**Personal Development Planning**

**Scope**
All programmes leading to a City University London award. This policy will apply for partnership programmes unless equivalent arrangements have been specifically agreed between City and the partner institution, in this instance, details will be set out in the student handbook.

**Date approved/re-approved**
September 2009
Updated October 2012

**Date for review**
To be reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates of roles and responsibilities by Education and Student Committee, as required.
Personal Development Planning

What is PDP?

Personal Development Planning (PDP) 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’¹. It is owned by the student and supported by members of staff and the University.

PDP sits at the heart of learning and the enhancement of learning. It involves thinking and planning ahead, acting on plans and reflecting on what has been achieved. It also involves recording these thoughts, actions and reflections. PDP is unique and personal and relies on the engagement of each individual student and member of staff to be successful.

Our Learning and Teaching Strategy recognises the importance of the underpinning aims of PDP in its commitments to:

- Ensure personal development planning and reflective learning are used to maximum relevant effect within programmes and awards.
- Embed personal development planning and professional and career planning into curricula.
- Ensure all students are provided with effective and appropriate levels of student support, both academic and pastoral, and enhance the coherence of support provision across the University.
- Ensure all students are taught the skills that will enable them to succeed in the University environment.

The report arising from the Review of Undergraduate Education emphasised the importance of personal development planning within a student’s educational offering and its role in the development of professional career graduates. PDP, including its incorporation of professional career planning, is one of the components considered to be a core of our undergraduates’ educational experiences.

Why is PDP important?

PDP provides benefits to students, staff and the University as a whole. These are listed in Appendix 1.

PDP at City University London

PDP should be clearly associated with students’ programmes of study and should support and enhance their educational experiences.

PDP has a clear definition but can incorporate a variety of delivery mechanisms which may either be highlighted as PDP or called something different. As such students may be offered, and participate in, personal development activities that may take various forms and titles². This policy supports a consistent but flexibly applied approach to the implementation of PDP.

¹ QAA publication: personal development planning: guidance for institutional policy and practice in higher education (2009)
² Some alternative names for PDP activities include, but are not limited to, learning logs, study skills development, reflective journals, learning portfolios, e-portfolios, progress files, the opportunity to undertake private reflection to support development (e.g. in performance), and personal and academic records.
All Schools and departments will provide activity in line with the following principles:

- Students are made aware of the PDP opportunities available to them throughout their programme of study, particularly at the start of the programme and the start of each academic year.
- Students are informed of the benefits of PDP and the rationale for the way in which they are being supported in PDP processes.
- Students are informed about the various support mechanisms available to them in their use of PDP, including in recording PDP.
- Where possible PDP should be customised and embedded within programmes.
- Where PDP activities are called something other than PDP students should be made aware that this represents a PDP activity.
- Staff who will be supporting PDP activity are provided with appropriate guidance and development to enable them to undertake this effectively.
- Where programmes have strong links to professions with CPD mechanisms and components integrated within them (for example the NHS’s portfolios), staff should aim to link PDP-style activities in programmes with the CPD activities students will undertake once they are in the workplace.

PDP activities should be recorded where possible. Students are responsible for this but the University and programme teams will provide information and support.

Numerous recording mechanisms are available, some of which are embedded within programmes. These include, but are not limited to, our e-portfolio system, personal and academic records and learning logs or reflective portfolios. In some instances, for example where PDP is continuous or where it occurs as a result of other learning and teaching processes, recording may be more challenging or less transparent but should still be facilitated in an appropriate way.

**Implementation of PDP**

All undergraduate, postgraduate and research students will have the opportunity to engage in PDP during their studies. PDP opportunities should be appropriate to the level at which students are studying. Some non-exclusive models for providing PDP opportunities are:

1. Embedding activities that fulfil PDP requirements within individual programme or module curricula. This can take place either in a single module or throughout the course of a programme of study and will be strengthened by the inclusion of PDP in the learning outcomes of the programme or module.  
   In this way PDP actively supports programme content and is recognised as directly relevant to the students. This form of PDP is often the most effective but the least signposted because it is fully integrated within programmes. Where possible, it should still be signposted as PDP.

2. Providing one or more discrete, but compulsory, PDP-type modules for students to study at stages of their programmes. This may be taught in conjunction with the development of other underlying core skills such as team-working and good academic practice.  
   Here PDP is linked to a programme of study but may not be seen as fully embedded because it is taught discretely from programme content.

---

3 Currently PebblePad, a personal learning space which is personally managed and private, although content can be shared with others.
3. Signposting students towards tools that support PDP activity and providing students with information on why the tools are of benefit, what the tools do and sources of further support⁴. Key tools are Improving my Success (the online PDP tool that is available to all students) and Upgrade (the Library and Information Services module that facilitates the development of key skills). Here PDP is a separate and individual activity that students undertake independently of their programme of study. It is recognised that this model may not be as effective as others although if introduced appropriately it should be seen as a mechanism by which students can learn from and reflect on their educational experiences.

Given the diversity of our students, disciplines, programme structures and professional, regulatory and statutory bodies, Schools, departments and programme teams should incorporate PDP in ways that best suit their and their students’ needs; they can choose which, or which combination, of the models provided to use in programmes.

The following are also important for the implementation of PDP opportunities:
- All programmes will include, promote and support the reflective and planning skills on which PDP is based.
- The CCSD will support students in PDP and particularly in PDP that relates to their professional development.
- The Student Centre will support students in resolving issues and developing solutions to problems identified through PDP.

**Responsibilities for PDP**

Each student is responsible for their own PDP. Students are expected and encouraged to participate in the PDP opportunities made available to them and to use PDP to help enhance their own reflective and analytical skills and support their current and future planning needs.

Personal tutors, placement supervisors, the CCSD and other student support services are responsible for supporting students in various aspects of their PDP. More specifically, due to the role that personal tutors play in the provision of academic, pastoral and professional support to students, PDP and personal tutoring can be closely linked activities that complement each other. For example:
- PDP can provide a mechanism by which personal tutors and students can develop a proactive and interactive relationship.
- In instances where PDP activities are not embedded into the curriculum, personal tutors may be important in the promotion and provision of PDP opportunities.
- Personal tutors may signpost students to appropriate individuals for further advice (for example the CCSD and other careers services) and may provide references for future student employment applications, although they are not expected to provide specialist careers advice.

In some instances other individuals, for example PDP tutors, may fulfil this role.

Programme directors and teams are responsible for providing students with the opportunities to engage in PDP activities, normally via one of the models listed above.

---

⁴ Those who provide academic and pastoral support for students, including module and programme leaders, personal tutors, placement advisers, mentors and the CCSD, will be important in supporting students who engage with PDP via this route
Schools are expected to monitor PDP activities via the normal programme review processes, including annual programme evaluations and periodic reviews.

**Appendix 1 – why PDP is important**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For students</th>
<th>For staff</th>
<th>For the University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supports the development of an independent learning approach</td>
<td>Enables students to become critical, reflective, independent and analytical thinkers</td>
<td>Is an important element of City’s mission, particularly given the University’s focus on employability and its role as the University for business and the professions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assists in career development and success</td>
<td>Provides a framework to help inform students’ academic and career choices and to help students plan, work towards and realise their personal, educational and career goals</td>
<td>Aids student retention and assists student transition from school to university and from undergraduate to postgraduate study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports the development and embedding of key skills</td>
<td>Provides a framework for tutorial and other support meetings by acting as a basis for discussions on an individual’s learning and development</td>
<td>Enables students to become more rounded individuals and supports their overall development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables the articulation and achievement of personal targets</td>
<td>Provides a useful tool for reference writing</td>
<td>Increases the likelihood of student success in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a process for reflecting and acting on strengths and areas for development</td>
<td>Mirrors staff CPD processes</td>
<td>Embeds the concept of lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a mechanism to help develop an understanding of and ability to enhance employability skills</td>
<td>Provides one mechanism by which staff can make the outcomes of learning explicit and transparent</td>
<td>Enables the University to meet student expectations where students are bringing personal development plans and e-portfolios with them from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a way of recording personal and professional development and recording the outcomes of learning</td>
<td>Provides a mechanism for linking programme learning to wider life and learning experiences</td>
<td>Provide students with experiences of PDP-style processes that will be of relevance to them in the workplace, or that may link to the opportunity to develop professionally-recognised skills and knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>