

# **Pathways to Management and Leadership**

**Level 5: Management and  
Leadership**

**Unit 525**

**Using Reflective Practice to Inform  
Personal and Professional Development**

## Pathways to Management and Leadership

### Unit 525 Using Reflective Practice to Inform Personal and Professional Development

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# About this workbook

## The unit

The main purpose of this workbook is to support you as you study for the Chartered Management Institute Level 5 qualification — Management and Leadership, so it specifically focuses on the content of the syllabus for Unit 525, Using Reflective Practice to Inform Personal and Professional Development. This is about reflective management as an essential management tool to help support the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace.

This workbook provides underpinning knowledge and develops understanding to improve your skills as well as to prepare for future assessment. If you are studying towards Level 5 in Management and Leadership, then you will be assessed by your approved centre on 'your knowledge and understanding of' the following learning outcomes:

1. Understand the value of reflective practice to inform personal and professional development
2. Know how to apply reflective practice to inform personal and professional development.

## The aims of the workbook

This workbook aims to help you learn how to:

- Equipping learners with the understanding of the value of reflective practice

How reflection can be used as the basis of meaningful personal and professional development.

## Syllabus coverage

The table below shows which sections of the workbook address the assessment criteria of the qualification syllabus.

Unit 525 Using Reflective Practice to Inform Personal and Professional Development Syllabus coverage		Addressed within section
1.1	Analyse the importance of continuous personal and professional development in achieving organisational objectives	1
1.2	Evaluate the use of reflective practice in personal and professional development	1
1.3	Evaluate approaches to reflective practice	1
2.1	Evaluate own performance in the workplace using principles of reflection	2
2.2	Reflect on own working style and its impact on others in the workplace	2
2.3	Analyse development needs for current and future roles	2
2.4	Examine development opportunities to meet short, medium and long term objectives	2
2.5	Create a personal development plan with measurable objectives	2

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## Getting started

Reflective practice is an essential management tool which supports the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the work place. By consciously analysing own performance, decision making, leadership and management skills (in different situational contexts) opportunities for on-going development can be identified. The aim of the unit is to equip learners with the understanding of the value of reflective practice, and how reflection can be used as the basis of a meaningful personal and professional development.

## How to use the workbook

The workbooks provide ideas from writers and thinkers in the management and leadership field. They offer opportunities for you to investigate and apply these ideas within your working environment and job-role.

### Structure

Each workbook is divided into sections that together cover the knowledge and understanding required for that unit of Level 5 Management and Leadership. Each section starts with a clear set of objectives that identify the background knowledge to be covered, and the management skills in the workplace that enable you to demonstrate this knowledge. You do not have to complete the sections in the order they appear in the workbook, but you should try to cover them all to make sure that your work on the unit is complete. There are self-assessment questions at the end of each section that allow you to check your progress. You may want to discuss your answers to the self-assessment questions with your line manager or a colleague.

### Activities

Throughout the workbooks there are activities for you to complete. These activities are designed to help you to develop yourself as a manager. Space is provided within the activities for you to enter your own thoughts or findings. Feedback is then provided to confirm your input or to offer more ideas for you to consider.

To get the best from the workbooks, you should try to complete each activity fully before moving on. However, if the answer is obvious to you because the issue is one you have encountered previously, then you might just note some bullet points that you can then compare quickly against the feedback. You may sometimes find it difficult to write your complete response to an activity in the space provided. Don't worry about this — just keep a separate notebook handy, which you can use and refer to as needed.

Try not to look at the feedback section before completing an activity. You might like to try covering up the feedback with a postcard or piece of paper while you are working through an activity.

## Timings

Timings are suggested for each section and activity, although it is important that **you** decide how much time to spend on an activity. Some activities may occupy only a few moments' thought, while others may be of particular interest and so you might decide to spend half an hour or more exploring the issues. This is fine — the purpose of the activities is to help you reflect on what you are doing, and to help you identify ways of enhancing your effectiveness. It is always worth writing something though, even if it's brief — the act of writing will reinforce your learning much more effectively than just referring to the feedback.

## Scenarios

There are scenarios and examples throughout each workbook to illustrate key points in real workplace settings. The scenarios cover a wide range of employment sectors. As you work through, you might like to think of similar examples from your own experience.

## Planning your work

The reading and reflecting scenarios and activities in each section of the workbooks are designed to take about two hours to complete (although some may take longer). This is a useful indicator of the minimum length of time that you should aim to set aside for a study session. Try to find a quiet place where you will not be interrupted and where you can keep your workbooks, notes and papers reasonably tidy. You may also like to think about the time of day when you work best - are you a 'morning person' who likes to get things done at the start of the day, or do you work better in the evening when there may be fewer disturbances?

## Preparing for assessment

Further information on assessment is available in the Qualification Support Section of ManagementDirect, CMI's online resource portal. If you have any further questions about assessment procedures, it is important that you resolve these with your tutor or centre co-ordinator as soon as possible.

## Further reading

Suggestions for further reading and links to management information are available via ManagementDirect. You will also find titles for further reading in the Further Resources at the end of this workbook.

# Section 1 Understand the value of reflective practice to inform personal and professional development

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria (about 3 hours)

By the end of this and the next section you will understand how reflective practice can be used as a meaningful personal and professional development tool. In this section you will be able to:

1.1	Analyse the importance of continuous personal and professional development in achieving organisational objectives
1.2	Evaluate the use of reflective practice in personal and professional development
1.3	Evaluate approaches to reflective practice

In this section you will first gain an understanding of the importance of reflective practice, evaluate the use of reflective practice and evidence and evaluate reflective models for your own business and personal life. The activities within this section are designed to encourage you to take the time to reflect, deliberately and consciously, to help see patterns and build self-confidence in using your own intuition.

## What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice might also be called, and is synonymous with or similar to:

- personal reflection
- self-review
- self-awareness
- self-criticism or self-critique
- self-appraisal
- self-assessment.

CMI define reflective practice as

*A high value transformational leadership skill aimed at moving people away from their routine and habitual thinking where their action is often guided by tradition, taken for granted process / procedure and / or culture ('we've always done it this way') towards a more informed reflective action*

*that involves critical and careful consideration of those traditions or taken-for-granted knowledge / process.Ä*

It is argued that reflective practice can happen either gradually or from a sudden or critical incident and alters the way the practitioner sees themselves and their world.

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future, in *Leaders Make the Future*, states that "Leaders need to see patterns before others see them. The ability to see links between personal experience and future possibilities will be essential. Great leaders have always had this ability but, in the future, the underlying patterns are likely to be more difficult to discern."

Reflection lies at the core of experience based learning and in this way can be described as a process of reviewing an experience or practice in order to describe, analyse, evaluate it and so inform learning about practice (Reid, 1993: 305). Without it experiences remain as experiences and the potential for learning...not realised (Boud et al 1985a: 83).

Reflective practices are 'deliberate attempts to access 'R-mode' thinking (formerly called right-brain thinking), emphasising such non-rational responses as metaphors and imagery. They work by connecting the two modes of thinking - 'L-mode' and 'R-mode' - providing access to data, facts, values, experiences, hunches, analysis, evaluation, intuition, different perspectives and feelings. This process of connecting and accessing is what makes reflection a whole-brain activity. (*Reflection in a fast-paced world*. Altman, David G, Training Journal, June 2013)

According to CMC:

*"Reflection-in-action is a high-level leadership skill where the practitioner is seen to examine their experiences and responses as they occur, whilst in reflection-on-action, practitioners are seen to consciously review, describe, analyse and evaluate their past practice with a view to gaining insight to improve future practice. This latter reflective approach provides the focus of the Chartered Manager context, where the practitioner is required within their submission to reflect on their experiences of leading people and managing change, in order to extract their personal and professional leadership learning to improve their future leadership practice.Ä*

## **The importance of continuous personal and professional development in achieving organisational objectives**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is widely recognised as being necessary to improve the standards and skills for individuals, teams and organisations. The responsibility for completing CPD lies with the individual employees. Taking ownership of your own CPD is important as it:

- ensures that further learning is progressed within the workplace
- focuses attention on areas for development and opportunities
- assists with career planning and enables individual responsibility for career development and work related goals
- encourages personal empowerment
- increases confidence, capability and results.

However, it is important for employers to take an active role in support of CPD activities as it brings a wide range of benefits. For example:

- more highly skilled, motivated and committed workforce
- more flexible employees
- improve quality, customer service and sales.

With the availability of more flexible approaches to CPD activities, such as online, distance and blended learning, short courses sitting alongside mentoring, coaching, on-the-job learning and networking opportunities, CPD can be tailored to suit the needs of both the individual and the employer, within a conducive learning environment.

**Scenario**

**Reflective practice is a way of studying your own experiences to improve the way you work.** Reflective practice can be a shared activity but can be difficult to find opportunities for either individual or shared reflective practice in the workplace. There are some obvious ones, such as appraisal, reviews of particular events or critical incidents, but they don't happen regularly. Some less obvious ones are coaching, meditation, content analysis, observation, role plays, simulations, journaling or keeping a diary. In today's fast-paced workplaces, we need to find new ways of helping people put insights into words and providing opportunities to reflect and learn from experiences. In the following activities think of workplaces that you are familiar with when providing your answers.

**Activity**

**1.1 Defining reflective practice** **(about 20 minutes)**

What does 'Reflective practice' mean to you? List 5 keywords.

How can you connect these words to your CPD?

Now, write your own personal definition of what reflective practice means to you in relation to your CPD.

**Feedback**

- Keywords may include *analyse, review, test, learning, progression, improve skill, examining, contemplate, deliberate, ponder, minding, study, research*.
  - Examples of connecting these words to your professional development could include
    - I analyse my skills by.....
    - I review my knowledge by
    - I test my understanding by
    - I have committed to continuous learning
- Now use a journal to reflect on what you have learned.
- What can be applied immediately?
- What do you need to do next to take this learning forward?
- How will you measure success if you apply this learning?

**Scenario**

**Using a reflective learning log**

A manager in a consultancy firm recognised that he simply wasn't giving himself the time and space to think. Day-to-day pressures meant that although he was achieving his objectives he wasn't learning from what he was doing and bringing the benefit of experience to new contracts. He decided to follow a development programme and learned the importance of putting time aside to reflect and learn. He got into the habit of writing a reflective learning log when he was facing particular issues and found that the process enabled him to take a broader perspective and build on his experiences.

Here is an example.

**Reflective learning log: DD/MM/YYYY**

*What happened?*

When producing draft input for a methodology, kept getting it returned by (internal) customer complaining that it was not what was required, despite being carried out as requested within the parameters given. I was getting frustrated with the customer for not telling me what he actually wanted.

*Relevant theories/reading/input from other people*

Discussion with my mentor made me realise that the methodology was an evolutionary process and that the customer did not actually know what was needed until inspired by the initial drafts. This enabled him to see further down the process and suggest modifications.

*Reflective learning points*

It's too easy to be critical of other people, especially when they are apparently being unnecessarily critical of your work. I need to take a step back and try to see the wider picture. How the problem is being viewed from the customer's side. I must be able to accept that other people may not see the wider picture either. I am prepared to adjust my stance to become more accommodating and tolerant.

*Action points*

Always consider a problem from the customer's side before making my own judgements.

Make time to evaluate a situation and look beyond the smokescreen for the source of the fire.

**Activity****1.2 Evaluate the use of reflective practices****(about 30 minutes)**

What methods do you currently use at an individual, team and organisational level to reflect on practice? Evaluate each method and outline the positive and negative factors for each. It may be beneficial to think of a critical incident that happened and how you reflected on the learning.