

Academic Staff Guide to Exeter's ePDP system

Background

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). Exeter's electronic tool – ePDP – is designed to complement, not replace, the face-to-face support offered by personal tutors and supervisors, and is accessible via the web to all taught and postgraduate research students.

So what's involved, and who is responsible?

The ePDP resource is designed to take students through a two-part process of Self Appraisal and Action Planning. Students can use this resource as an ongoing record of their academic, work-related/professional and extra-curricular activities during their time at University. They can create action plans based on their self appraisal records, and can also create semi-formatted CVs and personal statements.

Through this process, the aim is to encourage them to be reflective about their skills and competencies, and how they might demonstrate these (eg to a potential employer) in the light of actual experiences.

It should be made clear to students that they are responsible for keeping their ePDP up-to-date, not you. However, students are informed that their tutor or supervisor is able to view their ePDP records online and that this can be useful to help prepare both parties for tutorials or meetings about the student's progress. Students can also elect to keep some entries private, if they wish.

Although tutors/supervisors can view their students' ePDP records at any time, SITS Administrators in Schools can also enable a email facility within the system. This allows students to actively inform their tutor/supervisor that they would like them to view their ePDP records and provides a direct link to those records. Please note, however, that this function is 'not enabled' by default.

What do students see, and what are they being asked to do?

The new ePDP tool is built on SITS, the University's Student Records System, so it is not possible to view a live student demo account. For this reason it is important to familiarise yourself with the information for students about PDP, including the User Guide, from the Resources to Help You section of the PDP information website below:

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

Some students will inevitably engage with the reflective process more than others. Some will use ePDP to do little more than describe the basic details of their experiences; others will provide much more reflective accounts of particular activities they've engaged in and skills they can demonstrate.

It is important to remember that this is primarily a student resource, and unless it is being used as part of an assessment in a credit-bearing module, it is not appropriate to be too prescriptive about how they use it.

To access the Tutor/Supervisor view of ePDP

In time it will be possible for staff to access the ePDP system for students through their Staff MyExeter Portal. However, at the time of writing this user guide the link from this location is not yet in place, so please access your tutor view pages as follows.

1. Go to <https://srs.exeter.ac.uk>. On a light grey/mauve tab to the left-hand side of the screen will be a link named 'ePDP'. Click on this tab for the next screen where you should see links to your UG, PGT and PGR students.
2. By clicking on one of these groups, you should, provided your School has 'matched' tutors to tutees in SITS, see a list of your tutees/supervisees, together with an image of each one.
3. If the student's ePDP status is 'Not engaged', this means that the student has not yet activated their ePDP account. If the status is 'Engaged' the student has activated their ePDP account – though they may not have created any records yet. You will have to click on the student's name or their picture to find out.
4. When you do click on the student's name or picture, at the top will be the student's most recent Action Plan, if they have completed one, with previous action plans, details of particular experiences and any personal statements the student may have written, displayed underneath.

Access to tutor/supervisor functions within ePDP is fairly limited, as it is designed primarily as a student resource to be viewed by the tutor. However, as a tutor/supervisor, you can:

- Record the date on which a tutorial/meeting takes place.
- Make a brief comment – if you wish – about your students' ePDP records following discussion of them in the meeting/tutorial. You may – for example – ask them to add another Action to their Action Plan.
- If you are happy with the student's records, and do not see the need for him/her to add or edit them in any way, you can 'lock' the Student's latest Action Plan, preventing the student from changing it.

Whilst allowing tutors to interact with this resource if they wish, the above features do not have to be used in order for students to continue using the resource effectively. The User Guide for students gives a clear message that tutors are not expected as a matter of course to provide online comments on the student's ePDP.

Advising students about ePDP – some key points

- Students will need to be made aware of the benefits of the PDP process to their personal, academic and professional development. The Student Skills team (within Education Enhancement, Academic Services) can provide tailored workshops and lectures on this theme but all students will need to be directed to the student PDP information website for full information and to access the Student User Guide to ePDP. (See links section below.)
- Students may need to be assured that whilst you as their tutor/supervisor can view their records, they can also – when recording experiences through Self Appraisal – keep entries private as they see fit.
- Students may need to be reminded if you would like them to bring along hard copies of their records to tutorials/meetings. The most appropriate print-out option for them to use will be the one called 'View/Print non-private data'.

In case of technical difficulties

Please report any technical problems with the ePDP system to the IT Helpdesk (helpdesk@exeter.ac.uk or ext 3934), and encourage your students to do the same. The system administrator will attend to these and respond as soon as possible.

More information and useful links

For more student information about PDP and the ePDP resource:

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

For more staff information about PDP and the ePDP resource:

<http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/staffdevelopment/aspectsofacademicpractice/personaldevelopmentplanningpdp>

You can learn more about PDP and the ePDP system from attending a short course offered by Learning and Development. Access these from the A-Z of courses listed on Learning and Development's webpages at www.exeter.ac.uk/learninganddevelopment.

For more general information on PDP and ePDP resources, please email Jane Rowe, Learning and Teaching Adviser at: J.L.Rowe@exeter.ac.uk