PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (PPDP) FRAMEWORK

1. AIMS

An important element of Sheffield Hallam University's Education for Employment (e4e) strategy [1], and a key student entitlement, is the inclusion within the curriculum of personal and professional development planning, together with the provision of personalised academic tutorial support to monitor students' progress and support their transition to the world of work. The strategy also requires the provision of corporate but flexible processes for managing PPDP in ways that meet local needs. The PPDP framework sets how this will be achieved, and implementation will deliver real benefits for students, while ensuring that the University meets the QAA guidelines for institutional PDP policy and practice [2].

The Framework supports the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, and is based on existing experience, practice and expertise both across the University and across the Higher Education sector. It recognises the diversity of purpose and practice required and allows flexibility for each area to develop PPDP processes according to its own needs.

The Framework is intended to:

- ensure minimum level requirements and hence consistency for the support of all students and equity of opportunity for all students to engage with PPDP activities

- enable communication to staff and students about the nature and purpose of PPDP for students and the principles which underpin its use

- enable course teams to develop their own strategy and practice, and to articulate appropriate structures and systems for PPDP

- build on and extend existing good practice. It is anticipated that the minimum expectations set out in this Framework are/will be exceeded by course teams

- be consistent with the QAA policy statement for PDP [2] and the "Guidelines for HE Progress Files" [3].

2. A DEFINITION OF PPDP

Personal and Professional 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.*" [4]

3. PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF PPDP

Effective PPDP improves the capacity of individuals to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning and to understand what and how they learn. PPDP helps articulate learning and the achievements and outcomes of HE more explicitly, and supports the concept that learning is a lifelong and life-wide activity.

PPDP is based on the skills of reflection and action planning which are integral to knowing how to learn in different contexts and to transfer that learning throughout life. PPDP results in enhanced self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses and directions for change.

The process helps students 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 an individual, both personally and professionally, but also has benefits for others with whom

they interact. Through PPDP, individuals can become more self-aware, articulate, and better able to express and evidence own skills and abilities, leading to improved prospects for graduate employment.

PPDP is an underpinning process that helps students recognise their progress towards graduate outcomes, and to see the 'big picture'. It helps them identify areas for development, success and growth and enhance their chances of achieving their full potential.

A variety of curricular activities will be provided to help students develop PPDP (and other) skills, however this learning partnership can only be successful if students fulfil their responsibility to engage with these activities.

PPDP helps students:

- plan, integrate and take responsibility for their personal and academic development, identifying learning opportunities within their own academic programmes and extra-curricular activities, including work experience
- consider how engagement with these learning opportunities and experiences can improve their employability, prompting reflection on their ongoing career planning and development
- recognise, value and evidence their learning and development both inside and outside the curriculum
- be more aware of how they are learning, what different teaching and learning strategies are trying to achieve and how each activity helps build towards the complete skill set expected of a graduate from their programme of study.

PPDP helps academic staff by:

- enabling students to become more independent/autonomous learners
- providing a framework for discussion with each students about their progress
- providing a mechanism for relating the curriculum to the world beyond HE
- improving the quality of staff-student interaction through the personal tutoring system
- making more effective use of off-campus opportunities for learning, such as work placements, study abroad and extra- and co-curricular activities
- creating a mechanism through which career-related skills and capabilities can be recorded and, where appropriate, assessed
- improving their understanding of the development of individual students and their ability to provide more meaningful employment references on their behalf.

PPDP can help institutions, departments and support service staff by:

- facilitating more effective monitoring of student progress
- providing more effective academic support and guidance systems for all students
- enhancing their capacity to demonstrate the quality of support they are giving to students in external review processes
- supporting initiatives to enhance student retention and attainment
- providing opportunities for cross-institutional communication and discussion.
- creating a flexible process for providing input to the relevant section of the Higher Education Achievement Report. The specific mechanism for this will be developed when further clarity about implementation of the HEAR at SHU is available.

PPDP helps employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies by:

- providing a framework for the development of appropriate professional and work-based skills and competencies, including the ability of prospective employees to identify their unique abilities

- enabling prospective employees to articulate and evidence their competencies and demonstrate verifiable proficiency
- developing the ability of their graduate employees to continually reflect, review, and plan specific actions in relation to required learning and development.

4. CONTEXT

4.1 External Context -

An early impetus for the introduction of curricular processes to support reflection and action planning was the Dearing report (1997), which recommended the introduction of Progress Files. More recently, subject benchmark statements were published, all of which stress the importance of professional development skills. The QAA have published guidelines on Personal Development Planning, most recently updated in 2009 [2].

4.2 Internal Context

Within SHU, PPDP plays a pivotal role in meeting the various commitments of the Employability statement, the Employability strategy [1], the LTA strategy [5], the Student Experience Framework, the Career Management Skills Framework [6], the statement of graduate attributes [7] and the student charter [8]. The SHU Course Design and Approval process requires evidence of how PPDP, particularly reflection and action planning, will be embedded in all provision.

The delivery and management of PPDP may make use of Academic/Professional Tutors, other academic staff and Careers and Employment Advisors as appropriate. The particular approach adopted will be determined locally, in order to best meet student needs.

5. SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The PPDP Framework will normally apply to all award or credit-bearing programmes of study, (of at least one academic year of full-time study or part-time equivalent) for which the curriculum has been approved or validated by the University, whether delivered on or off campus. Variations in the method of delivery may apply to programmes delivered under collaborative arrangements with partners in the UK and Overseas, through distance learning and for students admitted with APEL.

6. CORE ELEMENTS OF THE PPDP FRAMEWORK

The SHU PPDP framework should encompass the following key features:
- Opportunities to engage in reflection and action planning will be provided to all students at each level of study, in all modes of learning.
- The rationale for engaging with this process will be explained to students at each level of study as appropriate. Information about the process should be made available to all students in electronic and/or hard copy format, normally in a course guide.
- Support structures and materials are provided to help all participants engage with the process.
- Implementation of PPDP, by each course team, will be formally monitored through the annual Routine Monitoring and Review process.

7. KEY PRINCIPLES

A variety of strategies exist to support PPDP, such as personal profiling, personal and academic records, development plans, progress files, learning portfolios, e-portfolios, learning logs, and diaries. Many of these terms emphasise that formal and informal records can help structure and support the process of learning, and evidence attainment.

- Where possible reflection and action planning should take place within the curriculum, in the disciplinary context and be represented by one or more module learning outcomes.
- Assessment of PPDP demonstrates its value, and can increase engagement, but it is recognised that this may not be possible or desirable in some areas.
- PPDP is a student focussed activity, supported by staff. It should be confidential between each student and the relevant staff team.
- The PPDP process is most effective if it is integrated into mainstream academic activity, and carried out frequently.
- Mechanisms for implementation and support of PPDP are agreed within departments or course teams, as appropriate, to ensure fitness of purpose.
- Students should reflect on their own learning both within and outside the curriculum, plan for their personal, educational and career development, and take action to develop further.
- The relationship of PPDP processes to curriculum design and assessment practices and requirements are shared with students.
- Opportunities for professional and careers advice and planning are integrated into the PPDP process at all levels.
- Guidance and development opportunities are provided for all staff involved in supporting PPDP, including personal/professional/academic tutors, Careers/Employment Advisors and workplace mentors, so that the support they provide is informed and effective.
- While all relevant staff may be involved, it is likely that Academic/Personal Advisors will focus on a student's personal and academic development and Careers/Employment advisors will focus primarily on career development. (The term 'Professional development' is taken to include both academic and career development.)

8. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this framework should not require additional PPDP activities to be developed if these are already taking place, wherever they may be in the curriculum. Students should, however, be very clear about what it is they are doing, why they are doing it and what benefits it will bring. It may be necessary for course teams to be explicit about this.

An accompanying University-wide electronic toolkit will provide

- staff with resources to help develop teaching materials, materials to support personal/professional tutorial sessions and guidance on course design to embed PPDP,
- students with resources to help them engage in PPDP processes,
- guidance materials on the various tools available to support student reflection, action planning and portfolio development,
- materials and an accompanying training package to support staff in their career planning and development conversations with students,
- indicative examples of PPDP activities at each level.

The implementation of academic support for PPDP, including the role of academic. Careers/Employment and/or personal advisors, will be determined locally within Faculties.

REFERENCES

[1]   The SHU Employability Strategy - Education for Employability (e4e), http://tinyurl.com/ch5dsgu

[2] "P*ersonal development planning: guidance for institutional policy and practice in higher education*", QAA, 2009. http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/PDPguide.pdf,

[3] "*Guidelines for HE Progress Files*", QAA, (2001)
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/progfile2001.pdf.

[4] "*PDP: Personal Development Planning*", QAA,
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/pdp/pdp

[5] SHU LTA Strategy - http://tinyurl.com/c7859lr

[6] SHU Career Management Skills Framework, http://tinyurl.com/bnu3lt9

[7] SHU Statement of Graduate Attributes,
https://staff.shu.ac.uk/sls/QESS/Documents/Graduate%20Attributes.pdf

[8] SHU Student Charter,
http://www.shu.ac.uk/university/overview/governance/studentcharter/index.html

[all web links last visited 28/02/2013]

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