# Planning for Practice

Planning is the up-front and on-going thinking that enables a fit-for-purpose outcome to be developed. It is an essential part of all technological practice.

Planning should consider:

* the physical and sociocultural environment of an outcome
* the context the technologist will be working in.

Effective planning enables technologists to systematically account for all the factors that influence the successful fulfilment of a brief. It also supports reflection and decision making.

## Key ideas

Effective planning techniques are the key to efficient management of resources (materials, time, money, personnel, and so on).

### Record keeping

Planning for practice always involves some record keeping. Keeping records allows technologists to:

* manage resources
* keep tabs on progress
* reflect on decisions
* ensure that vital documents are filed for future reference.

Records should contain enough detail to:

* justify decisions
* suggest new directions if practice runs into a dead end
* satisfy queries from an external evaluator
* confirm that appropriate ethical and/or legal protocols have been followed.

Record keeping can be oral, graphical, written, and/or electronic as long as it satisfies the needs of all stakeholders, including the technologist.

### Planning tools

Suitable planning tools such as timelines or Gantt charts can simplify the record-keeping process – reducing the effort involved and keeping the focus on enhancing the quality of the practice.

Planning tools should be selected because they suit the particular nature of the practice and how the technologist most effectively communicates.

### Reflection and evaluation

A technologist’s ability to make informed planning decisions is enhanced when they reflect on and evaluate past and present planning (of others as well as their own).

Analysing the impacts and implications (ethical, environmental, political, and so on) of technological practice and the consequent outcomes is an important aspect of planning.

### Flexibility and robustness

Planning for practice needs to be both flexible and robust:

* flexible enough to allow for modifications that reflection and evaluation show to be desirable or necessary and to cope with unforeseen eventualities or changing circumstances
* robust enough to make the steps in the process clear, to ensure that the necessary resources are available, and to allow for critical evaluation at key decision points.