

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY FOR THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING ELEMENT OF PROGRESS FILES

Introduction

Edge Hill University regards Personal Development Planning (PDP) – the continuing process of review, reflection and action-planning - as an integral part of each learner's overall development. Institutional policy on PDP was formulated in the context of the report of the 1997 National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report) which recommended the introduction of Progress Files for all learners studying awards located within the UK's *Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications*¹. It is informed by the QAA's 'Personal Development Planning: Guidance for Institutional Policy and Practice in Higher Education' (2009)² which describes PDP as:

“A structured and supported process undertaken by a learner to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development... Effective PDP improves the capacity of individuals to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning and to understand what and how they learn. PDP helps learners articulate their learning and the achievements and outcomes of HE more explicitly, and supports the concept that learning is a lifelong and life-wide activity.”

PDP at Edge Hill University

Edge Hill's approach to PDP is consistent with the following principles:

- PDP is integral to learning at all levels and features in the full range of programmes leading to HE awards at sub-degree, undergraduate and Masters levels, and in all types of delivery and learning contexts.
- PDP is a structured and managed process in which learners receive guidance and support to engage with and reflect on their personal and professional development.
- PDP is an inclusive process, open to all learners.
- PDP involves self-reflection by the learner, the creation of personal records, and planning and monitoring progress towards the achievement of personal objectives.
- PDP enhances the capacity of individuals to communicate their learning to others, for example employers.
- Ultimate responsibility for deriving benefit from PDP resides with the individual learner.

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>.

² <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Personal-development-planning-guidance-for-institutional-policy-and-practice-in-higher-education.pdf>.

While maintaining an overall coherence, Edge Hill's PDP policy is sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the needs of individual programmes and learners and to incorporate the requirements of Professional Statutory and/or Regulatory Bodies where applicable. It also takes account of the fact that whilst having common purposes, the relevant curriculum elements associated with PDP may be referred to by different names³.

Minimum requirements

Experience of providing PDP has shown that it is most effective where delivered as a mainstream academic activity, supported by Institutional structures and valued by staff and with clear links to programme and module learning outcomes, assessment and feedback. Whilst integral to the development of each learner subjects will determine their own approach (model) for implementing PDP within programmes, e.g. 'discrete'⁴, 'embedded'⁵ or 'integrated'⁶. With equivalence of opportunity as its guiding principle, Edge Hill's PDP policy aims to provide a framework of minimum requirements that comprise:

- i) Ensuring that every student following an Edge Hill programme leading to an award located within the UK *Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications* (2014) has appropriate opportunities for PDP at all levels of their programme as part of a continuous process of personal review and development.
- ii) The primary objective of PDP will be to improve the capacity of individual learners to understand what and how they are learning and to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning, thus helping them to:
 - 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.
 - Encourage a positive attitude to learning throughout life.
- iii) Opportunities for PDP will be developed and monitored in the context of the most recent QAA guidance and any subsequent update to it.

Minimum Outcomes

Faculties ensure that on completion of their programmes learners have had the opportunity to engage in PDP at all levels, including Masters study. As such and with

³ A variety of terms is used to describe the process of reviewing and recording learning and achievement and action planning which reflects the objectives of PDP. These may include: personal development plan/ portfolio; personal and professional development portfolio; e-portfolio; learning log; and reflective diary.

⁴ Where PDP is conceived as additional to, and separate from, the curriculum. Because learner motivation is crucial this approach is generally seen to be more appropriate for higher-level study.

⁵ Where PDP is embedded in specific elements of a programme, which provide the main support for PDP. These may also serve to link with material covered elsewhere in the programme.

⁶ A 'whole-curriculum' approach where all or most parts of a programme involve activities which are aligned with PDP processes, including those in the workplace.

appropriate support they will have been able to:

1. Reflect upon, review, act upon and, where appropriate, record their personal and academic development and related action plans;
2. Create records containing information on the qualities and skills they can evidence and use for purposes such as applying for a job or a further course of study.

Information

Faculties ensure that learners commencing study at Edge Hill are made aware of:

- The rationale and opportunities for PDP, e.g. through induction and in programme handbooks;
- How PDP will be operationalised and recorded;
- The support that will be provided for them to engage with PDP.

Quality Assurance

Institutional validation and periodic review explore the approach taken by programmes to the delivery and quality assurance of PDP. Faculties use established monitoring procedures to assure themselves and the University that PDP is being implemented effectively at programme level.

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