

NCC/0014/10/2011

## RCP insight

# Top ten tips: personal development plans

Dr Andrew Goddard, former chair of the New Consultants Committee, offers some tips to help you succeed with your personal development plans

- 1 Tailor the plan to achieve both short term and long term aims. Two of each are achievable.
- 2 Have one 'daring' aim that excites you but may be difficult to achieve if you want. However, the other 3–4 aims must be achievable or else you may be accused of 'failing' to reach your objectives at your appraisal in a year. Theoretically some trusts could use this as an excuse to hold back pay progression.
- 3 Ask yourself what you didn't achieve this year that you wanted to and whether these aims are still possible. Set one of these as a short term aim. The other short term aim should be something new that you have enthusiasm for.
- 4 Look at how the department you work in and the Trust are developing. If your aims are similar they are more likely to be achieved and vice versa. If you are unsure where the department is going, one aim could be to develop a departmental strategy!
- 5 Ask yourself what you want to be doing in 5 years time and how you need to get there. Play the long game.
- 6 Assess how much study leave you have and how you want to use that. **Never** finish a year without having used all your study leave. If you do not have study leave funding talk to your BMA rep. You cannot develop without resource.
- 7 Identify courses that will help with your aims and get signed up **early**. Good courses for consultants usually fill up quickly.
- 8 Your PDP should have some relationship to your job plan, and can be used to change your job plan in job-planning sessions. For example if you want to develop a particular practical procedure you can argue for increased time in your job plan for this. Make your PDP work for you.
- 9 Identify who is your appraiser and discuss your PDP with them prior to your appraisal. This makes it more likely that your PDP will be approved.
- 10 Beware of Trust 'additions' to PDPs. For example an aim may be added 'to help achieve Trust targets'. Ensure you know exactly what you are signing up to. Many of these are reasonable, but must not compromise your own objectives.