



University
of Glasgow



Personal Development Plan

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Personal Development Plan

This student-staff partnership embeds graduate attributes in a Personal Development Plan framework within the Veterinary Biosciences Programme.

Context

Vet School / MVLS

Level 2-4

Subjects: Veterinary Biosciences

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Key features



Small group size (<25).



Focus on general awareness raising.

A sequence of seminars accompanied by self-led activity out of class. 3-4 one-hour sessions across years 2-4 of the programme.



Paper materials and the use of Mahara online portfolio which requires advanced technological competency and training for both students and staff (supported by learning technologist).



Partial impact on syllabus redesign.

Considerable impact on staff workload: feedback and assessment get embedded into the existing advisor system; significant staff input in the design, rollout, and student consultation process.

Moderate staff time required for assessment of student submissions through written feedback and verbal interaction with individual students.

Activity description



Rationale

The general aims of the PDP are to enhance awareness of GAs, to encourage engagement with personal feedback and reflective practice, to prompt action to improve skills and to evidence personal development and experience to facilitate transition to employment/further study application. The PDP aims to encourage all students to become more proactive in their development throughout the Programme and, in line with the underlying principles of the GAs framework, to appreciate that they offer more to a potential employer than a knowledge base in veterinary biosciences.

By the completion of the PDP students will be able to:

- critically evaluate their own work;
- apply reflective practice to enhance learning;
- plan appropriate action in response to reflection;
- demonstrate skills development throughout the Programme;
- present a lasting archive of personal accomplishments.



Activity description



Implementation

Currently the Personal Development Plan (PDP) is introduced to the second-year students in the context of an element of coursework that they will use to start compiling their PDP. The PDP is compiled and presented using the University's portfolio platform, Mahara. A facilitated discussion session is delivered in which students are asked to work in groups to identify links between the Graduate Attribute framework and their own activities (within and outwith University). In addition, a computer-based training session to familiarise the students with the Mahara platform and support them in the writing of their first reflection is delivered. The first stage of the PDP is then submitted for feedback through the Advisor of Studies system. In subsequent years, the PDP is then revisited in similar contexts with formative assessment and feedback encouraging development of the PDP across the later years of the Programme.

From 2019-20 a small portfolio of assets evidencing acquisition and development of graduate attributes will be summatively assessed in the final year of the Programme.





Reactions

As part of a student staff partnership on the implementation of a PDP in the Veterinary Biosciences Programme, students in Levels 2 and 3, who have experienced sessions and activities associated with the prototype PDP have been surveyed. Resistance to such activities has been reported in the literature but we have been encouraged by student feedback to date:

- PDP useful in transition to employment: Level 2 - % Yes 100, Level 3 - % Yes 79
- PDP useful for personal development in programme: Level 2 - % Yes 85, Level 3 - % Yes 77
- Appropriate to focus PDP on graduate attributes: Level 2 - % Yes 100, Level 3 - % Yes 100

In general, staff have reacted positively to the activity. The higher assessment load and learning curve for staff with an adviser role is of some concern and thus the scope of submissions has been limited to address this concern, but also to maximise impact for students without assessment overload. Verbal feedback and advice on PDP activities will be provided to individual students during advisor meetings that already take place every semester and it is hoped, in addition to avoiding greater time commitment by students and staff that the discussion offers added structure and value to advisor-student meetings.



Analysis & evaluation

In terms of the **design**, the Veterinary Biosciences PDP was developed using the BVMS (veterinary) degree portfolio as a model where submitted assets evidence acquired skills and reflection on performance based on day 1 Veterinary competences. The scale of the portfolio was reduced and the focus shifted to Graduate Attributes for Veterinary Biosciences students. The PDP was first rolled out to Level 2 students in 2016-17.

When it comes to the **implementation**, the PDP was developed by a core group of staff, academics and technologists, in a format designed to encourage engagement by the students in reflective learning, without assessment overload. This prototype PDP was subject to review in 2017-18 by student partners from Level 2, 3 and 4 classes and all Level 2 and 3 students were surveyed for input prior to formalisation of the PDP. Surveyed students indicated a general accord with the type and scope of PDP assessment in L2 and L3 and that planned for final year. They were also in accord with summative assessment in final year of the Programme.

Full evaluation and analysis of the project will be conducted once the project is completed.



Recommendations

Our experience to date has been positive and the PDP format is broadly transferable to any Programme. The GA give the PDP a clear framework to create a living document showcasing the student skillset.

References

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This resource is part of the 'Graduate Attributes – Roadmap for Staff' resource:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/leads/goodpractice/graduateattributes>

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