

Career Development Learning Case Studies for Postgraduate Students

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Background

Research Councils' 'Joint Skills Statement' (2001)

- Research skills and techniques
- The research environment
- Research management & information technology
- Personal effectiveness
- Communication, presentation & learning & teaching skills
- Networking and teamworking
- Career management
 - Continued professional development
 - Ownership and management of career progression
 - Insight into transferable nature of research skills
 - Presentation of skills in CVs, applications and interviews

Background

- *Roberts Review 2002*: Led to research council funding to support CDL for research students
- *Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) Framework 2001*: Directed that PDP (Personal Development Planning) implementation take place by 2005/6 across the whole system and for all HE awards
 - Roberts, G. (2002). *SET for Success. The Supply of People with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical Skills*. HM Treasury, London.
 - QAAHE (2001). *Guidelines for HE Progress Files* [<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>]

PDP and employability

- *“PDP is about improving general skills for study and career management. In a competitive working market, being able to use the skills you learn during PDP will become invaluable.”*
(QAAHE, 2003)
- *“Skills have been discussed throughout modules at university, but often it is taken for granted that we fully understand what a skill is. I for one previously have found it difficult to recognise skills and know when I am developing and learning them.”*
(Reflection from a final year student on completing a career skills module)
- The relationship between CDL and employability was fully reviewed by Watts in 2006
 - QAAHE (2003). *Getting the job you deserve, progress files for students*. [<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>]
 - Watts, A.G., 2006. *Learning and employability, Series 2. Career development, learning and employability*. The Higher Education Academy, York.

Who is supportive of PDP?

- QAA HE and HE Academy
- Professional Bodies
- University Senior Managers
- University Academic Staff
- University Careers Service Staff
- Undergraduates
- Postgraduates
- Graduates
- Employers

Online CDL versus face-to-face

Advantages: Online can be accessed by students at any time and almost any place. Resources can be updated easily and can't be lost.

Disadvantages: Students may not have ready access. Needs to be set up. Loss of face-to-face interactions.

Career development learning for postgraduate research students at Ulster

Sharon Milner

Career development learning for postgraduate researchers at Ulster

- Background
- Research Development Programme at Ulster (RDPU)
- UlsterGradNAV
- NI GRADSchool
- Arts & Humanities postgraduate website

Background

- Roberts Review Funding
- Ulster RTC's & 'learning pathways'
- Ulster PDP policy implementation (2004/2006)

Ulster RTC Overview

- Research Councils requires registered students to complete 180 RTCs over 3 years
- RTC = attendance credit based on RCUK recommendation that PhDs attend 2 weeks generic skills training/year
- 1 day's training = 6 RTCs
- Up to 66/180 RTCs are prescribed by Faculties (under HRGSs)
- Programme designed to encourage and enhance PhD employability prospects

Ulster RTC Overview

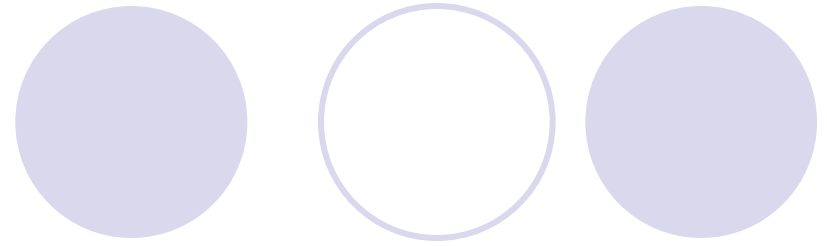
PhD registration		Block Training required	Required communication & presentation for all	Elective short courses	Faculty requirements	Total RTCs 180
Full-time	Part-time	Total 90	Total 6 (before 100-days seminar)	Total 18 minimum	Total 66 prescribed by Faculty	
1 st year	Years 1-2	18 24				
2 nd year	Years 3-4	24				
3 rd year	Years 5-6	24				

Defined 'learning pathways'

Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)

- First Steps to Teaching Programme (FSTP)
- Information Technology Enhancement Project (ITEP)
- Enhancing Research Practice (ERP)
- Postgraduate certificate in Professional Development (PGcert PD)

CDL input into RDPU



- ½ day workshop to new PhD's in Sept
- 1 day workshop in January to 1st years
- 1 day workshop in September to new 2nd years
- 2 hr discipline specific workshops to 3rd year students in “Professional CV's”, “How to Interview successfully”

Online Personal Development Planning System

PDSsystem: <http://pds.ulster.ac.uk>

- ❖ Online application for the recording of PDP

Key Features for researchers:

- ❖ Set goals and plan how they are going to achieve these
- ❖ Complete Meetings forms
- ❖ Record progress and experiences
- ❖ Create and share their e-portfolio with others
- ❖ Communicate with their Supervisor
- ❖ Access their Research Training Credits
- ❖ Access their student Netmail account
- ❖ Add events to their personal calendar
- ❖ Carryout psychometric tests
- ❖ Carryout skills audits

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PDSystem: Benefits for the Supervisor

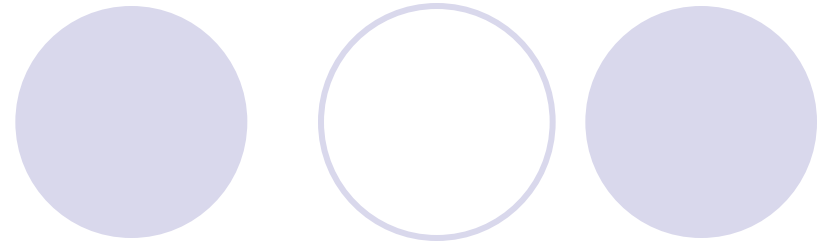
Structured framework:

- Facilitate the recording of the outcomes of the PDP process researchers engaged in
- Support and communicate with researchers
- Easier supervision of researchers who take ownership of their own PDP

Feedback from postgraduates

- “increasing my confidence in regard to using my skills to get a job”
- “helped refresh the ‘world of work’ in the context of after the PhD is over. Made me think again of where to go next career wise”
- “very useful...hearing what current lecturers and employers had to say and reassurance that there is employment opportunities outside of academia”

UlsterGradNAV



- CDC online career development learning resource
- Sits behind PDSsystem
- Available to all students from Sept 08

Northern Ireland GRADSchool

- 3 day summer school
- Collaboration between QUB and Ulster
- Accredited by UKGRAD
- For 2nd and 3rd year Postgrads
- Assess their personal skills & help them to develop team & career management skills
- Free irrespective of the students funding

Postgraduate Arts & Humanities Website

- Designed by Reading CCMS postgraduate working group (members across UK)
- Careers website for Arts & Humanities PhDs to complement existing resources available for PhD students
- Will contain:
 - Case studies of PhDs career paths
 - Audio recordings of interviews in which people talk about how their career has unfolded
 - Short opinion pieces (around 1,000 words) on topics like academic identities, international opportunities
 - Audio recordings of groups of professionals (e.g. careers staff, academics, employers) discussing PG issues
- Should be available late Sept 2008
- Access not restricted to those on working group

Resources/contacts

- <http://pdp.ulster.ac.uk>
- <http://pds.ulster.ac.uk>
- http://www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev/Research_Training/controller.php
- St.milner@ulster.ac.uk

Online career development learning for postgraduate students at Hull University

Steve Hanson

Online career development learning for postgraduate students at Hull University

- Facilitated and non-facilitated
- Background to CMS module
- Development
- Implementation
- Demonstration of the CMS RS module
- Evaluation
- Future developments
- Conclusion

Non-facilitated or facilitated

Two extremes, but with intermediate approaches

- **Non-facilitated:** Careers material is there for the student to use, but with relatively little if any feedback and typically not accredited
 - Example at Hull University: Online PDP resources provided in Blackboard VLE for taught Masters students in the Business School
- **Facilitated:** Definite course for the students to follow, with a lot of feedback and accredited
 - Case study at Hull University: Career Management Skills (CMS) for Research Students module

Background

- Successful undergraduate online CMS module, using Hull University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called Merlin
- Roberts Review funding
- PDP implementation
- Postgraduate Training Scheme (PGTS) for research students at Hull University

Development

- Consultations with students and research supervisors
- Approximately 60% new material
- Content includes: presentations (with audio), quizzes, video clips, online group exercise, alumni biopics
- Reflective portfolio as major part of assessment
- Project Assistant took about 4 months (one day a week) to produce new module
- Continually being updated - see later

Development

Pathway of 12 Stages covering

1. Changing world of work
2. Options after a research degree
3. Careers research
4. Skills looked for by employers
5. Self-assessment
6. CVs and application forms
7. Interviews
8. Other selection methods
9. Group working
10. Giving a presentation
11. Action planning
12. Managing career development

Implementation

- Runs from January to June, commenced 2005
- About 30 students each year (~ 25% of all research students)
- Mainly PhD students, but some Masters by research students
- From all faculties and both campuses
- Includes part-time, distance learning, and a high proportion of international students
- Students remain registered for a year after completing the module

Implementation

Student comment on commencing the module:

“As a student living 80 miles from the University and working shifts I think it's an excellent idea to be able to study when I want. We can e-mail one another plus it's set up so we get to see a picture of the person we're e-mailing and read a little about them. It's quite lonely being a long-distance student! This is the first time I have felt part of the University.”

Demonstration of the CMS RS module

Evaluation

TQE survey 2006 and 2007 (65% response)

- All sixteen measured parameters scored very positively, including improvement in career management skills.
- 83% of students indicated that they would strongly recommend, and 17% recommend, the module to other research students.
- The most useful and/or interesting sections were those on CVs and the group exercise.

Evaluation

Student comments include:

- *“Completing this module has opened my eyes as to the many different techniques that can be used by employers to find their desired candidate. I also now realise the importance of regularly assessing my own skills and career development. I thoroughly enjoyed the module and found it extremely useful and informative.”*
- *“For someone who has taken time to develop a no-nonsense, scientific writing style I was sceptical, to say the least, about reflective assessment. I have to admit I haven’t at times found it easy, but I feel that I have gained an insight into myself and how I really feel about myself with regards to my career in writing in this way. I have been forced to admit to myself that I have been ignoring particular career paths through fear or ignorance, but I vow to approach my career with a new found confidence and enthusiasm and aim for what I really want rather than the easy option.”*

Future developments

- Sakai VLE version of the module
 - In collaboration with Mary Sweeney and Elaine Kiely, University of Limerick
- Update technology - Screencasts, RSS feeds, Podcasts etc.
- Online CMS module for taught postgraduate students

Conclusion

- The module fits well with the University's overall PDP strategy and hence receives financial support.
- The flexibility of online delivery appears to be popular with research students who form an online community.
- TQE feedback indicates that participants believe that their career management skills have been much improved.
- The reflective learning approach, although sometimes causing difficulties, can have great benefits.
- Updating and conversion to other VLEs is relatively simple.

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