Personal Development Plan

University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

PDP

2012
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Dear Personal Development Adviser,

You are involved in one of the most important aspects of student development. As a PDA you may be assigned one or more students, depending on your departmental/school/faculty policy. You will assist them in reflecting upon their performance and achievement and planning their educational and career development.

You are not alone in this task and a team of colleagues from the Careers Service, Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement and Learning Technology Enhancement will play a supporting role. The many personal development activities which are already embedded within the classes in your department/school should be acknowledged also.

There are a number of positive outcomes for staff involved in this process, as detailed later in this handbook. One of the most rewarding is observing students take increasing responsibility for their personal development and becoming graduates who are enquiring, engaged, enterprising and ethical, all the attributes necessary for a professional fit for the 21st Century.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Willison
University lead for PDP

Contents

"What sets someone apart from another is the attitude and motivation to achieve and expand their full potential. This can only be achieved through having realistic development goals and sticking to a practical and achievable plan"

Baxters

Personal Development Plan

Personal development programmes have existed in many different forms across the University for several years, and are a requirement of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education in Scotland for all Scottish universities. The new personal development programme for undergraduate students aims to formalise personal development activities across all departments in the faculty and lay out minimum requirements for the provision of support and feedback for students with respect to personal development activities and student-generated materials. Core expectations in this programme for the students will be:

- Students are expected to take increasing levels of responsibility for their own personal development and learning as they progress through their course of study.
- Students are expected to be actively involved in their peers' development as well as their own.

In practice, personal development in the University takes the form of a cyclic process of planning, doing, recording and reflecting undertaken by students, which aims to encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning and development. Students generate or initiate the inputs and outputs at each stage of the process, giving them ownership over their development and progress.

Input has come from many sources, including the Careers Service, departmental societies, industrial partners and alumni – the process relates to development in all aspects of a student's life:

Personal Life	Academic Life	Professional Life
- Extracurricular activities - Participation in University societies and sport clubs	- Exam performance - Coursework - Study skills advice	- Institution Membership - Work experience and placements - Career applications and interviews - Erasmus exchanges

The QAA has identified a number of benefits for students who follow a structured, supported process for personal development during their time at university.

Students will	Staff will
- Become effective, independent and personal learners who are more willing to participate in class activities. - Understand how they are learning and how this understanding improves their skills for study and career management - Articulate personal goals and evaluate progress - Be able to provide evidence to support job interviews and applications - Be less likely to drop out of their course and will be better prepared for academic achievement.	- Have a clearer understanding of your students strengths, weaknesses and aspirations so you can confidently provide them with useful advice - Help students become independent learners who can take initiative and attempt to find answers for themselves - Help to eliminate the 4th/5th year rush for help with job applications and CVs by providing advice throughout university - Be able to write meaningful references for employment if requested - Have the opportunity to shape the future of PDP

The PDA has the responsibility to **encourage** the students to engage with all aspects of personal development, including, planning and action plans & reflection and action plan reviews, student log, PDA meetings and peer mentoring.

This is also a PDA's Role Responsibility to arrange meetings with their students and guide them through Personal Development tasks and any Personal Development problems they may have.

Creating an action plan involves 4 steps which are demonstrated in Figure 1. When creating their Action Plan, students must consider both their long- and short-term goals. Crucially, these goals must be realistic and achievable.

PDAs may wish to offer advice on setting realistic goals using SMART criteria, shown below, a widely-used tool in objective-setting.

S	Specific	Set clear goals, lay out exactly what you want to achieve avoid vague language
M	Measurable	Set goals which have some measure of success- otherwise it becomes impossible to achieve them
A	Attainable	Set goals which are realistic, an attainable goal may stretch an individual, but it is not so extreme as to become meaningless
R	Relevant	Set goals that are worthwhile, the goal setter must actually be willing to enthusiastically work towards the achievement of the goal
T	Timeframe	You must give goals a time frame and a target date in order to focus your efforts and avoid becoming distracted

1. Where are you now?

Think about your skills and abilities. Then think about goals you would like to reach to improve your skills or learn new ones that will help you

2. Where do you want to be?

Develop a strategy to reach your goals and list the tasks you should complete. Give each task a date it should be completed by

3. How will you get there?
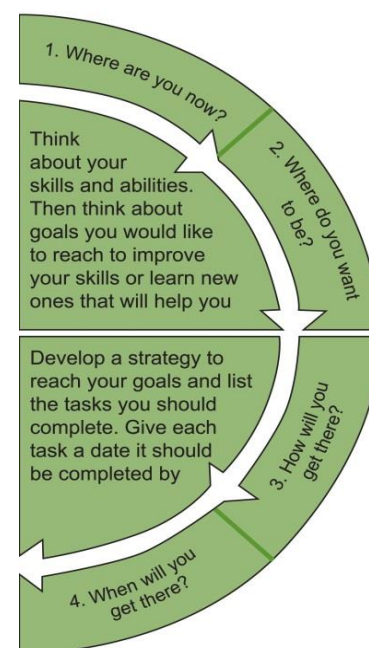
4. When will you get there?

Figure 1

As a PDA, should be prepared to **discuss a student's Action Plan** at meetings, as well as offer advice in the development of the plan scheduled by mutual convenience. In the case of first years or your departments focused year group, PDAs should help the student to develop a basic Action Plan during their first meeting, in order to explain the purpose of the plan and ensure that the student understands the planning process.

A concept the focused student year group should be introduced to is reflection (see Figure 2). As with planning, a tool has been developed to help junior students learn how to reflect in a useful, meaningful manner. This tool is known as the Action Plan Review Form.
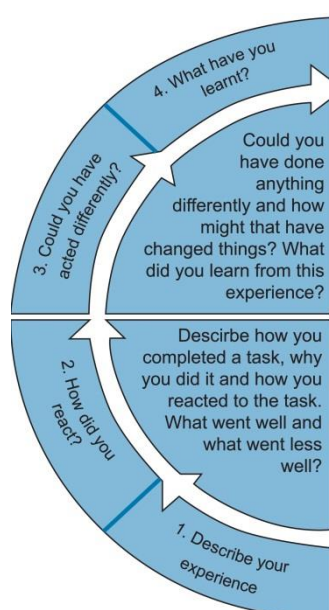
S	Situation	The interviewer wants you to present a recent challenge and situation in which you found yourself.
T	Task	What did you have to achieve? The interviewer will be looking to see what you were trying to achieve from the situation.
A	Action	What did you do? The interviewer will be looking for information on what you did, why you did it and what the alternatives were.
R	Result	What was the outcome of your actions? What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your objectives? What did you learn from this experience and have you used this learning since?

Figure 2

Reflections should be performed initially on events such as submitting an assignment or receiving feedback. As the student becomes used to reflective thinking they should be encouraged to carry out shorter reflections on a more regular basis. These reflections will relate to experiences primarily devoted to skills development, either professional personal or academic. If a student wishes to withhold an action plan, as it includes personal reflection not related to skills development this is wholly acceptable and you should consult your referral sheet if necessary.

The Action Plan Review Form can be used to summarise the important reflections relating to the Action Plan for use in PDA meetings.

Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring is a main prerogative of PDP to support with development. This will often take the form of a student-led and or staff led peer mentoring system.

Staff led - At the discretion of your department or school, senior students will have the opportunity to become Peer Mentors for first and second year's students. Although it would be the responsibility of the department and PDAs to initiate the recruitment of these mentors, it can offer more formalised benefits. E.g. The Peer Mentor can also be assigned to the group of students a PDA advises.

Student led - Peer mentoring can also take the form of current subject societies offering peer support both face to face and online. Student led activities like this should be encouraged as much as possible and staff should be willing to relinquish responsibility. Online society pages will be linked into the PDP My Place page which staff can highlight. Overall The Peer Mentor provides another link for the student and provides informal advice on university life from a student's perspective.

PDA Meetings

The PDA meetings are a crucial element of a student's personal development. These can feature as small group meetings; however this will vary by department. More meetings can be held if deemed necessary by the PDA or requested by the student. The following guidelines were designed for the 1st and 2nd year; however the overall framework can be tailored to suit PDA preference and student requirements.

It is recommended the first PDA meeting is a group meeting of four that the PDA will advise. The peer mentors can also attend if program is staff led. Appendix 1 shows questions that may be asked by a student and the appropriate source of information to refer them to in these cases. It is also recommended that students get at least 4 weeks gap between their Action Plan meeting and Action Plan Review meeting.

Table of Scenarios & Referrals

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I think I want to leave/take a year out/suspend studies	PDA, Course Director, The Advice Centre
I want to change my module choice/programme	PDA, Year Advisor, Course Director, The Advice Centre
I'm not coping with my workload/very worried about exams	PDA, Study Skills @ Strathclyde, Student Counselling, Ask, Nightline Student Service
I have a serious complaint about the teaching	Refer to Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Student Complaints, Head of Department
I've failed some/all of my modules	PDA, Course Director
I think I may be dyslexic	Disability Service
I declared that I had a disability but nobody seems to be prepared to help me	Departmental Disability Officer, Disability Service, Check the information is on PEGASUS
I'm being bullied/harassed (sexually/racially/religiously) by other students/my tutor	Dignity and Respect Adviser
I have nowhere to live/want to move	Accommodation Office
I'm in financial trouble Childcare arrangements have fallen through	Student Finance (Home students), The Advice Centre (International and EU students)
My part-time job leaves me too tired to do academic work	Careers Service, Student Finance (Home students), The Advice Centre (International and EU students)
My friend/ close relative is seriously ill	Student Health Service Student Counselling, Ask, Nightline Student Service
I feel so depressed all the time OR A student/parent is seriously worried about another student's state of mind	Student Counselling, Ask, Nightline Student Service
My friend/ close relative has just died	Student Counselling, Ask, Nightline Student Service
I've split up from my boyfriend/girlfriend My parents are divorcing I'm really homesick	Student Counselling, Ask, Nightline Student Service
A student starts to reveal some personal problems	Student Counselling, Ask, Nightline Student Service Perhaps also the Student Health Service
My visa is running out	The Advice Centre (Immigration issues)
I've been mugged/assaulted/burgled/raped	Police Student Counselling, Ask, Nightline Student Service
I've been too ill to attend or do academic work	Student Health Service, The Advice Centre Refer to the Policy on Mitigating Circumstances
A student comes to see you every week to ask you to look at his/her work	Explain the limits of the PDA scheme
A student's parent contacts you for an update on their child's academic progress	Data Protection Implications

Contact details for services:

Accommodation Office student.accomodation@strath.ac.uk
Ask ask@theunion.strath.ac.uk
Careers Service Tel: 548 4320
Disability Service disabilityservice@strath.ac.uk
Nightline Student Service vpsc@theunion.strath.ac.uk
Student Counselling student-counselling@strath.ac.uk
Student Finance s.finance@strath.ac.uk
Student Health Service studenthealth@strath.ac.uk
Study Skills @ Strathclyde studyskills@strath.ac.uk
The Advice Centre inforandadvice@strath.ac.uk
The Advice Centre (immigration issues) tier4@strath.ac.uk
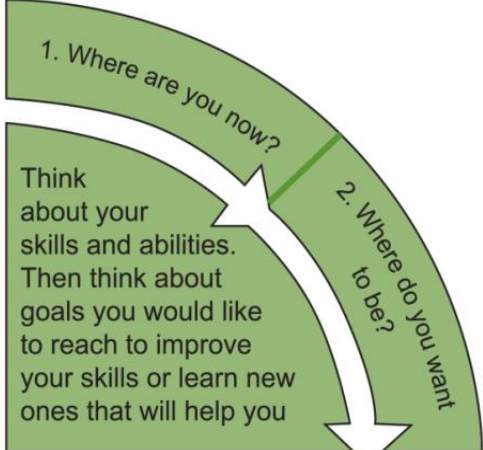
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Academic Context

Where am I now? (Please list your performance to date this year.)

- How do I rate my performance?
- Do I have any academic difficulties?

Class Code	Ind Mark (s)	Group Mark (s)	Exam	Final
??201	58, 51	66	50	55
??206	67	66		67
??	68		55	58

1. Where are you now?

Think about your skills and abilities. Then think about goals you would like to reach to improve your skills or learn new ones that will help you

2. Where do you want to be?

I think my performance has been okay this year but I have noticed that I am struggling in my exam grades. I am confident with my group work skills but would like to develop a more organised study plan to improve my marks in the next set of exams.

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Professional & Transferable Skills

Use the scale below to see how you comfortable you feel with skills used both in first year and as benchmarks for graduate employers.

	Confident	Reasonably confident	Not confident
Exploring & Creating Opportunities	○	○	●
Analytical thinking and Problem Solving	○	●	○
Group work	●	○	○
Subject Knowledge	○	○	●
Research& note taking	○	○	●
Essay/ report Writing	○	●	○
Reflective thinking	●	○	○
Numerical	●	○	○
Time Management	○	●	○

Personal

-What are your main interests and or extra-curricular activities? E.g. a band, writing, sports, union societies

　　-List one strength and weakness within a personal context and articulate why below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Hockey	Planning
This is a strength because I play hockey regularly and have made the second team for the University team. It is something I am passionate about and excel in. I work well as part of the team and communicate clearly to make successful plays and formations work well.	I often do not plan my work, I can get it done but the quality is not as consistent or done to any strict time scale. It often leads to late night work the day before submission working to the due date and writing off the cuff.

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2. Where do I want to be?
-What skills need improvement?
-Why do I feel those skills are important?

Specific   **M**easurable   **A**ttainable
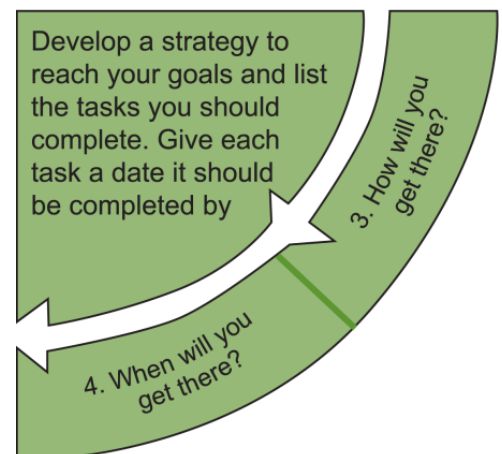**R**elevant   **T**ime-bound

I want to be able to be able to get a 65% or above mark for my next presentation by the end of Semester 2. Being better at presentations will increase my confidence and bring up my average grades. I'm also not great at organising myself which affects my ability to study. I want to become better organised in terms of my class notes and time-keeping.

3. How will I get there?
- What are the steps I should take to achieve my goals?

I could watch some examples of good presentations and see how people act, then try to copy their actions. I will also practice more but in front of people like my flatmates I could use the study skills information on the PDP page.

I will make a study plan before the exams start this year and I will stick to it. I will research the best way to make study plans so that I am most likely to stick to it.

Develop a strategy to reach your goals and list the tasks you should complete. Give each task a date it should be completed by

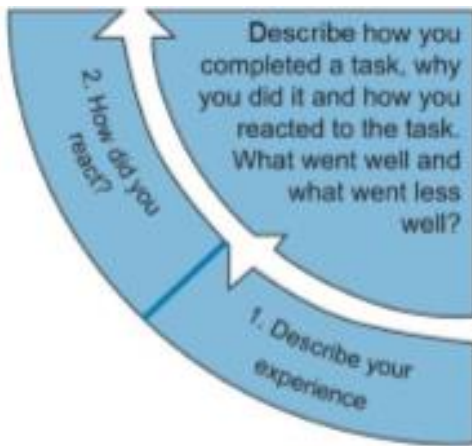3. How will you get there?

4. When will you get there?

4. When will I get there?
- When do I want to have achieved my goals?

I have a presentation in week 10 so I should have watched and practiced presentations by week 9. I should make a study plan by week 8 which will give me at least 1 month to study for exams.

What did I do?

Describe how you completed a task, why you did it and how you reacted to the task. What went well and what went less well?

2. How did you react?

1. Describe your experience

1. What was the goal that I set for myself?

> The goal I set for myself is to be able to be able to get a 65% or above mark for my next presentation by the end of Semester 2.
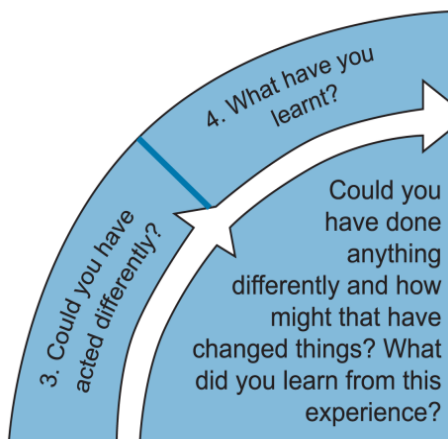
2. Rate the statements below

	Confident	Reasonably confident	Not confident
From my last PDA meeting I have reached my goal.	○	●	○
The Goals I set followed S.M.A.R.T.	○	●	○
Did I use existing university resources e.g. careers service, The Union?	●	○	○
Can I articulate these skills clearly using S.T.A.R. For employers?	●	○	○
Did I use networking skills or contact friends to achieve my goals?	●	○	○

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What have I learnt?

3. What positive things have I done? What mistakes did I make?
4. What do I have to improve in my next Action Plan?

| **S**ituation | **T**ask |
| **A**ction | **R**esult |

4. What have you learnt?

3. Could you have acted differently?

Could you have done anything differently and how might that have changed things? What did you learn from this experience?

I feel like the presentation I gave in Week 10 was much better than before because I didn't stutter as much as usual. My tutor said my eye contact can still get better, so I want to improve this next.

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