PDP: Key questions for Course Planning Teams

"PDP results in an enhanced self awareness of strengths and weaknesses and directions for change. The process helps learners understand the value added through learning that is above and beyond attainment in the subjects they have studied"

(QAA, 2009 - Personal development planning: guidance for institutional policy and practice.)

This set of questions is based on the key questions in *a toolkit for enhancing personal development and planning strategy, policy and practice in higher education institutions* (QAA Scotland, 2009)

Embedding PDP into the curriculum

1. What opportunities are there to include PDP activities in the curriculum? Are these opportunities more beneficial at course or module level? Has a curriculum mapping exercise been carried out?
2. How do course and module learning outcomes reflect the expected engagement with PDP (e.g. is the ability to plan and reflect regarded as an important graduate attribute?
3. Are PDP related activities routinely assessed?
4. Are PDP activities associated with the curriculum developmental in nature and therefore appropriate for students at different levels?
5. How are the needs of late entrants, early exit and discontinuing students taken into account?
6. How are employability skills and attributes clearly articulated and embedded in the PDP process?
7. In what way are the final outcomes of PDP tailored for graduates within your discipline (e.g. by cross referencing to accrediting body benchmarks, via a well refined CV, or by preparedness to engage in 'appropriate' CPD activities)?
8. To what extent are students given opportunities within the curriculum to meet careers advisers or external contacts (e.g. professional bodies' representatives, alumni, practitioners or potential employers) to link PDP practice to future career developments?
9. How is involvement in extra curricular activities supported, recognised and recorded?

Promoting and Introduction

1. How is PDP covered in course and module documentation so that students can see how PDP activities form part of the learning activities?
2. How are students introduced to PDP (e.g. through pre-entry materials, an induction event or sessions integrated into the curriculum?

3. Which staff are involved in inducting staff in PDP (e.g. academic, support services, personal tutors) and what support are they given (e.g. a centrally produced script)

Engaging students

1. How are intended learning outcomes used to encourage engagement with PDP?
2. What forms of support are available to maintain student engagement or reduce barriers to engagement?
3. Which staff members have responsibility for promoting and supporting PDP engagement among students and how do they discharge this?
4. Are students assessed or rewarded for engagement in PDP and PDP related activities? If so, how?
5. How are students made aware of the notions of lifelong learning and CPD to help contextualise their PDP work?

Supporting reflection and action planning

1. How is the nature and value of PDP-related reflection explained to students?
2. How is reflection and introspection supported through the design of PDP and its templates?
3. How are students shown models of good reflective and planning practice (e.g. via exemplar PDP portfolio)?
4. Where are formative reflective activities included in the course?
5. How are students given feedback on the content of their reflection?
6. How are students helped to take reflection forward into action planning?
7. Is the ability to reflect assessed summatively? If so, how?