

# Guidelines for HE Progress Files

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## **Summary of Guidelines for HE Progress Files**

- The Guidelines have been prepared to help universities and colleges of higher education develop and introduce Progress Files. They draw upon much experience and existing practice in HE.

### **What is a Progress File?**

- Progress Files *'should consist of two elements: a transcript recording student achievement which should follow a common format devised by institutions collectively through their representative bodies; a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development'*. (recommendation of the National Committee of Inquiry in Higher Education; 1997)

While the term Progress File suggests that it is a document charting the progress of an individual, the overall concept contains:

- ❖ the transcript: a record of an individual's learning and achievement, provided by the institution;
  - ❖ an individual's personal records of learning and achievements, progress reviews and plans that are used to clarify personal goals and can provide a resource from which material is selected to produce personal statements (e.g. CVs etc) for employers, admissions tutors and others;
  - ❖ structured and supported processes to develop the capacity of individuals to reflect upon their own learning and achievement, and to plan for their own personal educational and career development. The term Personal Development Planning (PDP) is used to denote this process.
- Progress Files help make the outcomes, or results, of learning in higher education more explicit, identify the achievements of learning, and support the concept that learning is a lifetime activity.

### **Transcripts**

- The transcript provides a comprehensive verifiable record of the learning and achievement of an individual learner;
- transcripts should also provide learners with a record of their learning *while* they are studying; a formative statement that should help students monitor and reflect on their progress, and plan their further academic development;
- *higher education institutions are encouraged to introduce a transcript, that includes a consistent data set, by 2001/2002, but the use of such a transcript would not be expected until 2002/2003.*

### **Personal Development Planning (PDP)**

- Personal Development Planning is a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.
- The primary objective for PDP is to improve the capacity of individuals to understand what and how they are learning, and to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning, helping students:
  - become more effective, independent and confident self-directed learners;
  - understand how they are learning and relate their learning to a wider context;
  - improve their general skills for study and career management;
  - articulate personal goals and evaluate progress towards their achievement;
  - and encourage a positive attitude to learning throughout life.
- *The PDP element of the policy objectives should be operational across the whole HE system and for all HE awards by 2005/06.*

### **Developing an infrastructure to support HE practitioners**

Universities UK, Universities Scotland, the Standing Conference of Principals, the Learning and Teaching Support Network and QAA are working with others to help HE institutions and academics develop Progress File policies and practices.

## INTRODUCTION

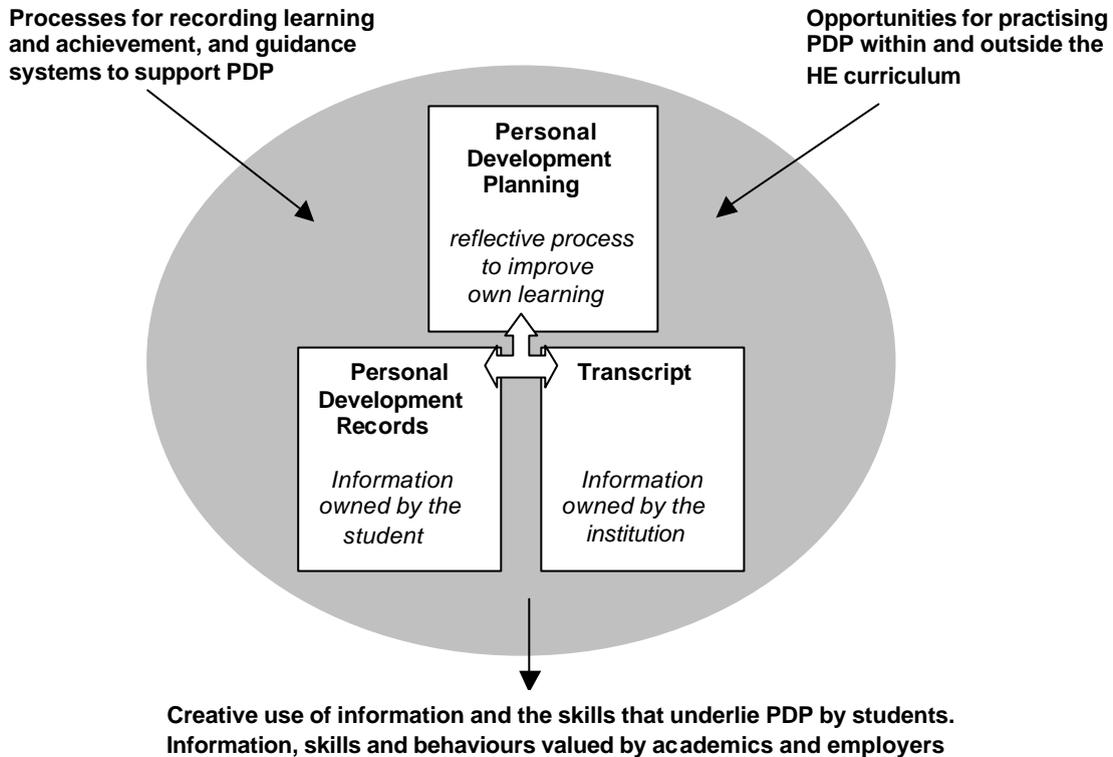
### Who are the guidelines for?

1. These guidelines have been prepared to help universities and colleges of higher education higher develop and introduce progress files. The concept of the HE progress file and this guidance has been developed through extensive discussion and consultation with HE practitioners and interest groups.
2. The idea for a progress file emerged from the National Committee of Inquiry in Higher Education (Dearing and Garrick Reports). *'We recommend that institutions of higher education, over the medium term, develop a **Progress File**. The file should consist of two elements: a **transcript** recording student achievement which should follow a common format devised by institutions collectively through their representative bodies; a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their **personal development**.'*
3. The HE progress file has been the subject of discussion involving the academic community, HE administrators and student records officers, student and employer representatives, and special interest groups like Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies and HE Careers Advisors.
4. In autumn 1999 the representative bodies and QAA circulated a consultation paper *'Developing a Progress File for Higher Education.'* The feedback received was used to formulate a policy statement that was agreed by Universities UK (then CVCP), SCoP, Universities Scotland (then CoSHEP) and QAA in May 2000. This statement is embodied in the guidance contained in this document.

### What is a progress file?

5. While the term progress file suggests that it is a document charting the progress of an individual, the concept, shown schematically in Figure 1, contains within it the ideas of:
  - an institutional record of learning and achievement: the term *transcript* is used to describe this record;
  - an individual's *personal records* of learning and achievements, progress reviews and plans. These records are used to clarify personal goals and provide a resource from which material is selected to produce concise personal statements (e.g. CVs and application forms) required by employers and admissions tutors.
6. Implicit in these core features of the Progress File is:
  - a range of recording processes in order to create and maintain these records;
  - structured processes to develop the capacity of individuals to reflect upon their own learning and achievement and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development (the term *Personal Development Planning – PDP* will be used to denote this process);
  - guidance materials and support structures to enable and encourage the learner to participate and benefit from this active learning process;
  - opportunities within and outside the HE curriculum to acquire, develop and practice the skills necessary to engage in PDP.
7. The concept of the HE Progress File is shown schematically in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 The concept of the HE Progress File**



### Why are we introducing progress files?

8. The progress file is an important element of the new policy framework being created to help make the outcomes or results of learning in higher education more explicit. In doing so, it is argued, the quality of learning will be improved (because students are clearer about what is expected of them and what they, in turn, might expect), and the basis for academic standards will be clearer.
9. Progress files support the idea that learning is a lifetime activity. The transcript and personal records will be important components of an individual's lifelong record of learning and achievement and the process of personal development planning is intended to strengthen the capacity of individuals to reflect upon their own learning and achievement and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development. This is a core learning process throughout the education system and in many work-based and continuing professional development contexts, and higher education will play a key role in developing this capacity in the context of advanced study.

### How do progress files relate to programme specifications?

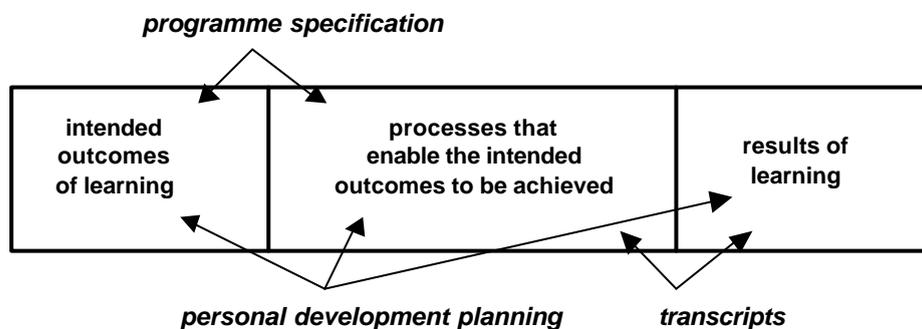
10. The progress file is one element of a framework that includes programme specifications, subject benchmarking and qualifications frameworks to encourage higher education to be more explicit about what is learnt and how it is learnt. This framework is founded on the idea of learning outcomes. A learning outcome is simply the result of a learning process.

11. The outcomes approach to learning has three parts:

1. a specification of learning intentions expressed as *intended learning outcomes*;
2. the *process* to enable the outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated and
3. the performance standards or *learning outcomes that are actually achieved*.

12. Programme specifications address 1 and 2, transcripts essentially address 3 but reflect the content or curriculum part of the process (2). Personal development planning reflects 1, 2 and 3 because it involves: the setting of personal learning goals/outcomes (1); awareness of the process and activities to enable the personal goals/outcomes to be achieved (2); and awareness of the learning that has occurred as a result of this process (3). The progress file supplements and personalises the programme specification.

**Figure 2 Schematic representation of the outcomes approach to learning showing the relationship between programme specifications, transcripts and personal development planning.**



### How do progress files relate to subject benchmarking?

13. Subject benchmarking statements contain information on the general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in a particular subject field. These expectations are articulated through a set of generic learning outcomes and related performance criteria which address the intellectual, subject specific and general transferable skills expected of, for example, a graduate. Benchmarking statements provide reference points – to be used as appropriate, when programmes are designed, reviewed and explained in programme specifications. The statements provide teaching teams with a focus for discussion on the aims and outcomes of programmes.

14. Twenty two benchmark statements have been published (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/benchmark/benchmarking.htm>) Many (but not all) of these statements embody within them the skills and behaviours that underpin personal development planning. Examples include:

- autonomy and ability to learn (Law);
- capacities for independent and self-managed learning (Accountancy);
- learning to learn and developing an appetite for learning; reflective, adaptive and collaborative learning: effective self-management in terms of time, planning and behaviour, motivation, self-starting, individual initiative and enterprise (General Business and Management);
- ability to undertake lifelong learning, particularly for continuing professional development (Engineering).

15. An institution's policy on personal development planning can provide a vehicle for recording achievement and the acquisition and development of such qualities, skills and behaviours at the subject level.

### **How do progress files relate to the qualifications frameworks?**

16. The framework for higher education qualifications provides reference points to be used to determine whether the intended outcomes for programmes, and actual student achievement, are appropriate for the level of qualification awarded.
17. The transcript is the key document that summarises the learning and achievement of an individual. Its structure will reflect the levels that are agreed in the qualifications framework and the protocols for naming awards. It will also record the academic credit that has been awarded for learning (both academic and experiential learning) that has been demonstrated. The transcript will be the key document to promote public awareness (nationally and internationally) of the qualifications framework.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

### **What is a transcript?**

18. The transcript provides a comprehensive verifiable record of learning and achievement of an individual learner. Many HE institutions already provide students with a transcript but there is considerable variation in the information they contain. The progress file provides an opportunity to move towards a more consistent transcript which would:
  - improve the quality and consistency of information on the learning and achievement of individual students in higher education for the benefit of everyone who has an interest in such information;
  - promote awareness of the national qualification frameworks and national and international transparency and recognition of higher education awards;
  - contribute to an individual's lifelong record of learning and achievement;
  - support the process of personal development planning; and
  - encourage good practice in the provision of information on learning in UK higher education.

### **How are transcripts used?**

19. A transcript serves two main purposes. It must provide learners with a record of their learning while they are studying (formative statement). The provision of such information should be incorporated into a student's personal development planning to help them monitor and reflect on their progress and plan their further academic development. The second purpose is to provide a student who has completed his or her programme (or at a point of interruption or premature termination) with a formal, verifiable and comprehensive record of learning and achievement for whoever needs such information. The development of consistent transcript information is restricted to this summative statement.
20. The transcript must satisfy the information needs of a range of potential audiences (Table 1) within and outside the UK. There are many overseas students studying in the UK and many of our own students may wish to study or work overseas in the future. The international mobility of people means that the transcript must recognise the information needs of the international community of employers, admissions tutors, professional associations and statutory regulators. The UK transcript is intended to satisfy most of the information requirements of the EC/Council of Europe *Diploma Supplement* initiative aimed at providing consistent transcript information to facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications. When combined with information from the

programme specification, UK higher education institutions will exceed the information requirements of the Diploma Supplement.

**Table 1 The main purposes of the information contained in the transcript and the main users of such information.**

| <i>Purposes of the Transcript</i>   | <i>Users of the information</i>            |
|---|--|
| to monitor achievement while studying in higher education   | students and their advisors                |
| to confirm academic achievement to potential employers in the UK and overseas   | students and employers                     |
| to confirm past achievements to UK employers providing work placements  | students and employers                     |
| to confirm past achievement to financial sponsors   | financial sponsors often employers         |
| to confirm whether students (current or past) may apply for, or study for, professional qualifications  | students and professional bodies           |
| to confirm whether students are suitable applicants for further study   | students and admissions tutors             |
| to confirm to another institution that students are suitably qualified to transfer to another programme: to provide the basis for the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) | students and course tutors<br>APL advisors |
| to record the achievement of those students who interrupt or do not complete their studies  | students and employers                     |
| to summarise the achievements of exchange/year abroad students to receiving universities  | students and overseas admissions tutors    |

21. Given the multiplicity of users it is unlikely that a single document will satisfy the information needs of each user group and a longer term objective for HEIs might be to develop transcripts that satisfy the particular needs of different user groups. The generation of transcripts from a computer database could provide transcripts that are tailored to the needs of different audiences.

Research undertaken to inform the development of policy suggests that the main users of the transcript are students (e.g. in monitoring progress and providing evidence of their learning and achievement to others), HEIs (admissions tutors) and Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies. There is considerable variation in the use of transcript information by employers. Their information needs vary according to whether they are appointing someone to a specific technical position (in which case transcript information is useful) or whether they are recruiting for more general positions. In the case of the latter, their information concerns are defined in their own graduate application forms and relate to the more general qualities, skills and attitudes that they believe are important for the prosperity of their business. Such information is not normally found in a transcript.

### **Who is entitled to a transcript?**

22. Transcripts should be provided for all HE provision for which credit is awarded and all provision that leads to a HE award. In principle, transcripts should apply to postgraduate research awards. But further work is necessary before proposals can be made for such a transcript. Institutions are encouraged to provide transcripts for research training programmes that lead to a higher degree but their content and format will be an institutional responsibility. Further work will be undertaken to identify best practice in this area.
23. Institutions might reasonably be expected to provide each student with a transcript showing what they have studied and achieved:
- after they have completed their programme;
  - after they have completed each stage<sup>1</sup> of their programme of study;

#### **Notes to aid interpretation**

<sup>1</sup> Stage is defined by the institution.

<sup>2</sup> The institution would determine the most appropriate time to issue a transcript relative to the point of interruption.

<sup>3</sup> Subject to a period of notice determined by the institution.

- at an appropriate<sup>2</sup> time when a student interrupts their programme;
  - when such information is necessary in order to apply for a job.<sup>3</sup>
24. Institutions may also provide such information on demand but this may be subject to a fee to cover the administration costs.

### What information should a transcript contain?

25. The transcript should reflect the complete record of learning and achievement. It should include information on what was studied, what was successfully completed and what was not successfully completed. Non-completion could be indicated by the number of attempts taken to complete a study unit (see appendix 1). Transcripts should be based on the agreed data set shown in Table 2. Institutions can present the information in the format that they consider to be most appropriate and include additional information if they wish to do so.

**Table 2 Recommended data set for a transcript**

#### **Student**

- Name
- Date of birth
- Institutional reference number
- HESA reference number

#### **Qualification**

- Name of qualification
- Level of qualification in National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- Name of awarding institution
- Name of institution responsible for delivering the programme
- Language(s) of instruction *(to meet EC requirement)*
- Language(s) of assessment *(to meet EC requirement)*
- Professional Body accreditation
- Statutory Regulatory Body recognition/approval

#### **Record of Learning and Achievement**

- Name of programme
- Module or unit study code (this should also indicate the level in the NQF that the module/unit is studied)
- Module or unit study title
- Number (and level) of any credits awarded for each module/unit completed
- Date (year) in which credit awarded
- Mark or grade for each module or unit studied
- Number of attempts to complete a module/unit (if more than one attempt made)

#### **Other Types of Learning within the context of a programme**

- Study Abroad (include ECTS credits if applicable)
- Work placement
- Work experience
- Accredited prior certificated and experiential learning
- Accredited Key Skills

#### **Award**

- Overall credits achieved
- Overall mark / grade
- Overall classification or performance indicator (e.g. merit/distinction)
- Professional/Statutory Body recognition *(if applicable, an indication that in gaining the award a candidate has satisfied the academic requirements for registration or membership etc).*
- Date of award

#### **Authentication**

- Date of issue
- Signature/seal (to be determined by HEI)
- Telephone number for validating information

#### **Explanatory information**

- Guidance on how to interpret the transcript (examples shown in appendix 1)
- Information on the grading scheme
- Overview of the National Qualification Awards Framework (to be agreed by national bodies)
- Overview of the UK HE system (to be agreed by national bodies)

*An example of a transcript that would meet these requirements is given in Appendix 1. Some institutions do not operate a modular or unitised, credit-based curriculum; they would be expected to provide a comparable level of information concerning the record of learning and achievement of an individual.*

### **When will the HE transcript be implemented?**

26. Higher education institutions are encouraged to introduce a transcript that is consistent with the data set given in Table 2 by 2001/2002 but the use of such a transcript would not be expected until 2002/2003.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

### **What is personal development planning?**

27. The term personal development planning (PDP) is being used to describe the 'means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development' (Dearing recommendation 20). This recommendation is founded on a long history of 'grassroots' activity aimed at embedding in mainstream HE the forms of documentation, skills and capabilities that have been central to the *Recording Achievement Movement* for the past 20 years.
28. Higher education already employs a variety of strategies to encourage students to reflect upon and evaluate their own learning experiences and plan for their own development. A variety of terms are used to describe a process of reviewing and recording learning and achievement, and action planning e.g. Personal Profiling, Personal and Academic Records, Personal (Academic) Development Plans, Progress Files, Learning Portfolios, Learning Logs and Diaries. Many of these terms emphasise that the records are a product of process. The term personal development planning is used in order to emphasise that this is an active learning process undertaken by individuals for themselves.

**Personal Development Planning** is 'a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.'

### **What is PDP intended to do?**

29. The primary objective for personal development planning is to improve the capacity of individuals to understand what and how they are learning and to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning.

It is intended to help students:

- become more effective, independent and confident self-directed learners;
- understand how they are learning and relate their learning to a wider context;
- improve their general skills for study and career management;
- articulate their personal goals and evaluate progress towards their achievement; and
- encourage a positive attitude to learning throughout life.

30. The ideas that underpin these conceptions mean that PDP is:

- a structured process that is integral to higher level learning;
- concerned with learning in an holistic sense (both academic and non-academic);

- something that an individual does with guidance and support: the latter perhaps decreasing as personal capability is developed so that it becomes self-sustaining;
  - a process that involves self-reflection, the creation of personal records, planning and monitoring progress towards the achievement of personal objectives;
  - intended to improve the capacity of individuals to communicate their learning to others who are interested in it (e.g. academic staff and employers).
31. The reflective and planning skills on which idea of PDP is based are integral to knowing how to learn in different contexts and to the ability to transfer learning.

### **What results from the PDP process?**

32. PDP results in two main outcomes. The first is enhanced self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses and directions for change. The process is intended to help individuals understand the value added through learning that is above and beyond attainment in the subjects they have studied. Crucially, it relates to their development as a whole person. The second outcome is a *record of learning experiences and achievement, personal reflections and plans for self-improvement* (Personal Records), that provide a unique resource to each individual. The information in such records is owned by the learner and their maintenance, authenticity and use is the responsibility of the individual. Institutions, through their support and guidance structures, and requirements for a programme or award may however influence how this responsibility is exercised. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies that accredit HE programmes preparing people for a particular vocational/professional field may also influence PDP at the level of an individual course.

### **What are the potential benefits of PDP?**

33. It is recognised that an important factor in the successful introduction of policy on PDP will be the winning of hearts and minds of those who will be responsible for implementing and using policy. A number of universities and colleges of higher education have introduced their own policies to support the process of PDP. The benefits they cite include the following:

34. *PDP will help students:*

- integrate their personal and academic development and improve their capacity to plan their own academic programmes;
- be more effective in monitoring and reviewing their own progress;
- be more aware of how they are learning and what different teaching and learning strategies are trying to achieve;
- recognise and discuss their own strengths and weaknesses;
- identify opportunities for learning and personal development outside the curriculum;
- be better prepared for seeking employment or self-employment and be more able to relate what they have learnt to the requirements of employers;
- be better prepared for the demands of continuing professional or vocational development when they enter employment.

35. *PDP will help academic staff:*

- by helping students to be more independent / autonomous learners;
- improve the quality of experience for tutors and tutees when it is linked to personal tutoring systems;
- make more effective use of off campus opportunities for learning like work placements or study abroad;
- by creating a mechanism through which career-related skills and capabilities can be recorded;

- by improving their understanding of the development of individual students and their ability to provide more meaningful employment references on their behalf.

36. *For departments and institutions PDP will:*

- facilitate more effective monitoring of student progress;
- result in more effective academic support and guidance systems;
- enhance their capacity to demonstrate the quality of support they are giving to students in external review processes.

37. *Teachers in schools and colleges:*

- will be able to show their own students that HE will value the investment they are making to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to support PDP;
- Students see the benefit of improved self-awareness of the qualities, skills and capabilities that they are developing through higher education and other life experiences, and their improved ability to draw upon any records they have maintained to present themselves to employers. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies see PDP as an essential capability for the reflective practitioner and an important feature of continuing professional development (CPD). Employers see PDP as improving the capacity of individuals to explain and relate what they know and can do to their particular needs (for example in completing a graduate application form or interview). Above all, the idea of PDP is central to a society that is committed to the idea that learning is a lifetime activity.

It will be important to evidence these benefits in order to justify the substantial investment that will need to be made to support this initiative.

## Who is responsible for PDP?

38. There is widespread recognition of the intrinsic educational value of helping students develop the skills and behaviours that underlie PDP. Personal development planning should be a feature of all provision leading to an HE award (i.e. the same principle that is applied to the transcript). Institutional policies should apply to all types of delivery and learning context (e.g. on-campus, at-a-distance, technology-based, work-based and other types of learning).
39. It would be logical to apply the principle of PDP to Continuing Education provision (albeit in a simplified form) but institutions should determine whether PDP should be extended to provision that does not result in an HE award.
40. Institutions are expected to develop their own PDP policies and practice within these Guidelines:
- Universities and colleges should be responsible for providing opportunities for PDP and for guidance to support the process.
  - The nature, scope and extent of opportunities and support for PDP should be determined by each institution (influenced by Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies where appropriate).
  - The ultimate responsibility for deriving benefit from PDP should rest with each student: although institutions will influence this.
  - QAA should, through its development and review activities, support the introduction of policy and, when practice is established, be responsible for providing public assurance that institutional policies are being implemented effectively<sup>1</sup>.

### <sup>1</sup> Explanation

*During the development phase (until 2005) institutions that are involved in the Academic Review process could signal in their self-evaluation document the progress they are making in creating opportunities for PDP. Academic Reviewers could encourage and promote this development by reporting on but not judging the practice seen. This could be an area where 'exemplary' features might be identified by reviewers. Encouragement for the development of institutional practice could also be provided through subject benchmarking.*

## **Personal Development Planning Quality Standards**

### **Opportunities and entitlements**

The minimum expectations for institutional PDP policies are that:

- at the start of a programme, students will be introduced to the opportunities for PDP;
- students will be provided with opportunities for PDP at each stage of their programme.
- the rationale for PDP at different stages of a programme will be explained for the benefit of students (e.g. in student or course handbooks or module/unit guides);
- the nature and scope of opportunities for PDP, and the recording and support strategies will be determined by each institution.

*These minimum criteria are not intended to constrain existing practice or local initiatives and institutional or local policies are likely to exceed these minimum expectations.*

### **Minimum outcomes**

On completion of their programme students will have:

- participated in PDP in a range of learning contexts at each stage or level of their programme;
- demonstrated that they can access and use the aids and tools provided by the institution to help them reflect upon their own learning and achievements and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development;
- with support, created their own learning records containing information on the qualities and skills they can evidence which can be drawn upon when applying for a job or further study.

### **Information on PDP**

- the opportunities for PDP in student programmes will be made clear in the programme specification and through any other means the institution considers appropriate;
- students who are applying to study in HE will be informed about the institution's policies on PDP;
- at the start of their programme students will be provided with information on PDP in their programme including a rationale for the approaches used;
- students will be provided with information on how they might integrate extra-curricula experiences (for example: voluntary service, part-time employment or work placements, study abroad, fieldwork and working as a student representative or Student Union officer) into their own personal development planning process;
- students will be provided with information on any ways in which their own evidence of learning might be eligible for accreditation;
- formal opportunities for PDP in the HE curriculum will be identified in the HE Transcript.

### **Quality Assurance**

- Institutions will be expected to have mechanisms to assure themselves that PDP is being implemented effectively.

## **When will PDP policy be implemented?**

41. The educational worthiness of PDP is widely acknowledged but this is a significant national development issue that will require careful nurturing and management if it is to succeed. Institutions are at different stages of development with respect to PDP and some will have to begin developing their practice from a low base line. Because of this, and the need to deploy resources to support this development, the achievement of the policy objective across the whole system and for all HE awards is set at 5 years (2005/06). This will enable PDP to be designed into programmes as they are reviewed and enable those institutions that have experience and expertise to share and disseminate their 'wisdom'. HE representative bodies and national guidance should encourage HEIs to incorporate PDP into their strategic plans for teaching, learning and staff development.
42. This approach to policy is intended to:
- place primary responsibility for policy with each institution;
  - engender ownership for policy since it can be developed by each institution;
  - value the investment already made by staff and HEIs in promoting PDP;
  - enable the system to build on existing good practice;
  - be more responsive to institutional, departmental and discipline needs;
  - facilitate the development of tools and methods to support PDP that are tailored to each educational context.
43. The main disadvantages of this approach are that students will be offered different levels of opportunity and support, some of which might be considerably below the best available practice. Without effective systems for sharing and evaluating practice it will also result in expensive duplication of effort. Flexibility will make monitoring and evaluation difficult and enable some HEIs and staff to avoid discharging their responsibilities fully. Variations in institutional policies and practice will mean that it is more difficult for employers to relate their own frameworks for PDP to the HE frameworks.

## **A framework for institutional PDP policies**

44. In creating their own policies institutions will be aware that most UK students entering higher education from School or College will already have experienced PDP in relation to the National Record of Achievement. Similarly, many mature students who have experienced working in an organisation will have experienced some form of PDP through a staff appraisal and development scheme or through an organisational competency framework. It is unlikely that students from other countries will have experienced PDP type processes.
45. There are many ways of promoting PDP and these guidelines do not prescribe a format.

### **PDP processes complement the formal curriculum by helping students to:**

- **critically reflect on their own learning, behaviours and achievements;**
- **be more independent and effective learners and value their own capability through improved self-awareness;**
- **motivate themselves;**
- **be aware of how they can apply their learning in contexts other than the academic curriculum;**
- **enhance their ability to present themselves to others;**
- **improve their employability;**
- **and encourage a positive attitude to the idea of learning throughout life.**

46. PDP is likely to involve an individual in:

- gathering information on learning experiences and achievement;
- reflecting on learning experiences and achievement;
- identifying new learning needs and creating development plans;
- reviewing their progress towards the achievement of goals they have set.

and develop their capacity to:

- recognise, value and evidence their own learning in academic and non-academic contexts;
- evaluate and recognise their own strengths and weaknesses and identify ways in which perceived weaknesses might be improved and strengths enhanced;
- utilise their own records and evidence of learning to demonstrate to others what they know and can do;
- recognise how achievements that are not part of an academic programme might be accredited;
- plan and take responsibility for their personal, educational and career development.

### **Characteristics of effective PDP practice**

47. The key lesson from institutions that have already implemented such policies in higher education is that PDP should be integral to learning. Students do not participate in such processes for altruistic reasons: they have to perceive the investment they make will be valued.

#### **PDP is likely to be most effective when it is**

- **a mainstream academic activity**
- **linked to the learning objectives/outcomes of programmes**
- **undertaken regularly**
- **supported and valued by staff**
- **supported by institutional structures, resources and expertise**
- **owned by the learner**
- **seen to be valued by society (e.g. employers and Professional Bodies)**

*Students are more likely to value PDP if they see that academic staff themselves are involved in PDP processes, e.g. through appraisal and development policies or portfolio building linked to professional accreditation or CPD requirements.*

48. Features of policies and practice that are known to be successful are identified below.

#### **General**

- Processes for PDP and documents that describe such processes are designed within departments, so as to reflect the curriculum and organisational patterns of the department and ensure local ownership.
- Where practical, students are involved in the design and development of such documents and processes.
- The primary responsibility for developing, updating and maintaining their Personal Learning Records rests with the individual student, with staff support.

- Students' are introduced to PDP its purposes, obligations and anticipated benefits, at an early point in their HE experience.

#### **Institutions /departments**

- Provide support and development opportunities for staff in order that they may participate in PDP in informed and effective ways.
- Support students in developing their understanding of the contribution that reflective review and action planning may make to their learning and personal development.
- Share with students the relationship of these processes to curriculum design and assessment practices and requirements.
- Provide purposeful guidance for all those involved in supporting the student in PDP e.g. personal tutors, careers advisors, work place mentors.
- Ensure that students have appropriate and regular access to a named individual who will support (and challenge) the student through the PDP process.
- Ensure that PDP is integrated into the opportunities that are provided for careers advice and planning.
- Gain feedback from students on the effectiveness of their PDP practices and involve them in any formal review of policy.

#### **Making the opportunities and reasons for PDP explicit**

49. Two frameworks are provided in these guidelines to help institutions make explicit the ways in which they are promoting PDP.
50. The first framework (Appendix 2) is intended to help teaching teams explain the rationale that underlies a particular context for PDP. The horizontal axis of this framework defines the main types of scheme used to promote PDP. Three types of scheme are identified:
- negotiated learning outcomes profile (*e.g. where a student will negotiate specific learning objectives and outcomes in the context of a work-based learning project or perhaps a final year project*).
  - personal development profile (*e.g. where a student develops a personal development profile in consultation with a personal tutor*);
  - prescribed (or programme /subject) learning outcomes profile (*e.g. where a student uses PDP in the context of curricular activities that are intended to develop particular qualities and skills within a subject or programme*).

The vertical axis shows the primary objectives of a particular approach. Seven objectives for PDP are recognised in this mapping tool.

51. The second framework (Appendix 2) is intended to help teaching teams identify the opportunities for acquiring, developing and using the skills that underlie PDP, and for creating personal records of learning.
52. These tools can be used heuristically – to promote discussion and understanding about:
- the range of approaches within an institution (different departments / programmes adopting different approaches);

- the reasons for different approaches in different subjects (e.g. involvement of a professional body might require a particular approach);
- the use of different strategies at different stages of a course or programme.

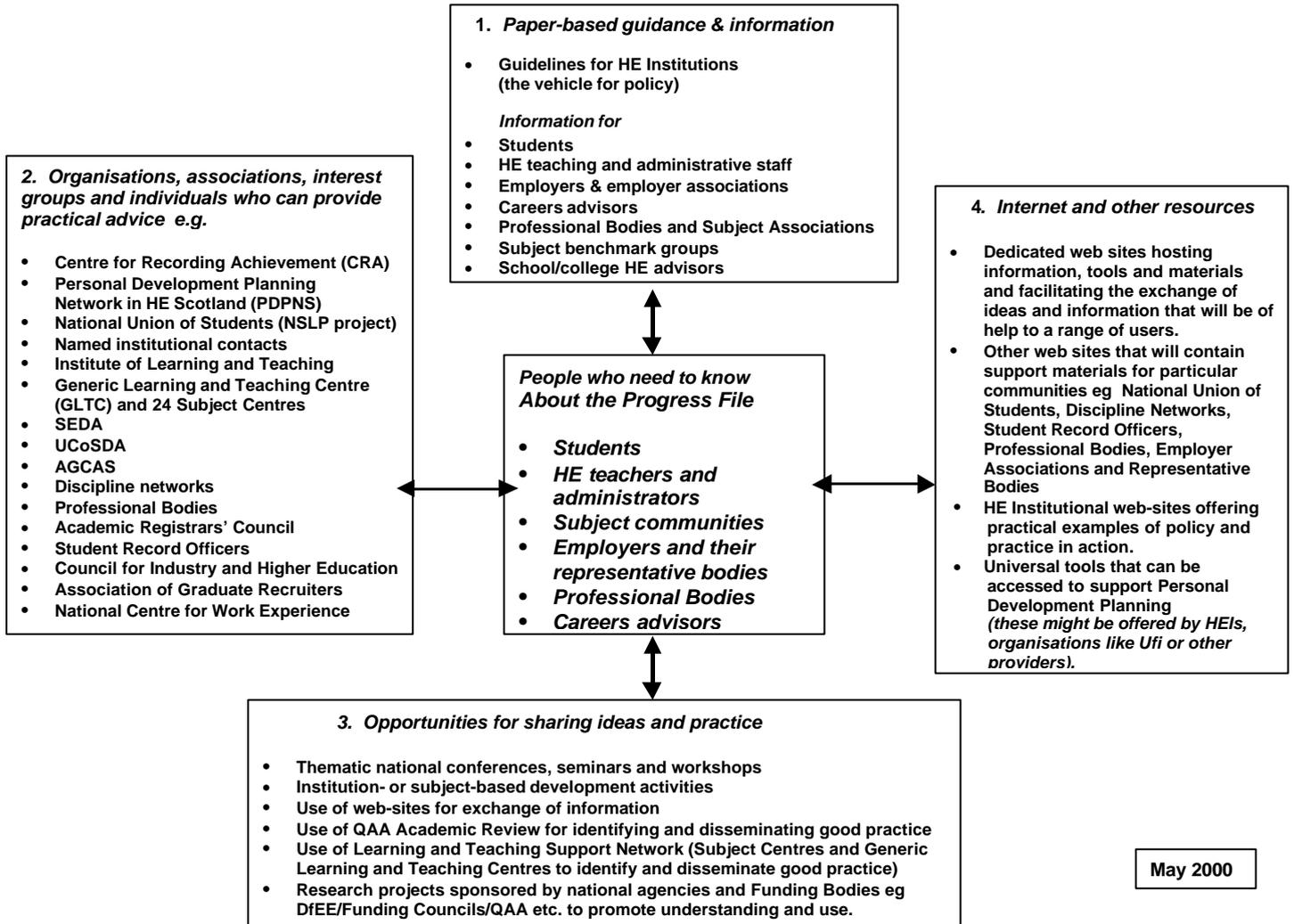
The tools can be used by institutions to:

- map and understand their own approaches to PDP;
- provide a framework for institutional quality assurance;
- provide a framework for internal or external review of institutional policies on PDP.

## **Developing an infrastructure to support HE practitioners**

53. Some institutions already have considerable experience of the practices that underpin PDP and have developed or are developing the appropriate infrastructure and resources to support such activities. The HE system will be able to learn from such experience.
54. The system-wide introduction of policy on PDP will require a cultural change and changes to the curriculum, student support and guidance systems, and quality assurance procedures. It will also require investment in staff development and new technology to support PDP. Institutions and academic staff will need time and support to make the necessary adjustments and develop new expertise.
55. If this initiative is to be successful it will require an infrastructure to be developed which facilitates the sharing of expertise, knowledge, practical know-how and resources and promotes cultural change. Such an infrastructure must:
  - accommodate the different elements of the progress file;
  - take account of the information and development needs of the different audiences that will use the Progress File;
  - help those responsible for developing policy and practice and enable them to locate their own work in a broader context;
  - be dynamic and responsive in order to accommodate change and innovation as practice develops.
56. A representation of this infrastructure is shown in figure 3. The purpose of the infrastructure is to support and help the people who need to know about the progress file (direct or indirect users). They need information that is customised to their individual needs (Field 1). This will comprise these guidelines for HE institutions and information for a range of audiences. It would also embrace good practice survey reports and research papers relating to the application and use of policy.
57. The preparation and dissemination of this information should be a collective responsibility for all those who might have an interest in promoting and supporting the initiative. A range of organisations and interest groups are suggested in (Field 2).
58. These groups also have an important role to play in creating opportunities and mechanisms for sharing ideas within and across communities (Field 3). Such opportunities will be very important in developing system-wide understanding about the progress file and in raising public awareness about what it is trying to do. Provision will also need to be made for researching and understanding the impact and results of different approaches and each interest group has the potential to contribute to the evaluation process.

Figure 3 Creating an infrastructure to support the HE Progress File



59. The Internet creates new opportunities for providing information, tools and other materials to support different communities (Field 4). Paper based information can be referenced to additional resources that can be accessed via the www and these resources can be customised for different audiences. There will be a number of dedicated web-sites that will provide specialist support and which have the potential to make generic materials and tools available for use by other HEIs. The Internet can also be used to make connections to related activities outside HE, e.g. the CPD requirements of Professional Bodies and large employer organisations.
60. The following strategy will be used to create the infrastructure to help HE institutions and academics develop their progress file policies and practices.
- i) **Identify interest groups, representative bodies and individuals** willing to support and contribute to the development of the framework. A range of potential organisations, interest groups and associations is shown in Figure 3. Their contributions will need to be co-ordinated and recognised. Key sources of support and guidance to HE institutions are given in appendix 4.
  - ii) **Construction of a road map** that will enable users to identify the information, support and resources that will be of greatest value and permit connections to be made between different elements of the framework. The process of producing the map will also help identify sources of information that are already available. Figure 3 provides a point of departure.
  - iii) **Creation of information for different audiences within and outside the HE community** and the accumulation and organisation (through the web) of generic resources that will help support the initiative (see for example the key www sites given in Appendix 4).
  - iv) **Research and development** to inform i) to iii) above. The policy units of Universities UK (formerly CVCP), SCoP, Universities Scotland (formerly CoSHEP), QAA and the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) Generic Centre are working with a number of representative bodies, including the National Union of Students (NUS), the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR), the Institute of Personnel Directors (IPD), the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) and the Personal Development Planning in HE (Scotland) Network (PDPHES) to develop a better appreciation of the place of HE policy in the broader context. There is also a wealth of experience in the HE system that can be drawn upon to inform the implementation process.

**The production of this document is being co-ordinated by QAA. If you:**

- **have comments and suggestions for improvement**
- **are willing to provide help and advice to others**
- **are able to offer materials to support PDP**

**please contact:**

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*Heather Gibson (QAA Scotland and liaison with Universities Scotland)*

*Nick Harris (QAA)*

*Norman Jackson (LTSN Generic Centre)*

*William Locke (Universities UK)*

**Appendix 1A** Example transcript for a hypothetical student completing a four year full-time degree programme that contains within it a period of study abroad. *Guidance on how to interpret the information would be provided on the other side of the transcript. Formal opportunities for personal development planning are shown by an underscore.*

|  |                                 |                |                   |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Name of student                              | <i>Gemma Jackson</i>            | Date of birth  | <i>03/10/1977</i> |
| University reference                         | <i>999999999</i>                | HESA reference | <i>888888888</i>  |
| Qualification                                | BA (Honours) English and French | NQF Level      | HE3               |
| Awarding Institution                         | University of Poppleton         |                |                   |
| Teaching Institution                         | University of Poppleton         |                |                   |
| Programme of Study                           | BA English French (joint)       |                |                   |
| Professional or Statutory Body Accreditation | not relevant                    |                |                   |
| Language(s) of Instruction                   | English and French              |                |                   |

## Record of Learning and Achievement

| <b>1995/96</b>   | <b>HE Level 1 BA Honours English and French</b> | <b>Mark</b> | <b>Credit</b> |
|--|---|-------------|---------------|
| ENGL 1010  | English Critical Practices                      | 70          | 20            |
| ENGL 1170  | English Literature in History                   | 67          | 20            |
| FREN 1010  | French Language Awareness Skills                | 63          | 20            |
| FREN 1020  | French Literature and Institutions              | 37          | 20            |
| ACOM 1630  | Basic IT Skills for French                      | 67          | 10            |
| ACOM 1635  | Further IT Skills for French                    | 66          | 10            |
| COMP 1300  | Introduction to Artificial Intelligence         | 63          | 10            |
| COMP 1150  | Introduction to Computer Programming            | 56          | 10            |
| <i>Transcript of Specific IT Skills (supplementary transcript)</i> |   |             |               |
| <u>Introduction to Personal Development Planning (Portfolio)</u>   |   |             |               |
|  |   | pass        | 10            |

| <b>1996/97</b>  | <b>HE Level 2 BA Honours English and French</b>      |       |    |
|---|--|-------|----|
| ENGL 2130   | Introduction to Medieval Literature II               | 75    | 10 |
| ENGL 2222   | English Literature 1500-1660                         | 67    | 20 |
| ENGL 2220   | Jacobean Shakespeare                                 | 66    | 20 |
| ENGL 2444   | English Literature 1660 –1790                        | 65    | 20 |
| FREN 2112   | Aspects of Popular Culture in France since 1936      | 69    | 10 |
| FREN 2011   | French Language in Contexts                          | pass# | 10 |
| FREN 2012   | French Language in Contexts II                       | pass# | 10 |
| CSER 2010   | <u>Career Development Skills I (vehicle for PDP)</u> | 65    | 10 |
| <i># these marks are conflated with Level 3 module marks FREN3010</i> |  |       |    |

**1997/98 HE Level 2 BA Honours English and French**  
Compulsory Year Abroad : includes study in a second language and work experience.

- Study at University of Paris XIII (3 months)
- Language Assistant University of Strasbourg (6 months)

*Credits are based on the students Personal Development Records that evidence the learning and skills acquired.*

pass 120

| <b>1998/99 HE Level 3 BA Honours English and French</b> |  |    |    |
|---|--|----|----|
| ENGL 3010   | <u>English Literature 1790-1900 (dissertation/project)</u> | 64 | 20 |
| ENGL 3016   | English in Time and Space                                  | 60 | 20 |
| ENGL 3011   | Renaissance Literature                                     | 65 | 20 |
| FREN 3110   | Advanced Language Skills                                   | 68 | 20 |
| FREN 3010   | Reading Poetry; Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarme              | 54 | 20 |
| FREN 3092   | La Nouvelle Vague  | 58 | 10 |
| FREN 3042   | Racine   | 60 | 10 |

*Total credits gained and overall mark (unweighted level 2 + 3 marks )* **64.3 480**  
*Honours Degree Classification* **Second Class (upper division)**  
*Date of Award* *July 1999* *Date Transcript Issued* *July 1999*

**To check the validity of this transcript call 0123456789 and quote transcript number 12345678.**



**Transcript that conforms to the data set given in table**

|  |   |                       |           |
|--|---|-----------------------|-----------|
| <b>Name of student</b>                 | John Harrison   | <b>Date of birth</b>  | 15.8.1977 |
| <b>University reference</b>            | 9600011/1   | <b>HESA reference</b> | 1111111   |
| <b>Qualification</b>                   | BA (Hons)   |                       |           |
| <b>Level of Qualification</b>          | HE3   |                       |           |
| <b>Awarding Institution</b>            | Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education |                       |           |
| <b>Teaching Institution</b>            | Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education |                       |           |
| <b>Work-based Learning</b>             | N.A.  |                       |           |
| <b>Programme of Study</b>              | Human Geography major / Physical Geography minor      |                       |           |
| <b>Professional Body Accreditation</b> | N.A.  |                       |           |
| <b>Language(s) of Instruction</b>      | English   |                       |           |
| <b>Language(s) of assessment</b>       | English   |                       |           |

**Record of Learning and Achievement**

Opportunities for personal development planning are underlined

| <b>1996/97 BA (Hons) Human Geography with Physical Geography HE Level 1</b> |  | <b>Mark</b>     | <b>Credit</b> |
|---|--|-----------------|---------------|
| HG103   | Making Places                                | 63              | 12            |
| HG107   | Global Development Issues                    | 56              | 12            |
| GE101   | Handling Environmental Data                  | 79              | 12            |
| GE102   | Using Local Geographical Sources             | 73              | 12            |
| GE103   | Global Environmental Issues                  | 57              | 12            |
| PG101   | Environmental Systems                        | 40 <sup>2</sup> | 12            |
| PG104   | Field and Laboratory Techniques in Geography | 66              | 12            |
| TM103   | Environment and Tourism                      | 66              | 12            |
| SF101   | Workshop I <u>Learning Development</u>       | 73              | 12            |
| SF122   | Workshop II <u>Transferable Skills</u>       | 60              | 12            |
|   |  | <b>total</b>    | <b>120</b>    |

| <b>1997/98 BA (Hons) Human Geography with Physical Geography HE Level 2</b> |                                    | <b>Mark</b>  | <b>Credit</b> |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| HG203   | Images of the Third World          | 58           | 15            |
| HG207   | Social Geography                   | 71           | 15            |
| HG210   | Investigating Society              | 66           | 15            |
| HG211   | Landscapes in Transition           | 71           | 15            |
| HG212   | Geography of Economic Change       | 63           | 15            |
| GE201   | <u>Field week</u>                  | 57           | 15            |
| GE202   | Environmental Hazards              | 65           | 15            |
| PG208   | Methods of Environmental Appraisal | 62           | 15            |
|   |                                    | <b>total</b> | <b>120</b>    |

| <b>1998/99 BA (Hons) Human Geography with Physical Geography HE Level 3</b> |                                     | <b>Mark</b>  | <b>Credit</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| HG304   | Geography of Retailing              | 68           | 15            |
| HG311   | Europe                              | 68           | 15            |
| HG316   | Geography of the Holocaust          | 71           | 15            |
| HG318   | Local Economic Development          | 75           | 15            |
| HG319   | Society, Space and Social Science   | 62           | 15            |
| PG306   | Environmental Conservation          | 62           | 15            |
| HG333   | <u>Dissertation (Double module)</u> | 65           | 30            |
|   |                                     | <b>total</b> | <b>120</b>    |

**Other Learning**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Work Experience</i>             | <u>3 month work experience with Geosurveys International</u>   |
| <i>Study Abroad</i>                | 4 weeks fieldwork in Spain (to support dissertation)   |
| <i>Accredited Key Skills</i>       | <u>Key Skills portfolio</u> developed through the National Union of Students National Learning Programme |
| <i>Prior/experiential learning</i> | N.A.   |

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Award</b>                 | BA(Hons) Human Geography with Physical Geography |
| <b>Total credits</b>         | 360  |
| <b>Degree Classification</b> | Second Class (upper second)                      |
| <b>Overall mark</b>          | 67%  |
| <b>Date of Award</b>         | July 1999  |
| <b>Date of Transcript</b>    | July 1999  |

To check the validity of the information please call 01234 56789

## Appendix 1C Example transcript for a part-time Masters programme

**Name of student** *Emma Smith*  
**Date of birth** *03/10/1960*  
**University reference** 999999999  
**HESA reference** 88888888

**Qualification** **MSc Applied Professional Studies (ITS pathway)**

**Level of Qualification** HE4  
**Awarding Institution** University of Poppleton  
**Teaching Institution** University of Poppleton  
**Programme of Study** MSc Applied Professional Studies  
**PSB Accreditation** not relevant  
**Work-based Learning** not relevant  
**Language(s) of Instruction** English

### Record of Learning and Achievement

**Units studied**

| Module  | Level | Mark | Credit | Date |
|---|-------|------|--------|------|
| ITS401 Introduction to IMTS                               | 4     | 77   | 15     | 1996 |
| ITS402 Designing learning materials                       | 4     | 91   | 15     | 1996 |
| ITS403 Prototyping IMTS courseware                        | 4     | 67   | 15     | 1996 |
| ITS404 Courseware implementation using computer languages | 4     | 85   | 15     | 1997 |
| ITS465 Designing self-study materials                     | 4     | 90   | 15     | 1997 |
| G06 Examination and assessment                            | 4     | 89   | 15     | 1997 |
| G02 Teachers and learners                                 | 4     | 88   | 15     | 1997 |
| R53 Evaluating Social Science research<br>1997            |       | 4    | 88     | 15   |

**Research study /dissertation**

|   |   |    |    |      |
|---|---|----|----|------|
| 'Investigation into possible influences on student participation in a tutor group conference' | 4 | 80 | 30 | 1998 |
|---|---|----|----|------|

**Total level 4 credits**

**180**

**Overall mark (unweighted )**

**83.4**

Date of Registration for Award

July 1996

Date of Award

July 1999

Date Transcript Issued

July 1999

To check the validity of this transcript call 0123456789 and quote transcript number 12345678



**Appendix 2A Framework for understanding and explaining different approaches to Personal Development Planning in UK higher education. The framework can be used to: 1) map the range of approaches within an HE institution; 2) the range of approaches used within a particular programme or modular scheme; 3) the range of opportunities for PDP experienced by an individual student.**

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TYPES OF SCHEME FOR RECORDING ACHIEVEMENT</b></p> <p><b>SCHEME OBJECTIVES</b></p>  | <p><b>Negotiated Learning Outcomes Profile</b><br/>Integral to the learning framework. Students, with guidance and support, formulate their own learning objectives/ outcomes that are formalised within a learning agreement. The learner assumes responsibility for how the outcomes are to be achieved, the form of assessment that will be used to demonstrate achievement and the criteria and evidence that will be used to evaluate their achievement.</p> | <p><b>Personal Development Profile</b><br/>Complementary, rather than integral to the teaching and learning framework. Students are encouraged to articulate their personal development goals and monitor their own development against these personal objectives. This approach is often integrated into a personal tutorial system.</p> | <p><b>Programme Learning Outcomes Profile</b><br/>Integral to the learning framework. The outcomes of learning (programmes and modules) are made explicit. They provide the framework for teaching, learning and assessment and provide students with clearly defined goals against which to evaluate progress. Such an approach must be designed into the curriculum/ assessment process.</p> |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Support for the learner</b> - this type of scheme is often linked to a personal tutor system. The key purpose is to guide and support the learner. The focus is on personal development through self-profiling and identifying learning opportunities within and outside the curriculum to achieve self-development objectives.</p>  |   |   |  |
| <p><b>Support for learning</b> - this type of scheme is linked to learning within a particular subject/programme context. The intention is to improve the capacity of the individual to manage their own learning by making the learning intentions of the programme/ discipline more explicit and creating opportunities for students to reflect up on and assess their learning.</p>         |   |   |  |
| <p><b>Support for off-campus learning</b>- this type of scheme is designed to help students optimise the benefits of off-campus study e.g. year abroad or employment placement through structured learning logs or diaries, and personal development plans and portfolios.</p>   |   |   |  |
| <p><b>Support for extra-curricular learning</b>- this type of scheme is designed to help students to recognise the opportunities for learning and personal development afforded by extra-curricular activities like part-time work, community service or service as a student representative/SU Officer, through structured self-assessment and personal development plans and portfolios.</p> |   |   |  |
| <p><b>Preparation for employment/ professional practice</b> - this type of scheme is designed to support students in their transition to employment by helping them develop a greater appreciation of the skills they have acquired through the discipline which are relevant and applied in the workplace.</p>  |   |   |  |
| <p><b>A means of demonstrating that broader expectations of a high quality educational experience are met.</b> e.g those contained in the Subject Quality Assessment Framework/HEQC Guidelines for Student Support for the effective integration of transferable skills</p>  |   |   |  |

|                                     |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| and independent learning abilities. |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|

**Q1 Which type(s) of approach does your institution use?**

**Q2 Does the table accommodate all possible approaches to personal profiling? If not how can it be modified to achieve this objective?**

**APPENDIX 2B** A variety of terms are used in higher education to describe a process undertaken by individuals to gather evidence on, record and review their own learning and achievement, and identify ways in which they might improve themselves academically and more broadly. The term **Personal Development Planning (PDP)** is proposed to describe a *structured process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development*. The purpose of this tool is to help HE teaching staff explain where PDP is being used within a programme or portfolio of modules.

| <b>Approach to PDP</b>  | <b>Level 1</b> | <b>Level 2</b> | <b>Level 3</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 Supporting the development and recognition of skills through the personal tutor system  |                |                |                |
| 2 Supporting the development and recognition of skills in academic modules/units  |                |                |                |
| 3. Supporting the development and recognition of skills through purpose designed -modules/units   |                |                |                |
| 4. Supporting the development and recognition of skills through research projects and dissertations work                                |                |                |                |
| 5. Supporting the development and recognition of career management skills   |                |                |                |
| 6. Supporting the development and recognition of career management skills through work placement or work experience                     |                |                |                |
| 7 Supporting the development of skills by recognising that they can be developed through extra curricula activities                     |                |                |                |
| 8 Supporting the development of the skills and attitudes as a basis for continuing professional development                             |                |                |                |
| 9. Other approaches to personal development planning  |                |                |                |
| The means by which self-reflection, evaluation and planned development is supported eg. electronic or paper-based learning log or diary |                |                |                |

## Appendix 3: Careers Advisers and Progress Files

Progress Files should be MEANS to ENDS, not ends in themselves, and nobody can demonstrate this better to students, employers and academics than Careers Advisers. Appropriately developed, Progress Files can offer significant support to the individual for effective progression through learning and work.

### The Transcript

The intention of the Transcript is *"to improve the quality and consistency of information on the learning and achievement of individual students in higher education for the benefit of everyone who has an interest in such information"*.

Careers Service staff and other guidance workers in higher education are key mediators of this process of communicating student attainment from the University to providers of future opportunities in work and learning, as well as using it with the students themselves to support their planning.

- **Students** are potentially beneficiaries of the greater transparency the transcript will offer in detailing their learning, but experience suggests that many students will need guidance and support in relating such information to their own needs and circumstances.
  - This may even be the case when undergraduates have had previous experience of Records of Achievement (RoA) in schools. Whilst some will carry their own RoA into HE because they recognise its value, others will already have built-in resistance to what may have been a sterile experience.
  - There will need to be clear presentation of how, in higher education and beyond, capable people can benefit from recording and reviewing their experience and achievements; that there is both on-going ("formative") value in logging strengths and identifying weak areas to be addressed and a "transfer" value in the transcript to help graduates attain their goals in work and learning by demonstrating what they have achieved so far.
  - Guidance interventions, especially when students are making choices about future modules or contemplating changing course or institution, can be based on much more explicit evidence of what they have achieved and where the gaps might lie.
  - Discontinuing students should also be greatly assisted, both in making decisions about their next steps and in having a tangible record of what they have achieved to date.
  - Planning a future beyond HE for all students should rest on their having a clear understanding of their capabilities and limitations as a basis upon which to build future goals. The greater detail of information and evidence available should enable them to make more effective use of guidance services, and more successful action plans.
- Externally, major stakeholders will be **graduate recruiters**, large and small; **professional bodies** and **external examination boards** (e.g. City and Guilds) and admissions tutors for further academic study or research, both in the UK and other countries.
  - Careers Services are well placed to help to demonstrate how the transcript can feed into selection processes and entry requirements and have long experience of monitoring opportunities for study and employment abroad. (It is intended that the UK Transcript will

satisfy most of the requirements of the EC/Council of Europe *Diploma Supplement*, which aims to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications).

- This is also an opportunity to demonstrate to **academic colleagues** and **university managers** the value of the links Careers Services can offer, and their understanding of what is comprehensible and helpful to the University's wider constituency.
  - This understanding of the importance of articulating skills as well as knowledge, and the appropriate language to use can, if Careers Services and institutions wish, draw Careers staff closer to the academic curriculum.

### **Personal Development Planning**

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is "*a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and /or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development*".

It is clear, therefore, that PDP purposes lie at the heart of Careers Service missions, whatever the service and its Institution perceives its role to be. This aim underpins activities as diverse as individual guidance interviews and career development modules, 'Insight into Management' courses and CV Clinics.

"*This is the Golden Egg laid by the Trojan Horse*", one Focus Group of Careers Advisers reported...but the egg will need to be carefully hatched if the full potential of the learning materials and PDP processes are to be achieved.

### **Opportunities**

All the ways in which Careers Advisers can contribute to the effective development and use of Progress Files which were outlined above in relation to the Transcript apply to an even greater degree to Personal Development Planning processes and materials. This is an area in which all Careers Advisers have long experience - even though they may never have used ( or wish to use) the term PDP. There is a significant contribution to be made to institutional and departmental developments, although its nature will vary greatly depending on how the Careers Service and the institution sees its strengths.

The Code of Practice for Careers Education, Information and Guidance which is currently being drafted by QAA in consultation with key stakeholders will usefully feed into this.

There are also new opportunities to strengthen the 'bridging' role which Careers Services have always played between the Institution and the world of work.

### **Students**

- In direct interaction with students - individual, group or electronic - Careers Service staff can show students **why** they are increasingly being asked to "develop skills". Students may well need to be convinced that they can use the PDP opportunities to help themselves decide on the next job or course and to learn how they can draw on this evidence in self-presentation at application and interview. The benefits for personal action planning can be readily be demonstrated in a career development context.
- Students will also need to learn how NOT to use their Personal Development Records. These should **not**, for example, be presented at selection interview unless specifically requested!
- 'Self-awareness' has long been a skill that Careers Advisers have worked to inculcate in their clients. Self reflection is difficult to acquire in the short space of time students often give

themselves to decide on the next step, and between career choice and interview. If appropriately developed, PDP processes will encourage this skill from an early stage.

- Students will also, ideally, have had experience of articulating and evidencing their skills and knowledge long before the first application form, and their CVs should be far richer than a mere list of qualifications and hobbies.
- As the curriculum increasingly features opportunities for self-development and awareness of opportunities, especially work-related learning, Careers Service staff (who may already be involved in such curricular developments) can remind students of the value and use of recording and reviewing such experience, including that gained from casual and voluntary work, and can show them how to do it.
- Mature students will have an opportunity to develop a tool to articulate and value the skills and experience they brought into their programme of studies.
- Even more than the Transcript, PDP materials can offer an excellent basis for individual guidance, or to underpin free standing workshops or Career Development modules (a 'Career Learning Log', for example). It is important that these purposes are built into the design of the materials...structured self-reflection and action planning, for example.

### **Employers**

- With PDP materials even more than Transcripts, Careers Service Staff can play a major role in clarifying to employers the nature and purposes of the PDP materials and processes, and reassure them that students will be encouraged to draw on these materials and processes as a basis for more relevant presentation, through the company's own application and interview procedures rather than as an additional burden of paper to be ploughed through. Employers should also find graduates better equipped to tell them what they can do, rather than just what they know, and this will be of particular benefit to SMEs.
- There are likely to be increased opportunities to draw employers into the academic curriculum as PDP initiatives accelerate the present focus on skill development, and also into the design of the 'evidencing' materials - Portfolios, Work Experience Journals, Career Learning Logs and so on.

### **Academics and Managers**

- This is an opportunity to gain or enhance recognition from academic colleagues for experience, skill and a practical understanding of the links between self-reflection and action planning, and to draw departments into explicitly supporting student progression.
- Careers Service staff may feel that they can contribute from their experience to Institutional and departmental discussions: for example -
  - to remind colleagues that Progress Files can support more effective and informed progression through modular choice, by reflection on gaps which need to be filled to achieve goals.
  - to emphasise the purposes of Progress Files as a basis for action planning rather than as a static record.
  - to demonstrate how Progress Files can be used to assess and accredit experiential learning, especially Work Experience.

- to demonstrate how Progress Files can be used to encourage students to draw out their interests, skills and values from even traditional lectures and seminars, by the way in which they are encouraged to record and reflect on their learning.
- to ensure that academics are aware that a growing number of Graduate Recruiters and Professional Institutions use recording and reviewing processes for their own management development or professional accreditation, so that the HE experience is part of a continuum to support life-long learning.
- to remind academic colleagues how Progress Files (particularly when based on some form of Personal Tutoring) can make an enormous difference to the increasing difficulties of writing references in a mass HE market where personal contact may be limited.

### Concerns

Progress Files **can** offer the opportunities described above - but only if Careers Services and individual Careers Service staff, their institutions, students, academic staff and graduate recruiters work together to make this happen, and have creative and visionary approaches to addressing the problems which will undoubtedly be encountered in the implementation of a quality system.

Concerns expressed by Careers Service staff about Progress Files include:

- They represent the extension of a bureaucratic system of student records: an attempt to reduce human beings to columns of data.
- They constitute a breach of student privacy.
- Students may have had bad experiences of Records of Achievement at school, and be very resistant.
- 'Recording and reviewing' processes favour some disciplines and learning styles, but may disadvantage others.
- Progress Files are viewed by some academics as being merely ways in which QAA can check on the delivery of Programme Specifications, and some Careers Service staff hear and accept these views.
- Employers will find piles of paper burdensome, and will not gain the information they need.
- Careers Services may be marginalised in discussions of developments which are seen as mainstream teaching, and others in the institution will take over work they have started to develop.
- Conversely, Careers Services may be expected to deliver extensive additional functions with no additional resources and sometimes with insufficient expertise or training ("suppose we are given the opportunity to be involved and then perhaps can't come up with solid enough responses due to lack of Careers Service expertise and lack of academic credibility...").
- Who is going to have ownership of the Progress File? What about data protection?
- How will the Transcript fit with the PDP?
- How can the University "credit" student-claimed skills and experience? ("They can say what they like! How do we know if it's true?")

These concerns, and possibly others, will need to be addressed.

- In some cases, there may be a simple lack of understanding of the nature and purposes of Progress Files, or a confusion between the Transcript and the PDP, and within that, a lack of clarity between PDP documentation and PDP processes. These issues will be clarified when people have had the time to digest and discuss the Guidelines.
- In other matters, the Careers Service may need to make clear to the institution the scope or boundaries of their contribution to developments, or to use it as an opportunity to prompt a review of their role. Resources will need to be considered, both for the Careers Service and across the Institution.
- Involvement of all the institutional stakeholders, including the student body and the administration (at an active rather than representational level) could prevent a number of difficulties arising.
- Sharing of good practice and problems can circumvent some issues, and AGCAS is particularly good at this form of networking.
- 'Ownership' will need to be carefully considered in the context of the institution's strategic planning for accreditation, guidance and learner support:

One University is developing a system which records learning and skills centrally in three sections. The student has access to all three. Briefly,

- the **University** 'owns' the section which contains data on achievements- (and failures) which it is happy to accredit -including skills-based qualifications e.g. City and Guilds Senior Awards.
- the **Department** 'owns' the section which (rather like a departmental reference) provides evidence that a student has, for example, made a good contribution to the staff - student Committee, or attended an 'Insight into Management' course. This is not graded or "accredited" in any way unless it is already an assessed part of a programme.
- the **Student** 'owns' the final section, and "makes claims" to skills, knowledge and experience gained from academic study, work experience (including casual and voluntary work), hobbies etc..... just as students have always done when making applications! But the strong encouragement is for them to record evidence of their claims, which can be questioned either in guidance situations or at selection interview.

Finally, it is important not to lose sight of the Guidelines' reminder of the core features of the Progress File:

- a range of recording processes...;
- structured processes to develop the capacity of individuals to reflect upon their own learning and achievement and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development;
- guidance materials and support structures to enable and encourage the learner to participate and benefit from this active learning process;
- opportunities within and outside the HE curriculum to acquire, develop and practice the skills necessary to engage in Personal Development Planning.

## Appendix 4 Important sources of guidance and support for the HE progress file

**Centre for Recording Achievement** For nearly a decade the CRA has been involved in promoting good practice and researching practice in the activities, processes and recording systems that underlie PDP. The Centre organises regular seminars and conferences, supports a range of staff development work, provides specialist advice and services to HEIs, and produces a range of publications and research reports to inform institutional policies.

Contact – Rob Ward, Centre for Recording Achievement, 39 Bridgeman Terrace, Wigan, WN1 1TT.  
Tel 01942-826761; FAX 01942-8259222; email: [enquiries@recordingachievement.org](mailto:enquiries@recordingachievement.org),  
<http://www.recordingachievement.org>

**Personal Development Planning in Higher Education (Scotland) Network.** PDPHES is involved in promoting good practice in the activities, processes and recording systems that underlie PDP. It organises regular seminars and conferences, supports a range of staff development work, provides specialist advice and services to HEIs, and produces a range of publications and information to inform institutional policies.

Contact – Lorraine Stephanie (Chair), University of Strathclyde, tel 0141 552 4400 email [L.stefani@strath.ac.uk](mailto:L.stefani@strath.ac.uk). Website: <http://www.strath.ac.uk>

**Personal and Academic Development for Students in Higher Education.** The PADSHE project led by the **University of Nottingham** involves a consortium of seven institutions that have adopted Personal Academic Records (PARS). PADSHE has been at the leading edge in understanding how personal development planning can be linked to personal tutor systems to improve student learning.

Contact – Dr Angela Smallwood, Department of English Studies, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD. tel 0115 951 5913. Email [angela.smallwood@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:angela.smallwood@nottingham.ac.uk). website : <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/padshe>

### **Integrated Personal and Academic Development Programmes within the Curriculum.**

**PADPs.** This DfEE funded project at the University of Manchester has also used the PADSHE concept to develop personal development planning. The particular focus of the project has been on helping staff to develop their practice.

Contact – Ms Catherine O'Connell Project Manager tel 0161 275 3399. Email [catherine.oconnell@man.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.oconnell@man.ac.uk)

Website to help students become more aware of the opportunities for personal development  
<http://www.umu.man.ac.uk>

Website to help students make the most of their personal and academic skill development opportunities [http://www.man.ac.uk/EHE/Stud\\_Ent/keys.htm](http://www.man.ac.uk/EHE/Stud_Ent/keys.htm)

**Liverpool Universal Student Interactive Database.** LUSID is a web-based personal development planner. The system has four areas of activity for recording and reflection; auditing skills; action planning and reporting.

Contact – LUSID Project Coordinator, Centre for Careers and Academic Practice, University of Liverpool, Student Services Centre, 150 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L69 3GD. Email [lusid:info@liv.ac.uk](mailto:lusid:info@liv.ac.uk), tel 0151 794 4629. Website <http://lusid.liv.ac.uk>

**National Union of Students** Students have a key role to play in promoting PDP. The NUS through its representatives and focus groups contributed to the development of PDP policy. The NUS is itself promoting PDP through its National Student Learning Programme. This aims to develop and evidence key skills through Student Union Officer or student representative work.

Contact – NSLP Co-ordinator, National Union of Students, Nelson Mandela House, 461 Holloway Rd., London N7 6LJ.

This page will be updated; if you would like to be included please contact: [n.harris@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:n.harris@qaa.ac.uk)