University of Glasgow

Developing a Professional Skills Portfolio for Psychology Students

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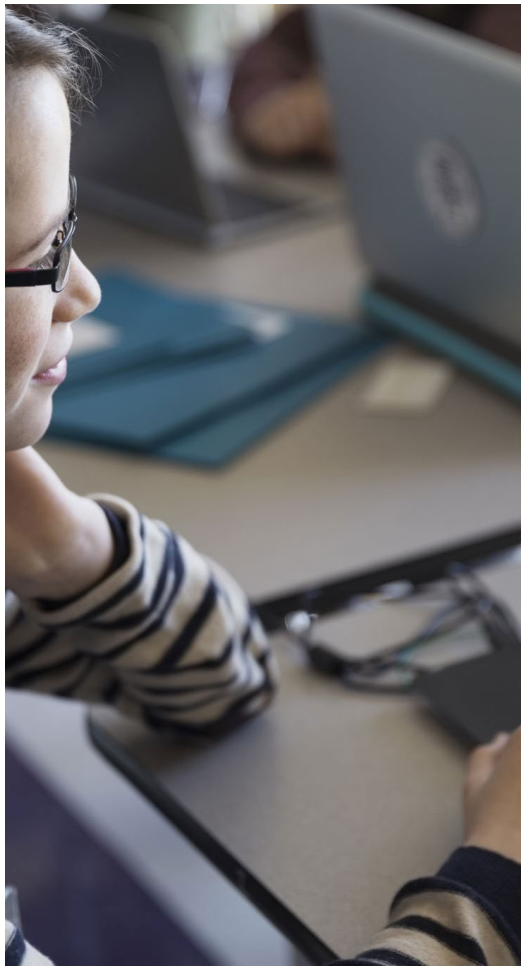
Summary



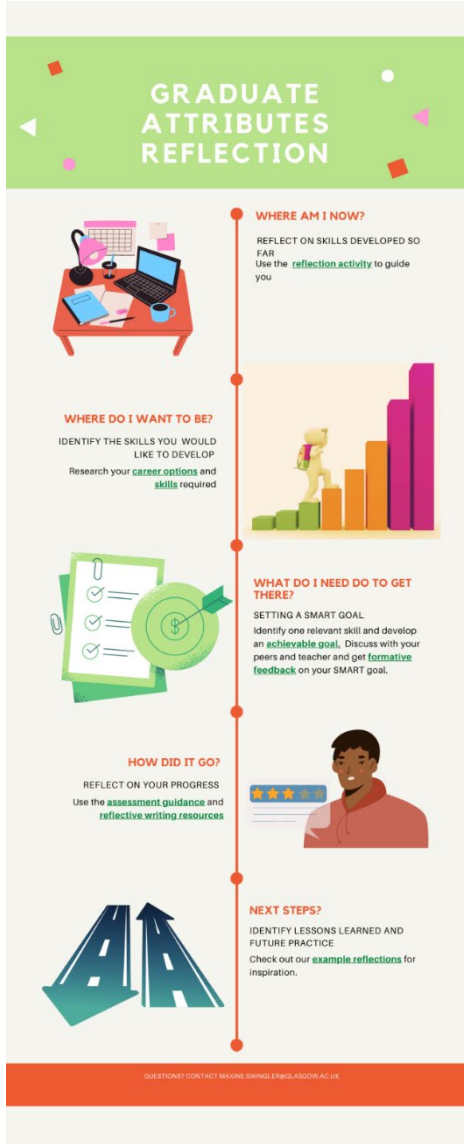
- A ten credit course available to honours UG and PGT conversion students.
- Supports students in:
  - Identifying and reflecting on their existing skills /experience.
  - Developing these skills and gaining relevant experience for their career goals.
  - Communicating professionally to a target audience
- Students collate a portfolio of 2 assessments and a rationale for choices based on their career goals

Context

- At least 80% of Psychology graduates in non-psychology careers (Morrison-Coulthard, 2016).
- Entry to professional psychology PG training is competitive
- QAA benchmark statement for Psychology and British Psychological Society accreditation emphasise development of *transferable skills* throughout the degree.

- Students need to reflect and articulate their transferable skills
- Opportunities to research career options
- Plan for post-graduate career development

Assessment 1: Graduate Attributes reflection



- In class reflective activity using U of G Graduate Attributes
- Set a SMART goal
- Receive formative feedback
- Reflect on progress after 5 weeks.
- Plan for future skill development

Assessment 2: Volunteer/Work Reflection

- Scaffold reflection on previous work experience
- Reflect on a “critical incident”
- Receive formative feedback
- Contextualize their reflection within their professional development.

Assessment 3: Succeeding as a Candidate

- Evaluate example CVs and cover letters in class
- Alumni speakers share their career journeys
- Students choose a currently advertised job or PG course available to psychology graduates.
- Develop a 2-page CV and cover letter/personal statement.
- Receive feedback
- Signpost support from U of G Careers and BPS.

Evaluation

- A small increase in students' self-efficacy and awareness of their skills after engaging in the GAs reflection activity.
- Allow flexibility in the choice of skills, experience and career pathways
- Providing students with a framework for the assessments, exemplars and formative feedback is key
- Researching job / course specifications motivated students to seek out opportunities and rethink previous career plans.

It did a good job at making me focus on my future and investigate paths that I would not have done had it not been assessed

It gave me an opportunity to really understand and see what experience I have

Having not been tested in this way before I felt very out of my depth. It felt as though the more abstract options like the smart goals were more difficult to gage in terms of what makes it 'good'…… I think this is a bit of a shame as reflection is an important part of being a psychologist.

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Acknowledgements

Dr Steven McNair- Graduate Attributes and Psychology Posters
Dr Archie Roy- CVs and Applications assessment

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