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How to complete the Work-Based Project

What is the Work-Based Project?



The Work-Based Project (WBP) focuses on an area of your current work that you want to do differently. The WBP will help you understand how to reflect on your work and develop new skills and knowledge in order to effect positive change in your work. The WBP supports work-based learning within a project framework. It is linked to AMA criteria five and six, and will also feed into your CPD plan and help you to achieve your CPD goals.

The WBP takes six months to complete, beginning when your proposal is approved, but you should start thinking about what you might do before this. Your WBP will not be assessed until you come to Professional Review.

Work-Based Project at a glance:

- linked to AMA criteria five and six
- focused on your job
- takes six months to complete
- managed and led by you
- may be a small project or a discrete part of a much larger project
- an area of work you already do that you can take responsibility for
- an area of work you want to do differently to effect positive change
- will evaluate the impact of this change on you and your organisation
- proposal is assessed as part of the interim summary
- will be reviewed at a meeting with your mentor
- assessed at Professional Review



During the first year of your AMA: **generate ideas**



After approximately one year of undertaking the AMA: **choose an appropriate project and submit a project proposal to the MA as part of the Interim Summary.**



when your proposal is approved by the MA: **carry out your project**



throughout your WBP **record learning in your CPD Log**



mid-way through the project **review progress with your mentor**



at the end of six months: **evaluate your project and share learning**



when you are ready to attend professional review: **reflect on your WBP in your Final Summary and presentation at Professional Review**

Generating ideas for a Project

Before you start, read through the full description of criteria five and six in 'Your Guide to the AMA', page 5. Think about the requirements that have been set by the Museums Association (MA) for your project.

Now that you know the scope of your project, use the following questions to help you think of some initial ideas:

- look at your job description, is there something you would like to do differently?
- look at your CPD goals, is there an area you would like to develop in more detail or do you have new skills that you want to put into practice?

- think about your organisation, what opportunities are there?
- could your project be part of a larger project being undertaken by your organisation?

Brainstorming and mind-mapping are useful tools for generating ideas because they encourage you to think creatively and take risks. The most unusual or unexpected idea is sometimes the best. Go to the MA website for our WBP factsheet on generating ideas.



Choosing your Project

Now you are ready to talk to your mentor, line manager and colleagues about your ideas and choose your project. The WBP should support your CPD goals and be included in your CPD plan. Use the following questions and examples to guide your discussions and help you make your choice.

Appropriate

- will it enable you to meet AMA criteria five and six? (Look at appendix I, understanding the criteria.)
- will it support your CPD goals?

Achievable

- is it realistic for you personally?
- is it realistic for your organisation?
- is change achievable within six months?

Impact

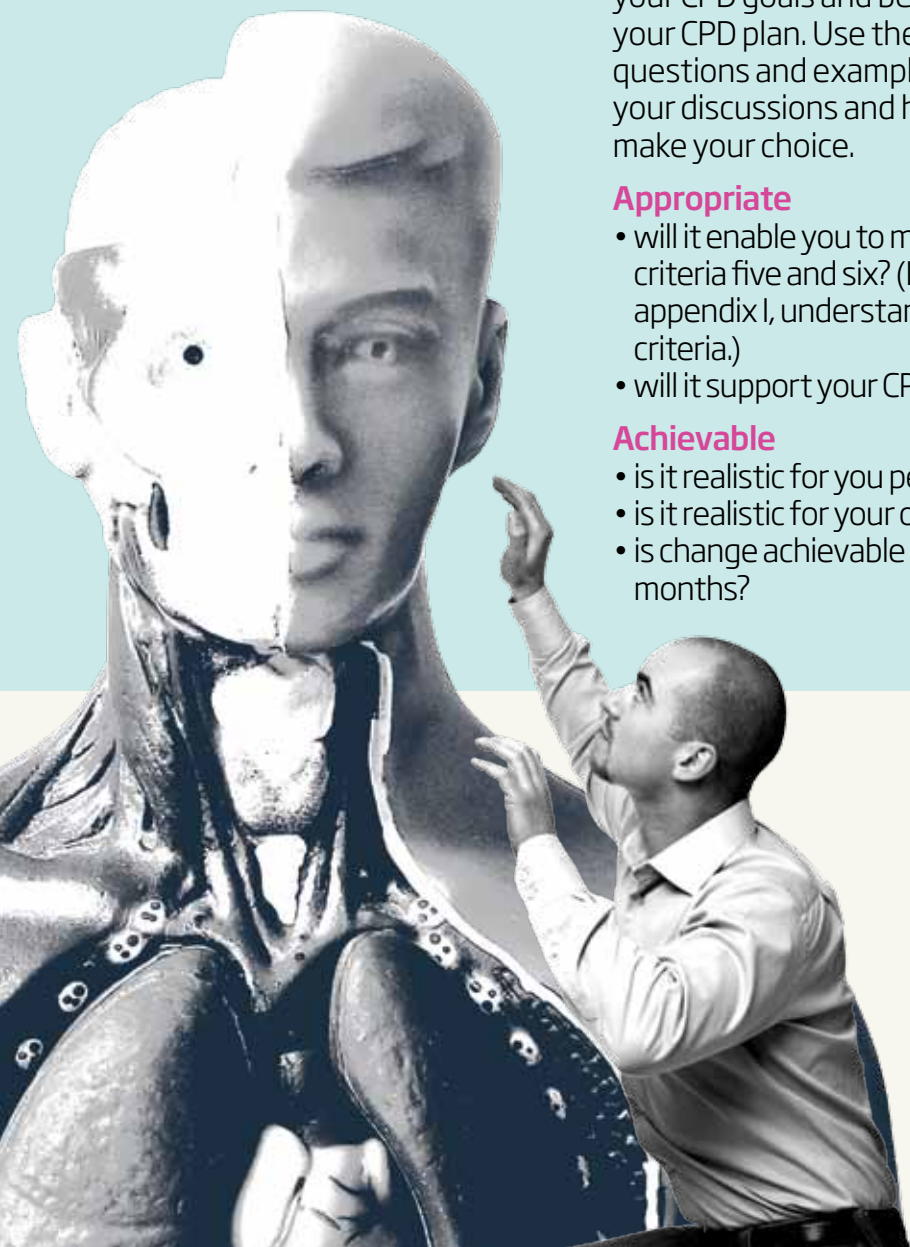
- which idea will be the most challenging or rewarding for you?
- which idea will have the greatest impact on your organisation and colleagues?

Scope of the project

Your WBP could be a small project or a discrete part of a much larger project being undertaken by your organisation. Focus on the part you want to submit as your WBP, making sure that you can effect positive change in six months and that it meets criteria five and six. In this situation the wider project will not necessarily have been completed when you complete and evaluate your WBP.

Example: Developing the role of visitor services in informal learning

You are working in a front of house role and have daily contact with the public. You are friendly, informative and helpful to visitors but believe you could have a greater impact on their learning experience. You would like to change the way you communicate with the public and facilitate informal learning.



Completing your project proposal

Now that you have chosen your project, you need to shape your idea into a proposal that can be submitted to the MA. Use the checklist below to see if you are ready to complete the project proposal form.

Use the guidance on the following page and example on the MA website to complete the proposal form:

Start by giving your project a title and describing your idea. If your WBP is part of a larger project make sure you focus on the part you want to be assessed on.

Project Proposal Checklist	✓
I have discussed my WBP with my mentor	
I have identified an area of work that I currently do and want to do differently	
My WBP is an area I can take responsibility for	
I think that I will be able to effect positive change within six months	
This change will have a significant impact on my work	
This change will have an impact on my organisation and colleagues	
My WBP has been agreed with my line manager	
I have set a date for my mid-point review meeting with my mentor	



Completing your project proposal continued

1. Evaluate your current performance in the area of work you will be focusing on.

- what are the strengths and weaknesses of your current approach?
- collect some qualitative feedback from peers, colleagues and users to help you assess the quality and impact of your current approach
- collect any relevant quantitative data to help you assess the impact of your work. Are you reaching set targets?

2. What will you do differently and why?

Give details of what you are going to change and why you want to change it. This might be because you have identified a particular problem or issue, because your approach is not up to date with best practice or because you believe you can have a greater impact doing it another way. You could also transfer ideas or skills from other areas to your work.

3. What impact will the WBP have on your organisation and how will you effect that change?

By identifying the outcomes of your project at the beginning, you will know at the end of the project whether you have been successful. You should include hard outcomes (eg efficiency, targets or how resources are used) and soft outcomes (eg attitudes, relationships or organisational culture).

Think about how you will influence and persuade your colleagues, how you will build enthusiasm for change and how you will make it sustainable and embedded in the organisation. You might want to identify allies and champions in your organisation. You might want to write a new policy or procedure and have it formally accepted by your organisation.

- describe your idea and focus on the big picture
- help people to understand the need for change and positive benefits of it
- acknowledge any risks and uncertainties and how you intend to manage them
- listen to and acknowledge others' ideas, reactions and suggestions objectively
- celebrate and build on early success. Success alleviates anxiety and creates further success.

4. Who will you develop working relationships with and get support from and how will you achieve this?

Identify key individuals or groups and describe how you intend to communicate with them.

5. How will you share what you have learnt?

This could be within your organisation, your region, a specialist group or even the wider museum sector.

6. How will you manage your time and resources effectively?

It is important to develop strategies for managing your time and resources during the project. Good management includes planning, organisation, monitoring progress and delivering on time.

A simple planning chart with key milestones and tasks can help you manage your workload, stay focused and maintain control of your progress. It will also save you time by working out which is the most efficient order of tasks so that you can reorder them if the unexpected happens. Gantt charts, flowcharts and critical path analysis are among the most common planning tools.

7. Tell us about any other management skills you will need to carry out the WBP

Maybe your project involves people management, resource management, event management, budget management or more complex project management skills.



Carrying out the Work-Based Project

In your project proposal you have identified the area of work you want to do differently and the impact that you want this positive change to have. Over the next six months you will develop your approach to this area of work, put it into practice in your museum and then evaluate it. During this time you may be faced with unexpected challenges and exciting opportunities. You can adapt and refine your approach in response to these but the area of work you intended to change for the project must remain the same.

To develop your approach you should:

- ask other museums what they do
- find out what approaches your museum has tried in the past
- research best practice in this area through networks, publications, reports, events or the internet

Mid-way through your WBP you will have a meeting with your mentor to review your progress. You do not need to report this to the MA but you will be asked to confirm the date in your project proposal.

- what have been the successes and challenges so far?
- do you think your project will have the impact you planned?
- are there adjustments/revisions you would like to make?
- how well are you managing the project?

Evaluating the Work-Based Project

Evaluation encourages you to think about what worked or didn't work and why that happened in order to learn for the future. Evaluation also helps you celebrate achievements, roll-out successes, advocate your work to stakeholders and present evidence of your development.

At the end of six months carrying out the WBP you will need to evaluate the impact it has had on:

- your work
- your organisation
- your colleagues

Your evaluation will not be submitted to the MA but it will help you demonstrate how you meet criteria five and six and provide you with evidence that you can use at Professional Review. For how to evaluate the WBP see the factsheet on the MA website.



Preparing your Work-Based Project for Professional Review



To complete the WBP element of the AMA you will be asked to do two things as part of the Professional Review:

1. reflect on your WBP in the Final Summary
2. prepare a short presentation on the WBP to give at Professional Review

You should prepare these with your mentor. The Final Summary will not be assessed but submitted directly to the professional reviewers with your other paperwork.

The Final Summary

In section B of the Final Summary you will be asked the following questions about your WBP:

1. Did you manage the WBP effectively and how did you achieve this? Include details of how you dealt with any changes or challenges to your original plans.
2. How has your practice changed as a result of the WBP and why did you choose to change it?
3. What has been the impact of the WBP on your organisation and how did you achieve this? Include details of relationships you developed and how you shared what you learned with colleagues.

Use the entries in your Log to reflect on what you learned during the project. Look back at your project proposal to remind yourself what you were trying to achieve and why. Use your evaluation to provide evidence of the impact that the WBP has had on you and your organisation and colleagues. Look at your planning charts or other tools and your notes from your review meeting to help you assess how well you managed the project.

The presentation

Your presentation will be no more than five minutes long so you will not have time to go into detail about what you did, rather this is your opportunity to tell the reviewers about your idea and celebrate your achievements.

More specifically the reviewers will want to know how you have met AMA criteria five and six. Use your evaluation and Final Summary to help you demonstrate and provide evidence to support what you are saying. After your presentation the reviewers will ask you questions to explore your WBP further. Full details of the presentation will be sent to you when you book your Professional Review.

Use the following checklist to see if you are ready for your Professional Review:

Professional Review checklist

I have discussed my WBP with my mentor and line manager

I have gathered evidence and evaluated the impact of my WBP

I can demonstrate that I have effected positive change in my work

I can demonstrate that I have effectively managed myself, my time and resources during the WBP

I have shared what I have learnt

I have written my final summary and submitted it to the MA

I have prepared a five-minute presentation on my WBP

Appendix I: Understanding the criteria of the AMA



AMA criteria five and six contain a number of elements that your WBP will need to meet.

Effect positive change in your work

- You need to identify an area of your work to focus on in your WBP. This area should be:
 - something you are already doing so that you can reflect on your current performance
 - something you can do differently
 - something you can take responsibility for, although you may be taking responsibility for the first time
 - something you can take initiative in, where you have some freedom to act and are able to make decisions
 - something where you can effect positive change in your work, where change is challenging but possible.
- The change that you make in your work must also have an impact on your organisation and colleagues.

Demonstrate effective management of yourself, time and resources

- you will need to develop strategies to effectively manage your time and resources during your WBP
- your WBP must be organised and well planned
- you should use the WBP to develop your awareness of other management responsibilities.

