**Ten things teaching staff can do to support student PDP and employability**

1. **Raise awareness of Personal Development Planning/employability from first contact**

Signal that employability and continuing development are valued on the course by bringing these to students’ attention from the first opportunity.

1. In the prospectus and at Open days, highlight opportunities for developing professionally and personally that are provided through the course and at the university/college more generally. Provide information about the kinds of jobs that are open to graduates of the course, both typical jobs and those that give an indication of the wider range of opportunities.
2. If you interview students, ask them what they plan to do after they leave the course. Show interest in their ambitions.
3. If you are using *Skills for Success* as a core text, recommend that prospective students browse through the book before term/semester starts. Encourage them to consider how they might use their time on the course to build their CV using ***Take and make opportunities,*** *Skills for Success* pages 26-7.
4. **Integrate Personal Development Planning/employability at each stage of learning**

Students will need to focus on various aspects of PDP at diifferent times, depending on the course of study and their experience of academic study and employment. It isn’t something that is delivered once at the start or end of their time in higher education. Students need to deepen their understanding and build skills over time, as well as respond to changes in the labour market and in their own aspirations. Also, when PDP is referred to at different points throughout their studies, it helps to demonstrate to students that their continual development and their aspirations are considered important.

1. Create opportunities to raise and discuss employability and personal development at the beginning of each academic year/ level of study, and at distinct stages of the course such as prior to a work placement. Clarify how each part of their course supports specific aspects of development - such as through group assessments that provide the chance to develop team-skills, or longer assignments that require project management.
2. Consider with students how aspects of PDP such as self-evaluation, reflection, goal-setting, action-planning and monitoring of progress can be applied to improve their academic performance and raise their grades.
3. Clarify which academic, professional and/or generic skills will be assessed at this stage of the course.
4. Where skills are to be assessed, specify how these will be taught and developed through this stage of the course.
5. Consider how students will know the standard expected: provide clear detail in the marking criteria.
6. Include a section on academic and/or professional and/or personal development in course materials such as the Course Handbook on your website
7. Provide links to useful resources on the course website. For example, let them know the relevant chapters of *Skills for Success* to use at this point on the course.
8. If you are using *Skills for Success* as a core text, point out which chapters are particularly relevant to what the student is studying over the next few months.

See PDP by undergraduate level of study.

Sections of *Skills for Success* for students to read and/or to stimulate early reflections and group discussions are:

# ***‘PDP’: What is it***? (*Skills for Success,* pages 5-6)

* ***Personal development involves …*** (*Skills for Success,* pages 7-9)
* ***Do I need personal development planning?*** *(Skills for Success,* page 18)
* ***What is ‘employability’?***  *(Skills for Success,* page 304).

1. **Clarify the benefits**

Without some support and guidance, students do not always grasp the purpose of PDP and employability intiatives nor the potential benefits of these. They can easily undervalue the need for forward thinking and advance planning. This is especially so if they don’t realise that most graduate employers will only take on new recruits with work experience, and that they can gain an advantage by applying for some opportunities for placements and internships in their first and second years. Apart from the advantages to employability, you might like to emphasise the generic benefits, such as to academic performance or coping with life events.

Sections of *Skills for Success* for students to read and/or to stimulate reflections and group discussions are:

* + ***Why PDP matters for students*** (*Skills for Success,* pages 10-12)
  + ***Identify personal benefits of PDP*** (*Skills for Success,* pages 16-17)
  + ***What are my PDP priorities?*** (*Skills for Success,* pages 19-22)
  + ***PDP in employment*** *(Skills for Success,* page 13). If students are already in employment and likely to go through work-place appraisal, encourage them to draw out similarities and differences between that and the PDP processes they will use whilst on the course.
  + ***Improving your personal performance*** (*Skills for Success,*Chapter 4*)*. Clarify how PDP can help students with their academic work and improve their grades, such as through better self-awareness, clearer understanding of their motivations and strategies for enhancing personal performance. The chapter provides a range of self-evaluation tools that students can use as the basis for reflection, discussion, tutorials, prepartion for study skills sessions and for adpating the way they approach tasks.

1. **Acknowledge challenges**

However useful or necessary it might be to plan for time after higher education, this can also be experienced as challenging. Addressing this from the outset, and at various times within the course, helps students to identify where particular challenges lie for them, and to consider how they might manage difficulties as they arise. It also shows them that they are not alone in grappling with some aspects of the process. Sections of *Skills for Success* for students to read and/or to stimulate reflections and group discussions are:

1. ***Managing the challenges*** (*Skills for Success,* pages 14-15).
2. ***Part 1, Self-management.*** Chapters 2-5 cover skills and strategies pertinent to managing PDP, such as goal-setting, setting SMART targets, prioritising, action planning, moniitoring, and time-management.
3. **Share your story**

Even if you do not feel you are an expert in areas such as careers education or personal development, you will have had some experiences of applying for work and holding down a job that can provided useful insights for students. Whether or not you feel it yourself, students tend to regard academic staff as smart, successful people; it can help them to to know that even academics have had to overcome career challenges and setbacks. Some students might want to progress to an academic career themselves, or to work in a professional area in which you have expertise, and your experiences can provide useful insights for them.

1. Provide opportunities for students to find out what they would need to do if they wished to pursue an academic or research career in your field. Let them know how they can improve their chances of doing so through actions they take from now on.
2. Which advice did you receive that was most useful? How did it help you?
3. Which advice do you wish you had received? How would that have helped you?
4. What did you find difficult in gaining the jobs you wanted? What mistakes did you make that students could avoid?

Sections of *Skills for Success* for students to read and/or to stimulate reflections and group discussions are:

* **Chapter 3: *Know yourself***
* **Chapters 14: *Employability: enhancing your career prospects.***

1. **Promote student well-being through PDP**

Student well-being is a concern in many countries worldwide. Whilst being in higher education opens up many great opportunities for students, it can also be overwhelming. As well as the pressures of their academic work, students may be juggling many other commitments such as part-time jobs and family responsibilities, as well as looking to build their CV and maintain a social life and relationships. This can affect well-being negatively if students feel overloaded. Personal planning sessions provide a natural opportunity for considering well-being.

Sections of *Skills for Success* for students to read and/or to stimulate reflections and group discussions are:

* ***Take a rounded approach to PDP*** (*Skills for Success,* pages 23-24).
* ***Well-being factors*** (*Skills for Success,* page 89).
* Chapter 5 *Skills for Success,* material on self-belief, hope and optimism, emotional self-management, managing distress i.e that there are things that can be done both to avoid and manage distress, and time management.

1. **Provide the imperative**

As with career planning and goal-setting when part of work-place appraisals, people can find it difficult to hold a mirror up to their own performance or to prioritise time to think about themselves in depth unless there is an imperative to do so. For students, such an imperative comes primarily from PDP and career-related education being incorporated into their course and, above all, if it counts in some way towards their grades.

* 1. To promote engagement with the process, include set times for discussions and events related to academic, personal and career planning across each level of the course.
  2. Include PDP/careers education within at least one assignment at each level, such that this accrues marks or contributes to grades at each level.

Sections of *Skills for Success* that can be useful for setting assignments and supporting students in undertaking them are:

* Presenting your reflection to others (Chapter 12, page 293)
* Selective reflective portfolios (Chapter 12, page 294 and pages 370-1)
* Reflective Essays (Chapter 12, page 295-6)
* Position Papers (Chapter 12, pages 298-9).

1. **Invite in experts and speakers**

If you feel that talking about employability and professional development does not play to your strengths, invite a speaker such as an employer or careers adviser to speak about these instead. Former graduates can also provide useful insights to current students about lessons they learnt when entering the job market, how different aspects of their course have proved useful, and what else they wished they had done whilst still a student in order to boost their employability. Students generally like the variety and careers staff usually welcome the opportunity to speak directly to students.

1. **Use PDP to enhance academic performance**

Many of the skills,qualities and attitudes needed to enhance workplace performance are similar to those needed for successful, collaborative, time-efficient and less stressful academic study. If this is made explicit, then students can find it more relevant to develop these skills now – rather than waiting until the final year or graduation. Tutors are experts for their own courses, so are best placed to be explicit how such skills can benefit students whilst on the course.

This focus on academic performance needs to go hand-in-hand helping students to think through how they might need to nuance ways they might need to describe, adapt and apply such skills in non-academic contexts. Materials in the book can hellp with this. It can also be useful to bring in some ex-graduates from a range of professions to give a feel for how they have had to apply such attributes, in practice, in the work-place or work-related contexts.

Sections of *Skills for Success* that can help in this respect are:

* **What helps you to learn?** (*Skills for Success*, pages 60-6)and **Extend your thinking** (Chapter 10)
* **Improving your personal performance** (*Skills for Success*,Chapter 4)

# **Time-management** (*Skills for Success*, pages 127-30)

* Using feedback (*Skills for Success*, page 286) and Constructive criticism (pages 144-5)
* Translating skills for the workplace and Employer case studies: skill sets in the workplace (*Skills for Success*, pages 313-324).

1. **Create opportunities for students to extend their range of skills**
   1. Build in opportunities for students to develop skills such as team work, problem-solving and action-planning through the curriculum over the length of their studies so that such abilities are nurtured and reinforced over time.
   2. Create workshop opportunities.Provide set time and opportunities for students to learn how to reflect, prioritise, plan, self-assess and gain new skills, including sharing their experiences and strategies with peers. Depending on the course, tis could be as class time or as additional workshops, by course staff or by specalists.
   3. Provide relevant training and guidance. Often, students are left to learn skills for themselves, with the assumption that they will just ‘pick them up’ along the way. This can be stressful, and students don’t necessarily know what there is to learn. This is especially the case for intra-personal , interpersonal and task-management skills such as self-management, time-management, team working and project planning. Such training is especially important if the skills are assessed and contribute to grades or transcripts.

Sections of *Skills for Success* that can help students to think about broadening their skills are:

* ***Ingredients of success*** (pages 44-7)
* ***Reflecting on transferable skills, academic development and professional development*** (pages 280-85)
* ***Current skills and personal qualities*** (page 373)
* ***Develop your leadership capacity*** (Chapter 8)
* The chapters for skills relevant to the student or course, whether for thinking, people, task- or self-management skills