



## Understand Your Career Goals

Just as training is not the solution for everything, neither is the CPLP. What are the career goals that the CPLP can help satisfy? The CPLP is ideal for addressing career deficiencies that involve increasing and proving your skills and qualifications across the broader workplace learning and performance field and help you update or refresh your technical knowledge.

## Understand Your Options

Which is better: Certification or certificates? A degree or a certification? Determining whether or not to pursue a degree, a certificate, or certification is tricky. The reasons why individuals seek out one versus another are not clear cut, so consider the following:

- A **degree** is expected to develop someone intellectually and cover the general knowledge required for a particular field.
- A **Certificate** focuses on acquiring specific knowledge and skills during a learning event and has no testing requirement.
- **Certification** focuses on testing and providing evidence that usually signifies someone has required knowledge, experience, and has met pre-determined standards to practice in the field.

The best choice depends on your goals and objectives, and your employers' needs. Sometimes one or a combination of options is the best solution. Ultimately, the ideal path depends on your given situation and as well as the amount of time, energy, and money you have to spend on its pursuit.

## Develop a Realistic View of Certification

It is extremely important that you have a realistic picture of the CPLP prior to committing to the program. The CPLP can be a vital part of your career strategy, but is not the only part or a magic bullet. Certification provides no guarantee

of career success, or instant promotions or raises. It also is not a one-time event because you must continue to learn and grow to keep your skills sharp and maintain your credential. It takes a combination of experience, dedication, and hard work over the long haul to maintain certification and to ensure general career success.

Here are some common pitfalls and misconceptions to avoid:

**Inadequate knowledge of the certification itself.** Do not choose the CPLP just because it is popular. Read and understand the materials that describe what it involves and its objectives. An incomplete picture of what certification is about can lead to unrealistic expectations and disappointment.

**Underestimation of the real costs of certification.** You should not only include the cost of the test and the learning materials into the equation, but the drive required to finish it. How will you handle certification when you have conflicting commitments? What's in place to prevent you from cramming versus mastering the material?

**Inadequate knowledge and experience to sit for the exam.** Assess honestly whether or not you meet eligibility requirements and have the adequate knowledge and experience to sit for the exam. The self-assessment (provided) can help with this. It can help you gauge your perceived current level of knowledge as it relates to the areas of expertise being tested, the gaps, and potential strategies you can employ to close the gap so that you are ready to test.

**Incomplete understanding of program requirements.** It is important that you examine the certification requirements carefully. Read the materials available on the ASTD Website to familiarize yourself with the "ins" and "outs" of the program. Here are some examples of what you might want to investigate and understand at the onset:

- eligibility requirements
- monetary cost (including the learning materials and testing fees)
- study materials available
- time required
- retake policy
- certification maintenance policy

**Do I fit the profile?** These factors might help you to assess whether or not you are or are not ready to test. Use the self-assessment worksheet for ideas about what learning strategies you might employ to prepare yourself, especially if you are not ready.

Use the following chart to help you determine your readiness.

| Status                   | Eligibility   | Breadth of Knowledge                                 | Work Product                 | Fit   | Commitment   | Informed  |
|--------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Ready to test</b>     | Meets minimum requirement of three (3) years related experience (1 year related education may be substituted for 1 year of experience)* | Has had exposure to multiple areas of expertise      | Has a work product to submit | CPLP fits in solidly with career goals                  | Willing to spend resources (study time, money, etc.) required for CPLP | Has read and understands CPLP program requirements      |
| <b>Not ready to test</b> | Does not meet minimum eligibility requirements  | Has had limited or no exposure to areas of expertise | No work product to submit    | CPLP does not fit with career goals at the current time | Does not currently have resources required                             | Does not fully understand the CPLP program requirements |

\* This is a minimum eligibility requirement. If you meet this requirement, you should still carefully assess whether or not you are ready to take the exam.

Below is another method of assessing readiness.

### CPLP Self-Assessment by Area of Expertise

To use the following self-assessment by Area of Expertise (AOE), understand that you will need to evaluate your own expertise level, determine your own gap, and select from a variety of learning strategies to bridge the gap for each AOE.

On the next page is a listing of the key knowledge areas for the Area of Expertise covering *Career Planning and Talent Management*. For each key knowledge, fill in your level of expertise, whether a gap exists, and what learning strategy (or strategies) you plan on implementing to address the gap. This will give you a good picture of how much preparation you will need relative to this particular AOE. You can repeat this exercise with each of the key knowledge areas listed for each AOE. This information can be found in Chapter 4 (Exam 1: Content Outline) of the Candidate Bulletin located on the CPLP website at [http://www.astd.org/astd/cplp/cand\\_bul.htm](http://www.astd.org/astd/cplp/cand_bul.htm).

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| <p><b>Level of Expertise:</b></p> <p>1 – No exposure<br/>2 – Basic Understanding<br/>3 – Moderate or Expert Level Understanding</p> <p><b>Gap:</b></p> <p>1 – Needs substantial development<br/>2 – Needs some development<br/>3 – Needs little to no development*</p> <p>*Review of the material prior to taking the CPLP knowledge exam is still recommended</p> | <p><b>Learning Strategy Codes:</b></p> <p>(C) = Classroom<br/>(E) = Experiential<br/>(R) = Research or Study<br/>(W) = Web-based course<br/>(F) = Facilitated learning<br/>(M) = Mentor or Study Buddy<br/>(I) = Independent Study</p> |
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# Sample Worksheet

| <b>Area of Expertise: Career Planning and Talent Management</b>  |                  |            |   |
|--|------------------|------------|---|
| <p><b>Definition:</b><br/>Ensuring that employees have the right skills to meet the strategic challenges of the organization; assuring the alignment of individual career planning and organization talent management processes to achieve an optimal match between individual and organizational needs; promoting individual growth and organizational renewal.</p> |                  |            |   |
| <b>Related Knowledge (From Content Outline)</b>  | <b>Expertise</b> | <b>Gap</b> | <b>Learning Strategy to Address Gap</b> |
| • Workforce planning approaches  |                  |            |   |
| • Succession and replacement-planning approaches   |                  |            |   |
| • Job analysis tools and procedures  |                  |            |   |
| • Career development theories and approaches   |                  |            |   |
| • Individual and organizational assessment tools, including assessment center methodologies  |                  |            |   |
| • Ethical standards and legal issues in career counseling and organizational restructuring   |                  |            |   |
| • Career counseling approaches   |                  |            |   |
| • Coaching and mentoring approaches  |                  |            |   |
| • Performance consulting approaches  |                  |            |   |
| • Managerial and leadership development best practices   |                  |            |   |
| • Performance management systems and techniques  |                  |            |   |
| • Approaches to maximize workplace diversity   |                  |            |   |
| • Resources for career exploration and lifelong learning   |                  |            |   |

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