

## Setting objectives and writing action plans

Using ePDP to help you keep a record of your various academic, work-related and extra curricular experiences, and to identify the skills you're gaining, is an important element of your personal development planning. Action plans, though, are the other vital element of personal development planning, and are all about planning what you want to do in future. You may want to start something new, build on existing strengths or work on skills you need to improve.

Creating an action plan for yourself will help you to be proactive in shaping discussions with your tutor and may enable you to get far more out of tutorials. Writing an action plan is a skill in itself, though, so make sure you know what's involved...

### Ingredients for a good action plan

<b>Task</b>	<b>Tips</b>
<p><b>1. Set 'objectives' for yourself - ie the 'bottom line' of what it is you want to achieve</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on what you've learned about yourself already – at School, in college and in your home life...Why not start by having a go at the interactive Personal Tendencies Questionnaire at <a href="http://www.exeter.ac.uk/employability/teamdev">http://www.exeter.ac.uk/employability/teamdev</a></li> <li>• Explore the learning and skills resources and training opportunities provided by your School, the Students' Guild, and via the <a href="http://www.exeter.ac.uk/employability">Employability</a> website at <a href="http://www.exeter.ac.uk/employability">www.exeter.ac.uk/employability</a> .</li> <li>• Be realistic! Think about what is feasible to achieve in the expected timeframe – for example, the time between now and the likely timing of your next tutorial. And don't set yourself <i>too many</i> objectives!</li> <li>• Make sure your objectives are relevant to your longer term aims – think about the kinds of skills and competencies that might be important to a future employer, for example.</li> <li>• Ensure they are clearly worded, realistic and achievable.</li> </ul> <p><i>Example: 'Increase my confidence in group situations.'</i></p>
<p><b>2. Define your success criteria – ie How will you know whether you've achieved a given objective</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pin yourself down to the detail here - describe <i>how you will know</i> that you have achieved your objectives.</li> <li>• Identify your success criteria <i>before</i> decisions are made on the actions to be taken.</li> <li>• Take care over wording, and try not to confuse success criteria with the overarching objectives.</li> </ul> <p><i>Example: 'Ability to conduct final presentation for Module X without feeling nervous!'</i></p>

<p><b>3. Identify and pinpoint individual responsibility for actions – What you are actually planning to do?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify exactly what is to be done and who will do it.</li> <li>• Are there others who can support you here?</li> <li>• Ensure your actions are realistic and achievable within the resources available</li> </ul> <p><i>Example: 'Organise study group so that I can get to know other students on the module and practise talking in front of others.'</i></p>
<p><b>4. Resources - What you will need in order to ensure your actions are successful.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about space, time and financial requirements.</li> <li>• Think about the appropriateness of resources you're planning to use.</li> </ul> <p><i>Example: 'One seminar room – for an hour each week.'</i></p>
<p><b>5. Target dates for achievement - By when will you have completed the action/s?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about these when the objective is framed.</li> <li>• Ensure that target dates are realistic and manageable!</li> </ul> <p><i>Example: 'End October 2008'</i></p>