Student User Guide to Exeter's ePDP system

Exeter's *'ePDP'* resource is accessible via the MyExeter portal (under the Student Record tab), and is available to all students at Exeter, whether you are an undergraduate, taught masters or graduate research student. It is a national requirement for all universities to provide a tool that enables students to create and store records relating to their Personal Development Planning (PDP).

Using the Self Appraisal and Action Planning parts of ePDP can be particularly helpful as a way of preparing for meetings with your personal tutor. However, you can also use this resource to create a CV and personal statements.

Unless you 'flag' your entries as 'private', your tutor or supervisor can access and view your ePDP records through their staff view of the Student Record system, and this can also help in the compilation of references for you in the future. It is *your* responsibility, however, to keep your records up-to-date.

Accessing the resource for the first time

If you haven't done so already, it is important that you familiarise yourself first with the general information about PDP at:

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/development/taughtstudents/personaldevelopmentplanning

1. Go to my.exeter.ac.uk and log in using your University username and password.
2. Once logged in to the portal, click on the Student Record tab.
3. Click on the link within the Student Record page entitled 'My ePDP'.
4. Read the opening statements and if you are happy to create an account, activate your ePDP.
5. Follow the instructions until you arrive at your purple PDP 'home page'
6. If you have any problems accessing this resource, please contact: helpdesk@exeter.ac.uk

Using the ePDP resource

The ePDP resource is designed to take you through a two-part process of Self Appraisal and Action Planning. You are also encouraged to use the Personal Statement facility as a summary of what you've achieved over the course of a complete academic year.

Important
- Your tutor/supervisor will be able to view your ePDP records at any time, by logging in securely to the Student Record System; however, bear in mind that your tutor may have a large number of tutees, and cannot be expected to provide detailed feedback on your ePDP records.
- You can keep private any entries you wish to remain personal to you, by clicking on the checkbox provided.

- You can also click on an 'Include in CV' checkbox, when creating self appraisal records. This will help you to build up an automatically generated CV.
- The ePDP system is designed to time-out 1.5 hours after log-in. You will receive a warning when this is about to happen, reminding you to save your work.

Part 1: Self Appraisal

Personal Development Planning is about building on experiences and skills gained in a whole range of situations – from academic and work-related settings to extra-curricular activities and interests.

Using ePDP, you can create records of *all* of the various situations in which you're gaining important transferable skills. However, your personal tutor will be particularly interested in your academic progress, so

- If you are an undergraduate or postgraduate taught student, it's important to reflect on either your experience of the modules you are studying or your achievement/performance within a given period of time. You can use the drop-down lists to help you.

- If you are a postgraduate research student, you will need to categorise/name these experiences in your own terms (eg 'First meeting with my supervisor', 'Effective Researcher Programme workshop', 'Preparing for my viva' etc).

Each of the Self Appraisal boxes visible on your ePDP home page works in the same way, with three key steps to a thorough appraisal of one's achievements and skills.

STEP 1: Provide a description/name/ title for your experience

Use the drop-down list of modules/terms/semesters or create your own name/title for your experience (eg 'Team Development Programme', 'Effective Researcher Programme Workshop on ……'). Complete the fields as appropriate. Please note that date fields are not mandatory, but may be useful if you wish to create a CV from your ePDP records. This first screen is designed to elicit only brief information on your achievements – so keep your inputs fairly brief!

Save your entry.

STEP 2: Reflect/comment further on your experience

Here you are prompted to describe in more detail a particular 'learning highlight', gained through this experience, perhaps a particular topic, event or incident that has been particularly significant in relation to this module or other academic experience, that you've enjoyed or been challenged by.

This might be something like your first experience of giving a presentation in a seminar, or your part in undertaking a group project. This is your opportunity to reflect on that experience and what you gained from it. The STAR technique might help you to do this:

- S – What was the Situation?
- T – What was the Task?
- A – What Action did you take?
- R – What was the Response or Result?

Whilst describing your experience in these terms, you may realise that you need to do something in order to move things forward or to improve/enhance your performance or personal development. If you note this as an 'Action' using the field provided, this will appear in your Action Plan.

Save your entry.

STEP 3: Add a skill

Click on this link to identify the key skills you feel you gained through this experience. You are advised to view the skills from the four 'skill contexts' (Self, Others, Task, Information) and pick just two or three that you feel this experience has particularly helped you to develop or practise. Note that you are also encouraged to provide the 'evidence' that you have acquired this skill. For example, how would you demonstrate to a prospective employer that you have this skill?

Save your entry.

Important
- The process of adding details of work-related and extra-curricular experiences to your ePDP is based on the same stages of Describe – Reflect – Add Skills. Remember that involvement in such activities is increasingly sought after by employers looking for additional experience and value in potential employees.
- By clicking on the View option from your ePDP home page, note that you can delete entries as well as add reflective comments and skills at a later date, if you so wish.

Part 2: Action Planning

If you have undertaken Self Appraisal thoroughly, completing Steps 1, 2 and 3, you will find your Action Plan already populated. If so, you can add other items to your Action Plan, if you so wish. If not, you can still create an Action Plan.

You may have other matters you wish to discuss with your tutor, and you can make a note of them on this screen as a reminder. You can also add intended Actions you wish to take that do not necessarily relate to an experience detailed in any of the experiences you've described in your Self Appraisal.

Once you've completed your Action Plan, don't forget to save it!

Part 3: Personal Statement

You are advised to record here a summary of your experiences, usually at the end of each academic year. The information recorded here should be a succinct statement of your main achievements during the course of the past few months, and may be used to inform references that you might require in the future.

More information about writing personal statements is accessible via a link from the 'Add a Personal Statement' screen or from the 'Resources to Help You' section of the general PDP information webpages mentioned above.

Part 4: Reports

The reports section enables you to print out your ePDP records at different levels of detail.

If you wish to use your ePDP records to inform discussions at personal tutorials or meetings with your supervisor, it is suggested that you click on the 'View / print (non-private) data' option and take along a copy for you and a copy for your tutor.

Your tutor can obviously view your ePDP records online and can also post a brief comment, if s/he so wishes, but many prefer to have a hard copy to hand during tutorials.

We hope you find this resource useful. Good luck!