



# Self-guided reading for Continuing Professional Development

## Introduction

To be effective, written advice and guidance documents, standards, desk instructions and manuals have to influence our thinking and affect our working practices. The knowledge of procedures and practice they contain has to come off the page and mess with your head!

Time set aside for reading guidance relevant to your current and future work is a form of continuing professional development (CPD). As with other forms of CPD, to get the maximum benefit this should be deliberately planned with particular objectives in mind, have time set aside for it, and be recorded for the future.

The following checklist will help you get the most out of reading the wide range of published advice and guidance available.

### **1. Agree time set aside for CPD reading with your line manager, tutor, mentor or whoever is responsible for your professional development.**

- Is solo reading for CPD or 'book-club' style group or project team reading most appropriate?
- Be clear what you want to achieve.

### **2. Identify and obtain relevant advice, guidance, guidelines and standards documents.**

Some sources to check are:

- Searching on the Historic England website [www.HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk)
- Professional associations websites and newsletters;
- Conference displays and hand-outs;
- Discussions and announcements of new advice and guidance on social media;
- Specialist libraries;
- ...or ask colleagues with appropriate experience to help you identify advice and guidance in your area.



### 3. Log your planned reading in your professional development plan

Be specific about the skills and/or knowledge you are aiming to maintain and/or develop. Typical examples might include:

- 'Ability to produce work which complies with...'
- 'Get up to speed with techniques in...';
- 'Be able to commission specialist work in...'
- 'Keep up to date on good practice in the area of ...';
- 'Explore techniques in ... as a means of widening my experience';
- 'Ability to contribute to a review of good practice in...'

### 4. Plan your reading

- Set aside an appropriate amount of time. A block of time is more likely to be useful than the odd few minutes here and there.
- Prepare your reading environment to avoid distractions – get away from the 'phone and the email at least, or ask a colleague to take messages. The kitchen table at home might be more appropriate for reading for CPD than the office desk.
- Printed copies are more likely to be useful for CPD reading than onscreen sources.

### 5. Do the reading

- Read to learn. Use note-taking and summarising, or annotating your copy of the guidelines, or whatever technique works best for you to make the text memorable. Test yourself by looking away from the document and trying to recall the main points.
- Plan how the knowledge gathered could be applied to current or future projects or core work you undertake.
- Note any areas that are unclear that you might want to clarify with colleagues or with the original author.

### 6. Evaluate the reading

Try to identify specific ways in which this reading has assisted in your professional development. Examples might include:

- 'I can brief team members on the content and relevance of the document to our work on...'
- 'I can apply the guidelines to my work on the ... project / case'.
- 'I can comment on the text and contribute to a future version'.

### 7. Update your CPD documentation

Make a record of what you have covered, and retain any notes or annotated copies as a source of reference for the future.

### And finally...

Comments on this guide are very welcome. Please email them to [guidance@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:guidance@HistoricEngland.org.uk)