Personal Development Planning Policy

Personal Development Planning in Bachelors and Foundation Degree Programmes

1. Introduction
1.1 The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for the current period commits us to the introduction of Personal Development Planning (PDP) to "encourage motivation and engagement with learning, support deep approaches to learning and develop reflective, more autonomous learning". Further, it will contribute to "an individual’s concern for their own employability and to achieving appropriate learning outcomes, skills and capabilities", and to their "ability to review and reflect on their achievements, develop their approaches to learning, and establish developmental objectives and map and follow a route to their attainment".

1.2 In the “Guidelines for HE Progress Files” published by UUK et al in 2001, PDP is defined as "a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning and/or achievement and to plan their personal, educational and career development. The primary objective of PDP is to improve the capacity of individuals to understand what and how they are learning, and to review, plan and take responsibility for their own learning".

1.3 PDP offers a means to effectively incorporate Careers Education, Information and Guidance within programmes of study.

1.4 In its guidance to programme teams on the requirements for re-approval of undergraduate programmes for delivery within a semester year structure, the Redesign Advisory Group required that programme teams should “ensure that documentation presented for re-approval includes information on reflective learning”. Furthermore, it recommended “essential steps” for programmes to incorporate PDP including its introduction in induction programmes and basic modules, and including use of on-line personal development planning facilities (“My PDP”) which will become available through the Personal Information Portal (PIP) from 2005/06.

Full incorporation and implementation of PDP, however, now requires further development to be undertaken.

2. PDP and Programme Specifications
2.1 Programme Specifications make transparent to students, and to prospective students, what knowledge and understanding as well as skills and capabilities they can achieve as outcomes of programmes of study – the “graduate profile” which is developed with reference to external benchmarks as
appropriate. The Specifications make clear the contribution that individual modules make to this profile and, at both programme and module levels, the learning and teaching approaches which support the achievement of learning outcomes and the assessment methods chosen to validate these achievements.

2.2 Programme specifications should make clear the skills which a student can expect to have achieved on obtaining an award, and the level and degree of complexity they will be required to demonstrate. The programme specification must also make clear the modules which provide opportunities to practise particular skills, those in which students can expect formative feedback on their skills development, and those in which summative assessment of skills is incorporated. Summative assessment should normally be designed to validate the achievement of skills at the level and complexity which characterises an award.

2.3 Such clarity is essential for the implementation and full incorporation of PDP in programmes of study, demonstrating the achievements of individuals which will be validated by assessment.

2.4 Individual modules should not be “wish lists” of learning outcomes, including a long list of skills. They should be designed to contribute to the “graduate profile” of the programme of study, and to ensure that the development of particular skills is facilitated through the learning and teaching activities selected, that feedback on skills development is given where appropriate, and that achievement of the skills is validated by appropriate methods of assessment.

2.5 It is essential that an holistic view of skills development, feedback and assessment is taken at programme level.

2.6 Students will develop knowledge and understanding, as well as skills and capabilities, outside the formal curriculum and these learning outcomes also contribute to personal development.

3. Implementing PDP

3.1 PDP should be incorporated within programmes of study. Thus the programme induction and Stage 1 modules will introduce PDP, provide opportunities to consider personal development and obtain feedback, and provide opportunities for summative assessment of achievements. These elements must be planned at programme level.

3.2 Programme Specifications and documentation should make clear that significant PDP activity is embedded within the curriculum. It is recommended that at least three of the following should be undertaken by a student during their programme of study:

- Production of a reflective statement including evidence of the acquisition of professional and/or generic skills within the curriculum and outside it
• Production of a reflective statement about development of understanding of and competence in subject/discipline knowledge, skills and discourse
• Production of a reflective statement about the development of personal attributes within the curriculum and outside it
• Production of a reflective statement about their own approaches to learning, including the identification of current strengths and weaknesses
• Development of an action plan to address weaknesses in approaches to learning
• Analysis of one or more career possibilities in relation to their current skills, knowledge, attributes, experience and interests

3.3 Personal Tutors will provide essential support for PDP. This will be reflected in a common tariff for Personal Tutoring within Personal Workload Plans. Personal Tutors will maintain regular contact with tutees and provide opportunities for them to meet with their Tutors (on an individual or small group basis) on at least two occasions each year to discuss their personal development and achievements, present evidence of development and receive feedback, and consider planning for future personal development. Personal Tutors should encourage reflection by students on the opportunities for personal development which are available within their programme of study, encourage the use by students of the 'My PDP' facility available through the PIP, encourage the use of Learning Support facilities when appropriate, and encourage engagement with careers advice and guidance available in the University. Guidance on the Personal Tutor's role in relation to PDP will be set out in the 2005/06 edition of ‘Supporting Students: A Staff Handbook’; information about Learning Support will also be included in this publication.

3.4 All graduating students (see Appendix 1) will have an opportunity to provide evidence of engagement with PDP, together with evidence that they have an overview of their personal, academic and skills development, by producing a Personal Development Statement for approval by their Personal Tutor (but see Appendix 1). A Personal Development Statement should include a student's reflection on their own preparedness for the next stage in their life and/or career. The recommended components of a Personal Development Statement are set out in Appendix 2; detailed guidance on the criteria that should be met in order for a Personal Development Statement to be approved will be set out in the 2006/07 (the first year when PDSs will be submitted) edition of ‘Supporting Students: A Staff Handbook’.

3.5 The task of composing a Personal Development Statement will be facilitated by the provision of a web-based Personal Development Planner, ‘My PDP’, that can be accessed through PIP. This will enable students to locate relevant learning outcomes, encourage them to keep a record of brief evidential statements about their development based on modules taken, and help them to keep a similar record of their development outside the curriculum. There will be a facility to email statements, as they are developed, to Personal Tutors in order to obtain feedback and/or to obtain approval of any completed Personal Development Statement that an undergraduate chooses to submit.
3.6 A staff-only access facility will be available for recording approval by Personal Tutors of any Personal Development Statements that are submitted to them; this will then generate appropriate text on graduate transcripts. This confirms that the student has presented satisfactory evidence of engagement in the PDP process; it does not confirm that, say, a CV presented as part of a PDS, is necessarily suitable for immediate presentation to an employer.

4. Approval of PDP incorporation within programmes of Study

4.1 Plans for the incorporation of PDP in all programmes with effect from Semester 1 2005/06 will be considered for approval as an element of the annual review of Schools in Semester 1 2004/05

The following will be required for approval:

- Programme Specifications amended to indicate the incorporation of PDP. (A generic reference to PDP will be incorporated into all programme specifications)
- Explicit reference to PDP and the opportunities available to students to engage with it, in all programme and module documentation
- Explicit reference to the role of the Personal Tutor and other support for PDP, within all programme and module documentation

4.2 Advice to Programme Teams on the incorporation of PDP will be available from the Undergraduate programme Re-design Advisory Group (RAG), the Academic Policy and Quality Unit (APQU), and the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD)

Keith H Cooper, Head of Student Services. April 2005
Policy approved by Academic Board, AY2004/05

Appendix 1
Students who will have the opportunity to present a Personal Development Statement (PDS):

- All Full-Time and Part-time Undergraduates who enter Year 1 of a degree programme from September 2005
- All Full-Time and Part-Time Undergraduates who enter Stage II with credit from September 2006.
- All Foundation Degree students who begin programmes from September 2005

Exceptions:

- Undergraduates who exit at the Cert HE or Dip HE stage
- Students on Graduate Diploma programmes
- Undergraduates on programmes where a ‘PDS Equivalent’ activity is a requirement within one or more compulsory modules. These will include; all undergraduates studying programmes within the School of Health and Social Care; all undergraduates on the Part-Time BA Post-Compulsory Education; all undergraduates on the BA Primary
Education; all undergraduates on the Work-based BA Primary Education.

- In addition, undergraduates enrolled on Publishing (single honours) will study a Stage 2 module that will include PDS Equivalent activity and are therefore unlikely to elect to write a PDS using ‘My PDP’. Similarly, all undergraduates who elect to register for a Careers module will probably not find it necessary to compile an additional PDS outside that module. This list will be extended whenever additional modules incorporating a compulsory ‘PDS Equivalent’ component are approved.

**Appendix 2**

A satisfactory PDS (minimum of 1200 words) should include items 1, 2 and 3 or 4 and four items chosen from numbers 5 to 13:

**Compulsory**

1. Understanding of ways in which subject understanding and skills might be applied in employment. This should include evidence of some awareness and understanding of the concept of so-called ‘generic’ or ‘transferable’ skills (in particular, the six skills of this kind which are required learning outcomes in the UMP). If a student has no current plans to enter employment, then he/she should indicate the relationship of this understanding and skills to their own life plans and interests.

2. Understanding of strengths and weaknesses in personal attributes and qualities, together with an action plan for addressing any perceived weaknesses and/or building on recognised strengths.

3. A draft CV together with evidence of understanding that CVs may need to be prepared for different audiences.

**OR**

4. Awareness of programme specifications and examples of evidence (including that which might be presented at selection interviews by those planning to go on to employment or further study) to demonstrate the extent to which related learning outcomes have been achieved.

**Employment/Further Study**

5. An indication of the reasons for a decision to undertake further study.

6. A demonstration of some understanding of the job market(s) a student is planning to enter/consider immediately or after a period of, say, world travel or further study.

7. Evidence of some understanding of employer selection procedures in preferred/chosen area(s) of employment.
8. Credible and substantive evidential statements about 'generic' or 'transferable' skills that have been acquired through the curriculum (including work placements) and/or outside it.

9. Some understanding of the problematical aspects of transferring skills to the workplace e.g. some skills are context dependent.

**Personal**

10. Some understanding of the concept of continuous or life-long learning in general and/or its relationship to any relevant Professional Development in their area of preferred/planned employment.

11. A listing of what are perceived as the most important personal achievements together with an explanation of how and why they came about.

12. An evaluative statement about the usefulness or personal relevance of the Brookes approach to Personal Development Planning.

13. Some awareness of the impact of learning experiences on the understanding and values that a student brings to their role as citizen.