

Illinois Leadership® Certificate Program

Steps to Creating a PDP

“While your vision and goals will define where you want your development to take you, an action plan will aid you in achieving your development objectives. True development does not have a beginning and an end, but instead is an ongoing process in which goals are achieved and simultaneously updates and revised.”

– Successful Manager’s Handbook (1996 Edition, pg. 692).

The Personal Development Plan (PDP) is the foundation to a productive start in the Leadership Certificate Program, and will guide you through consistent growth in two or more development goals and their related objectives that connect with our 11 Skills and Attributes. While there is not only one format or template for creating your PDP, the following are suggested steps to consider as you begin:

Step 1: Create a Personal Mission Statement

- A personal mission statement is a concise statement of your own personal leadership “philosophy.” Many students also use this section to describe their “core values” and why these values are important to them.
- As you develop your Personal Mission Statement, consider and include the following:
 - How you define leadership
 - What life goals you have
 - How learning leadership skills fits into the realization of these goals
 - Specifically why you are enrolled in the Leadership Certificate Program
- This section typically encompasses 300-600 words, although you may wish to write more

Step 2: Determine TWO significant Learning Goals

- Critically reflect on what specific areas you would like to develop as you progress through the Program and prioritize your goals (select your top two).
 - To better understand strengths and areas of improvements, you may want to take the Emotional Competence Inventory- University Version (ECI-U) that is a free online assessment offered on our website. Additional assessments are available at the Illinois Leadership Center.
- Each area should be specific, measurable, and include a context of why this area is important to you. Include examples of how you would know if you are successful in reaching each goal.
- Write each goal as a sentence (a concise statement of how you want to develop your leadership skills) – see page 10 of your Participant Manual for specific guidelines
- Students then follow up by describing what this goal means and how they will measure its success in 200-500 words, although students may decide to write more.

Illinois Leadership® Certificate Program

Steps to Creating a PDP

Step 3: Create a Plan for Development Using the 11 Skills & Attributes

- Develop a plan for how you will achieve improvement within each goal you set in Step 2.
- Build improvement goals into a plan with developmental objectives that connect to each of the [11 skills and attributes](#)
 - For example, a student might wish to improve his listening skills. He might plan to learn how to do this by attending Intersect and then applying what he has learned by practicing these skills within his RSO.
 - This section is typically described by students in a table over the course of 2-3 pages.

Skill/Attribute	Leadership Objective	Evidence
Self-Development		
• Self-Awareness		
• Self-Management		
Interpersonal Development		
• Relationship Building		
• Communication Skills		
• Ethical Practices		
• Team Development		
Organizational/Group Development		
• Leading Change		
• Project and Program Effectiveness		
• Systems Thinking		
• Community Building		
Transitional Development		
• Sustaining Leadership		

For each of the 11 Skills and Attributes, a separate reflection should be included. Reflections allow you to document what you have learned throughout your experience the Leadership Certificate Program and how you plan to apply the 11 Skills and Attributes in your future. Evidence should be provided for each skill area; however, some areas might overlap so evidence pieces can be used for more than one skill area. Additional supporting evidence can include: research papers, letters of recognition, certificates of achievement, pictures, etc.

Illinois Leadership® Certificate Program

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Step 4: Review your plan with significant individuals in your daily life.

- Share your PDP with your Leadership Coach as you begin to develop your mission statement and goals.
- Talk to family members, friends, and other individuals about your experiences and development
 - Complete the ECI-U and related 360-degree feedback to learn about how others perceive you as you develop

Step 5: Take time to look over plans and ensure that progress is being made.

- This is good to do after you complete a program or course to make sure you are meeting the goals you have set in measureable and effective ways.
- Remember, implementing the Personal Development Plan will require time and effort!

Step 6: Review and update your PDP to ensure successful development is achieved.

- Document each PDP review when updating your Portfolio.
- Include revised PDP in your final Portfolio.

If you have any questions or need any clarification please do not hesitate to call the Illinois Leadership® Center (217-333-0604) or email (leadership@illinois.edu)

