department are selected. The choices made will collectively form the overall Strategy.

3.1 Strategies

Strategies are the sets of intended actions and integrated plans that are to be pursued in order to achieve the strategic goals of the Department. L&D Strategies are the mechanisms that are chosen to help increase human resource capability and improve performance to support the achievement of these high level objectives.

A useful way to work on developing strategies is to assess existing approaches and consider alternatives. Are there other vehicles that could offer a better means of learning and developing? Effective techniques for opening up minds to different possibilities are brainstorming ideas in a group or creating mind maps.

The following table depicts a number of possible learning and development strategies which may be considered by the Department. As PMDS provides a structured mechanism for targeting learning activities at both Departmental and individual level, these options should also be discussed as part of PMDS.

Strategy	Components	Note
On the Job Learning	Observation/demonstration and practice Delegation Coaching Mentoring	Most effective and efficient means of developing capability
Self managed learning	Reading eLearning Further education	Effective where it supports on the job learning Must be relevant
Deployment	Mobility Secondment Temporary assignments/special projects	Effective where properly planned and managed Facilitates on the job learning
Group learning	Cross functional teams Communities of practice Networking Action learning	Key to success is the management of the group and the attributes of the individual members Can be resource intensive
Tutor-led interventions	Training courses Seminars Development programmes	Must be relevant to current work situation Opportunity to put learning into practice should be provided immediately on return to work

The above outlines some of the methods that can be used to facilitate, encourage and deliver learning. More details on these methods can be found at Appendix C.

Departments may come up with additional methods and select those which they consider would best meet their learning and development needs, bearing in mind that most learning will be achieved on, or very close to, the job.

SAMPLE TEXT

Recognising that Learning and Development is multi-faceted, our approach to Learning and Development will be through a combination of some or all of the following methodologies:

- On the job learning
..... etc
- Self managed learning
..... etc
- Deployment
..... etc
- Group learning
..... etc
- Tutor led interventions
..... etc

3.2 Value for Money

In choosing strategies, the various options being considered should be viewed from a value for money perspective. How value for money is to be achieved from the selected strategies should be set out in the L&D Strategy.

There are a number of areas where costs can be contained and/or additional value can be achieved in L&D. The following practices should be the norm and articulated in the L&D Strategy to ensure that the best value for money is achieved in L&D:

- A Departmental TNA, a Learning and Development Strategy and Training Plans should be in place to inform resource allocation and budgeting.
- Learning and work should be integrated by ensuring that workplace solutions, e.g. on-the-job training and self-managed learning, are fully exploited as a first attempt at addressing needs
- Learning and Development products and resources e.g. training courses, training facilities, training materials, should be shared with other Departments across the public service
- Training should be provided internally within the public service system. The experience and talents of people within the Department be tapped into to help train/develop other Departmental members. Subject matter experts should be coached on basic train-the-trainer skills. This approach will help to maximize existing resources as well as providing the subject matter expert with an opportunity to develop other skills.
- Where procurement of training is necessary, the Framework Agreement for the Provision of Training Services should be used to the greatest extent possible. Where this is not feasible, the formal procurement rules and procedures should be strictly applied.

SAMPLE TEXT

In order to achieve maximum value for money from the L&D investment, the following practices will be followed in the Department:

-
-
-

The above practices will be monitored for compliance (state who will monitor) and may be reviewed from time to time.

Any further initiatives which could save money or increase efficiency and effectiveness should also be included.

3.3 Evaluation

Evaluation is the final stage in the Training Cycle. It involves assessing the effectiveness of the training at various levels. It can also be used to measure value for money.

There are a number of evaluation models which can be followed. For the purposes of this guide, the two models most widely used are set out here for illustrative purposes. Kirkpatrick's⁴ Four Level Model of Evaluation evaluates at four different levels – reaction, learning, application on the job and organisational results. The Phillips (ROI) methodology includes a fifth level of evaluation – return on investment. Both models start with level one and progress through the subsequent levels. Information gathered at each level serves as a base for evaluation at the next level. While each successive level represents a more precise measure of the effectiveness of the training programme, it does involve a more rigorous and time-consuming analysis.

Details of the five levels can be found in Appendix D.

The L&D Strategy should set out how it is intended to evaluate L&D interventions. In introducing this section, some text is required around the importance of evaluation.

⁴ The Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation focuses on measuring four kinds of outcomes that should result from a highly effective training program. The model evaluates learning at four levels: level 1 – participant reaction; level 2 – participant learning; level 3 – transfer of learning to the workplace; level 4 – impact on business results.

SAMPLE TEXT

A critical element in Learning and Development Programmes is the development and implementation of an effective evaluation system. Evaluation is the process of determining how effective learning and development is in enhancing individual and Departmental performance and if the investment is justified. It is a valuable tool for strengthening quality control and measuring outcomes. The information generated from the evaluation is used to make adjustments to programmes or to decide if the programme in its current format should continue.

All Learning and Development Programmes will be evaluated at a number of levels in order to identify when and where the factors contributing to, or inhibiting the achievement of the learning objectives actually occurred. Improvements will then be made at the appropriate level to deliver better outcomes at subsequent levels.

The L&D Strategy should specify the number and type of courses/programmes that will be evaluated and to what level. The following table sets out the recommended percentage evaluation at each level.⁵

	Level of Evaluation	Percentage of Courses Evaluated
1	Level 1	100%
2	Level 2	60%
3	Level 3	30%
4	Level 4	10-20%
5	Level 5	3-5%

⁵ Source ROI Institute™

SECTION 4 - Implementation

Responsibility for driving, supporting and implementing the Strategy must be assigned. There are generally a number of stakeholders which are identified as playing a key role in this regard. In large Departments, there may be a hierarchical training structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities can be set out in this section. Where there is no formal structure, the following are examples of roles and responsibilities which may aid internal discussion and agreement.

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles discussed in this section are senior management, HR/Learning and Development Unit, line managers and job holders.

4.1.1 Senior Management

Senior management buy-in and engagement is critical to the effective implementation of the Learning and Development Strategy. Whether acting individually in their role as heads of division or acting collectively as the MAC, senior management should:

- Set the overall direction and provide a high level decision making forum on learning, training and development in the Department
- Allocate specific responsibility for Learning and Development to a nominated member of the MAC and ensure that Learning and Development regularly features on MAC agendas
- Establish how the training function is organised, structured and resourced. Identify roles and responsibilities, and reporting arrangements
- Ensure that a TNA is conducted to identify and prioritise training needs at Departmental level
- Promote a culture of continuous learning throughout the Department by ensuring that the L&D Strategy is aligned with other Departmental Strategies (including the IT Strategy for using technology in Learning and Development) and that the PMDS supports business driven Learning and Development
- Individually, ensure that the PMDS is fully implemented in their respective area of responsibility
- Provide input into the evaluation of learning events to determine level of behavioural change, organisational results and/or return on investment, as appropriate.

4.1.2 HR/Learning and Development Unit

Subject to the overall requirements of senior management, the HR Unit/Learning and Development Unit is responsible for determining the Learning and Development needs of the Department and individuals, developing Strategies for addressing these needs and preparing plans for implementation. In this regard the HR/Learning and Development Unit should:

- Prepare a TNA, a Learning and Development Strategy and Training Plans following research, consultation and analysis
- Develop mobility and other policies to support on-the-job learning
- Promote and administer the Refund of Fees Scheme to support self managed learning

- Organise direct delivery of formal training to staff using internal trainers, experienced officials and subject matter experts
- Identify opportunities for sharing Learning and Development products and resources with other organisations across the Public Service
- Procure training from external sources only where the need cannot be met internally within the system. Where procurement is necessary, use the Framework Agreement for the Provision of Training Services to the greatest extent possible.

4.1.3 Line Managers

Line managers have a key part to play in identifying the learning and development needs of the staff they manage, for agreeing priorities and delivery methods and for ensuring the learning needs agreed under PMDS are addressed. They should therefore:

- Discuss learning and development needs with their staff and agree a learning plan consistent with the needs identified in the TNA
- Provide an effective induction for new staff
- Integrate learning and work by ensuring that workplace solutions, e.g. on-the-job training and self-managed learning, are fully exploited as a first attempt at addressing needs
- Support and facilitate staff in relation to the time and effort required of them to learn and develop
- Delegate tasks appropriately and involve staff in meetings and other day-to-day events which provide opportunities for learning and development
- Coach and/or mentor staff and provide constructive feedback on performance on a continuous basis
- Manage and facilitate the release of staff to attend learning events
- Provide immediate opportunities in the workplace to apply new knowledge and skills gained at learning events, and monitor application
- Where possible, arrange for the newly acquired learning/skills to be transferred to other staff in the area
- Participate in the evaluation of training events in which their staff were involved

4.1.4 Jobholders

Jobholders have primary responsibility for ensuring that their own learning and development needs are identified and addressed. The PMDS process facilitates and supports them in this regard.

Specifically, jobholders should:

- Take responsibility for their own learning and development
- Participate in discussions on a regular basis to identify learning and development needs insofar as they relate to and support the key business objectives
- Actively engage in self development through on-the-job learning and self managed learning
- Avail of learning and development opportunities provided
- Participate in the evaluation of training events in which they were involved

4.2 Objectives, Actions and Indicators

A schedule of objectives, actions and indicators should be prepared to drive the implementation of the L&D Strategy.

The objectives in the L&D Strategy should be aligned with the HR Strategy which in turn should be aligned with the overall Departmental Strategy. The high level goals and the related HR strategies are developed internally by senior management and are specific to each Department. For the L&D Strategy, they are further broken down into key objectives, actions and indicators to facilitate implementation. Again, these will be specific to each Department because of the internal strategic links.

For illustrative purposes in this guide, a sample of the key objectives and actions are taken from the L&D Framework for the Civil Service 2011-2014. Examples of indicators associated with the key objectives and actions are also included. A summary schedule of these objectives, actions and examples of indicators is contained in Appendix E.

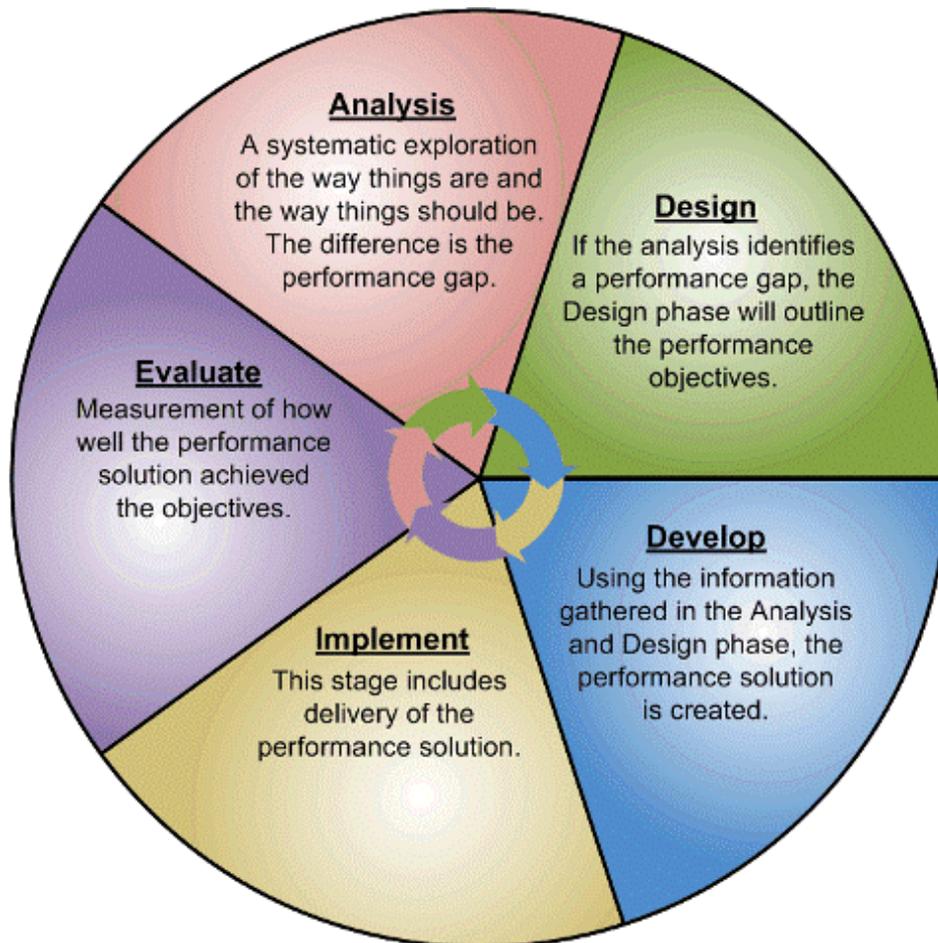
4.3 Approval and Roll-out

The engagement with senior management and consultation with representative groups at all stages of the strategy development process should ensure that support and buy-in is already secured for the L&D Strategy. The Strategy should be formally agreed and endorsed by the MAC and responsibility assigned for its implementation to a named official. Consideration should be given to reviewing the Strategy at some specified date in the future.

The L&D Strategy should then be communicated to all stakeholders and arrangements put in place to incorporate it into business plans and PMDS.

APPENDIX A

Training Cycle



APPENDIX B

Suggested Layout for the L&D Strategy

The following layout is suggested for the draft L&D Strategy.

Cover/Title Page

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is only necessary if the document is lengthy. It contains the main points drawn from the body of the document and should generally not exceed one page. It is intended to provide management with the essential information without them having to read the entire document. It is positioned at the start of the document but it is not finalised until after the remainder of the document has been completed.

Mission Statement and Objectives

The Mission Statement describes the purpose and function of the Learning and Development Unit. It justifies why it exists. While it is not essential, Departments may consider it appropriate to include a Mission Statement in their Learning and Development Strategy. A version of the following may be appropriate:

SAMPLE TEXT

Ensure that the Department's Learning and Development function operates in accordance with best practice, maximises in-house learning capability, supports innovative and cost effective approaches to staff learning and development, and contributes to continuous improvement in human performance

The Strategy

Sections 1-4 may be set out as suggested in the template

Appendices

The Appendices are at the end of the document and contain supplementary material for reference purposes. The number of and details presented in the Appendices is a matter for each Department.

APPENDIX C

Sample L&D Methods

1 On the job learning

Given that we acquire and develop most of our job specific knowledge and skills in the workplace through on-the-job application and experience, the default strategy for addressing L&D needs should be to fully exploit any work-based opportunities that are available. On the job learning involves sharing knowledge and skills and learning from experience. Components of on the job learning include observation/demonstration and practice, delegation, coaching and mentoring.

1.1 Observation/demonstration and practice means watching/showing how a task is performed, assimilating what is being seen and heard, and then re-using the information effectively to perform the task. Continuously practicing the task reinforces the learning and leads to continuous improvement.

1.2 Delegation describes the process used by a manager to assign a piece of work to another team member to complete. For learning and development purposes, the task provides an opportunity for team members to grow and develop their knowledge and skills, and reach their full potential in the Department. While it may take a lot of up-front time and effort, particularly if coaching is required, it makes the most effective use of the manager's time in the long term.

1.3 Coaching may involve creating learning opportunities, giving information, listening, demonstrating, encouraging, asking questions, observing someone while they take on a new challenge, suggesting the next learning step, giving feedback, creating ongoing learning situations, offering guidance at all stages of learning and openness to questions.

While coaching their staff is a key responsibility of the line manager, colleagues may also need to coach each other to achieve effective performance.

1.4 Mentoring is a process in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps and supports a less experienced or less knowledgeable person in their work, career or professional development. It entails informal communication, usually face-to-face, over a sustained period of time. Structured mentoring arrangements can be of particular benefit to newly recruited/promoted staff at senior level to foster staff development, contribute to positive change and to maximise skills transfer.

2 Self managed learning

Self managed learning can be very effective and might include reading, attending learning events, eLearning, pursuing qualifications outside working hours and any other learning pursuit which the individual controls.

2.1 Reading can be critical to learning and development and in some cases may be the only way of acquiring the requisite knowledge and skill. Such material can include job descriptions, work process maps, procedures manuals, reports, office files, circulars, rules and regulations, publications, and periodicals, where appropriate. The material should be easily accessed via the internet, intranet, library, files, personnel section etc.

2.2 eLearning is the delivery of a learning, training or education programme through the use of information and communications technology. It supports distance education and is an innovative way to learn. It provides the freedom and flexibility to learn when and where the learner wants and at their own pace. A variety of media is available to help with learning including traditional written materials, audio tapes and CD-ROMs, satellite TV, online information, online groups and video conferencing. It can be combined with classroom based training or delivered on a stand alone basis.

2.3 Further education provides learners with an opportunity to broaden their thinking, deepen their knowledge and develop a more strategic perspective through participation in relevant and appropriate third level education programmes. The Refund of Fees Scheme can be used to promote and support staff in this regard.

3 Deployment

Various deployment options are available to Departments to address gaps. Placing staff who need to develop technical and other skills into areas where they can develop those skills can address individual needs. Matching staff who have the required knowledge and skills with positions in which those skills are needed can address organisational needs. Mobility, secondment and temporary assignments are strategic options for HR. These options should be considered on a case by case basis to ensure that skills gains in one area does not lead to a skills deficit in another area, causing a dilution of the overall skills base.

3.1 Mobility is the movement of staff from one position to another within the Department, or from one Department to another. While job rotation occurs informally at a local level, a formal mobility policy is required where different management areas are involved. It is a cost effective method of developing skills and building capacity both internally and across the Public Service.

3.2 Secondment is a term used to describe a temporary movement or 'loan' of an employee to a completely different Department. Departments benefit from both inward and outward secondment by developing their skills base. Employees are offered career and skills development opportunities that may not be available in their parent Department.

3.3 Temporary assignments/special projects are flexible, short term approaches to skills development. The individual performs temporary duties on a full-time or part-time basis either internally within the Department or externally. They can be designed to enhance an individual's knowledge or skills in a particular area or to broaden an individual's knowledge of other functions. They can also be used to complete tasks or assignments when a mix of people with expertise in different areas is needed.

4 Group Learning

Employees getting together and interacting with each other can be beneficial in the learning process. Some of the commonly used means for facilitating group learning is through cross functional teams, through networks and through the creation of a mixed group of people to solve problems.

4.1 Cross functional teams are composed of people from different organisational units, with varied levels of knowledge, skills and experience,

who are brought together to accomplish a specific task or project. By working together as a group, knowledge is shared and skills are developed both individually and collectively.

4.2 Communities of practice (CoPs) are groups of practitioners from a particular specialty or work group who come together to share work-related information and best practices, and strive to improve their own knowledge by learning from others. The CoPs can be in the form of public service wide networks whose membership meet regularly and/or can be set up as an on-line resource. CoPs facilitate knowledge management by capturing tacit knowledge and collective expertise.

4.3 Networking can operate in a similar manner to the CoPs. It is an approach for dealing with complex, cross-cutting issues and for sharing best practice. They are useful for managing mutual dependency, promoting trust and openness to learning, guiding interaction and protecting the interest of network members. Networks can play an important role in identifying and mainstreaming good practice from local innovation to improve efficiency and effectiveness across the wider organisation/public service.

4.4 Action Learning is a form of learning by doing. It involves bringing together an ad hoc group of peers with varied levels of skills and experience for the purposes of analysing an actual work problem, generating solutions and developing action plans for implementation. The group continues to meet as actions are implemented in order to learn collectively from the implementation and to make mid-course corrections if required. It is useful for addressing complex organisational problems, determining a new strategic direction or exploiting new opportunities.

5 Tutor-led interventions

To support on-the-job and self-managed learning, it may be necessary to provide tutor-led interventions to maximise performance and to meet business needs. To be effective, the knowledge, skills and behaviour developed in the classroom must link with the workplace. The most common interventions include training courses, seminars and development programmes.

5.1 Training courses are sometimes referred to as workshops. Knowledge is imparted and skills demonstrated by the tutor. The participants work individually and/or in groups to put the learning into practice under supervision and to gain hands-on experience.

5.2 Seminars are learning events that feature one or more subject matter experts delivering information primarily via lecture and discussion. They can be useful in enhancing awareness of developments in the business environment nationally and internationally. The involvement of and interaction with the audience is limited.

5.3 Development programmes generally incorporate some tutor-led classroom work with a variety of activities in the workplace. These activities can include self managed learning, workplace assignments and mentoring. The various components are carefully choreographed so that skills can be practised in the workplace using the tools that were acquired in the classroom. Participants receive feedback and may be reviewed periodically. These development programmes can run from a few days in duration to several years.

APPENDIX D

Five Levels of Evaluation

- 1 Reaction level:** This level of evaluation assesses the reaction of participants to the programme – what they thought and felt about the effectiveness and quality of the training, speakers, venue etc. All programmes should be evaluated at this basic level. Participants should be asked to complete an evaluation or reaction sheet at the end of each course. The criteria to be assessed should be determined in advance which may include the quality of the course, learning objectives, course material, trainers, facilities etc. Aspects of the training which fall below par should be reviewed and amended, as appropriate.
- 2 Learning level:** The second level measures the learning – the resulting increase in knowledge or capability. A significant number of training programmes should be evaluated at this level to measure the extent to which participants have increased their knowledge and enhanced their skills in line with the learning objectives. Assessments can be made through individual pre and post course tests, question and answer sessions and group exercises. For accredited programmes, formal assessments and examinations should be conducted. Where the learning objectives/expectations have not been met, the programme should be reviewed and remedial action taken as necessary.
- 3 Behavioural change level:** Level three examines behaviour – the extent to which participants' behaviour changed on return to the workplace. A number of programmes should be evaluated to this level every year. Prior to attending the learning event, participants and their managers should be required to complete a questionnaire detailing areas for development and their expectations. Some months after the learning event, further data should be obtained regarding transfer of the learning to the workplace and application on the job. This data should be gathered from participants, peers, managers and staff (as appropriate) through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion. The results should be reviewed and changes made at the appropriate point.
- 4 Results level:** examines results – the effects on the business or environment resulting from the trainee's performance in the workplace. Factors affecting performance at organisational level are complex and it is difficult to determine, with any degree of accuracy, a cause and effect chain from the training to organisational results. For this reason, careful consideration should be given to the selection of a few programmes for evaluation at this level. The data should be gathered between six and nine months after the programme. Prior to the programme some baseline should be established with which to compare post-training results. The data for this evaluation should be gathered in a similar manner to that for level 3.
- 5 Return on investment level:** This is the fifth and final level of evaluation. It translates the output of the training into monetary value. It requires a cost/benefit analysis exercise to determine the return to the organisation on its investment in training. As this level of evaluation is very time consuming and expensive to carry out, a pragmatic approach should be taken regarding the number and type of programme to target.

APPENDIX E

Sample Objectives, Actions and Indicators

The following is an example of the type of objectives, actions and indicators which may be used to implement and monitor the implementation of the Strategy. The examples are for illustrative purposes and would require further development if used in the L&D Strategy. Furthermore, Departments will need to develop their own specific actions arising from their higher level Strategies.

Key Objective 1: Prioritise Business Needs & Align Business, HR and Learning Strategies		
Actions	Indicators	Timeline
Fulfil the commitment given in our current Statement of Strategy to develop a human resource management (HRM) Strategy that supports the achievement of our strategic goals.	HRM Strategy developed which supports the goal of Developing People set out in our Statement of Strategy.	The HRM Strategy will be published by (date).
Ensure that the learning objectives for L&D programmes reflect the organisation's key business objectives.	Learning objectives crafted for all L&D programmes which reflect the organisation's key business objectives.	
Key Objective 2: Analyse L&D Needs		
Actions	Indicators	
The business planning process will be used to identify L&D needs that are aligned with the overall business needs and future development of the organisation.	L&D needs discussed at business planning meetings and actions for addressing the needs incorporated into business plans.	
Needs will be analysed to identify gaps in knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes required to support business performance improvements.	A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) conducted using the TNA toolkit developed by the CSTDC and a report issued by (date).	
Key Objective 3: Develop strategies for addressing L&D needs		
Actions	Indicators	
The potential offered by eLearning as an efficient and cost effective way of learning will be fully exploited.	The number of eLearning/blended learning solutions offered will increase year on year by xx% with a commensurate decrease in classroom training.	
Opportunities for sharing facilities, trainers and learning with other organisations will be identified and availed of.	An increase in the sharing of resources.	
Key Objective 4: Evaluate L&D		
Actions	Indicators	
All learning events will be evaluated.	An annual evaluation plan developed detailing the extent to which learning events will be evaluated, i.e. the percentage/number evaluated to each level.	