Progress Files

for Personal and Professional Development Planning

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Introduction - How can a person achieve their potential unless they develop the ability to reflect on their progress, recognise where their strengths lie and identify and address areas that require improvement? Many students (and staff) feel that the process of reflection and action planning is not 'part of' their discipline. It is however very much part of becoming a better student, and achieving more within that discipline. Also, improved self-awareness is of tremendous value in career progression and development.

For this reason there is an expectation, through the SHU Employability Framework, that academic programmes will incorporate Personal and Professional Development Planning (PPDP) . The **e-Progress File** system reported here is *one way* of achieving this.

The e-Progress File Scheme:

- is web-based
- requires students complete progress file entries for each module weekly in year 1 and bi-weekly in year 2.
- requires final year students to record progress on their final year (30 credit) project
- is private between students and staff
- involves the award of academic credit
- has been running since 2001 in Mathematics and since 2007 in Business and Enterprise
- is currently used by 7 courses (approx 600 students) in ACES - 30,000+ entries made (2.7m words) in 2012/13

Benefits identified by students:

- Planning and organising workloads
- Freely express opinions; views heard and acted upon
- Reflect on development and progress through the year
- Quick feedback from staff and solution to problems
- Communication with academic staff; keeps lecturers updated on how students feel about the course
- Helps staff improve lectures/teaching
- Recognition of strengths and weaknesses
- It improves written communication
- "It is like a quick revision session"

Benefits for staff, the course and the University:

- Very rapid feedback from students after lectures
- Provision for staff replies to problems and questions
- Staff get to know students much more effectively
- Important contributor to student satisfaction

Y1 student comments from the 2012/13 evaluation:

"It has made uncovering what you find difficult easier, so that you work at improving in those areas"

"I have found the logbook a useful way of self-assessing and identifying areas of weakness throughout the year"

"I have also able to plan what work needs to be completed, which has helped me considerably in getting my assignments completed to deadlines"

"I also found it useful to be able to give feedback to lecturers on how the sessions had been run, as it helped them to know what worked best, and how to structure sessions more effectively"

"It allows tutors to learn more about how students are coping with the course, their strengths, weaknesses and any problems they may be having"

"I can ask any questions I felt to scared to ask in the lecture, which I find especially useful"

"I liked that lecturers replied to what I wrote as it showed me that they were there if and when I needed help, and also sometimes gave me things to think about or things I could do to improve"

"It acts as motivation to see the areas in which you are struggling and pushes you to improve these. Not only that but it also gives you a sense of achievement if you surpass an issue that you have found difficult in the past, and helps you move on to the next problem"

"It improves the student-tutor relations."

Case study:

Presentation slides:

Examples:

Sheffield Hallam University

Faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Science