

Student Guide

Core Skills Development

DE3R 34: Personal Development Planning

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INTRODUCTION

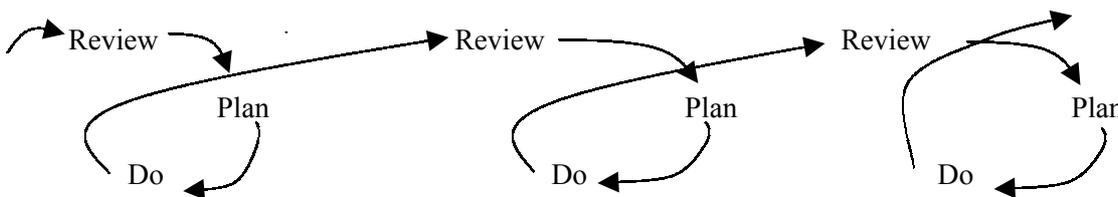
What is Personal Development Planning?

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is a process that will allow you to identify, manage and develop your skills, experience and learning. It is a recurring process that will help you clarify and achieve your personal, educational and career aims. In simple terms it involves a cycle of activities:

- ◆ reviewing where you are
- ◆ planning where you want to get to
- ◆ carrying out your plan and
- ◆ reviewing, again, where you have got to

review → plan → do → review

The review at the end of one planning cycle marks the beginning of the next:



The skills you develop in this Unit are useful because you will be able to use this planning cycle many times in your life whether you are planning for a career or planning to achieve your personal goals. You can use it to help you get the most out of your HN studies; if you go on to degree level study you will find the college/university you attend will require you to keep up the process; and, increasingly, employers require evidence that you can manage your own development, through PDP, at recruitment and as a basis for ongoing career development.

Examples of ways in which you might use PDP include:

- ◆ planning at school for subject choices and applying to a college
- ◆ setting objectives for degree level study
- ◆ setting objectives for employment
- ◆ gap year or voluntary service
- ◆ pre exit planning session with supervisor
- ◆ annual requirement for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) report in employment
- ◆ joining professional body/annual requirement for CPD update for membership
- ◆ requirement for postgraduate qualification at university
- ◆ career move: new CPD phase

This Unit

By completing this Unit you will demonstrate to yourself and to others such as employers, academic selectors or admissions tutors that you are able to think critically about your own development and take appropriate action to achieve goals.

In particular, your work on PDP in this Unit will:

- ◆ help you make the most of the opportunities offered at HN and post-HN
- ◆ develop your skills as an independent learner
- ◆ ensure lessons learned during your HN course are carried through to post-HN study and employment

Approaches to PDP and your broad objectives

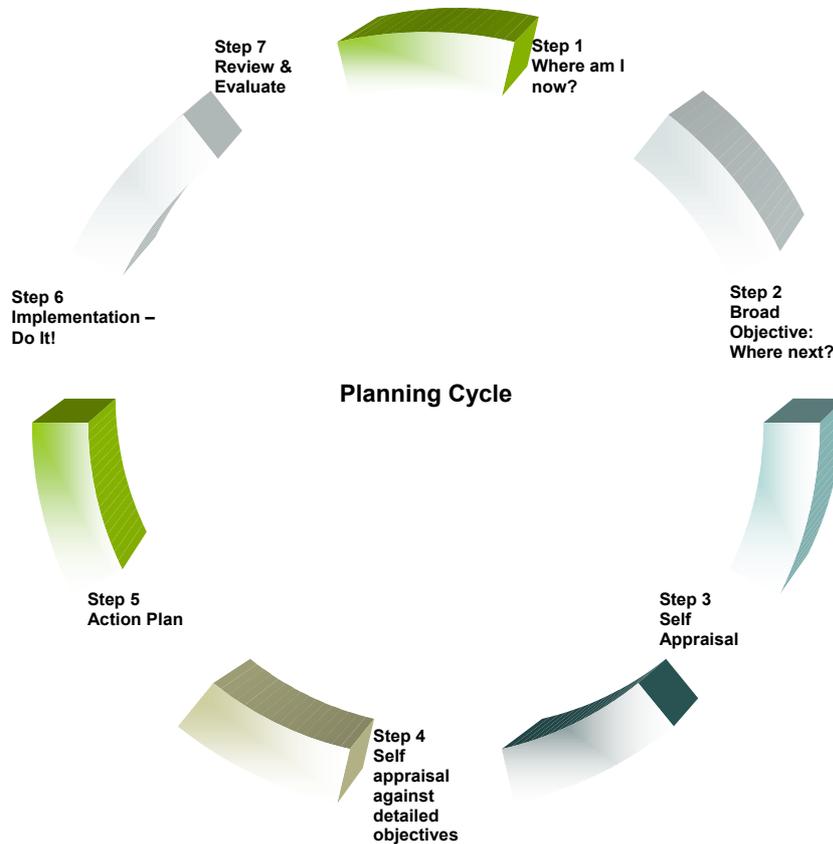
Through the PDP process this Unit will help you to focus on immediate goals as well as long-term objectives. For the purposes of the Unit you will be looking at your intended direction over the next 18 months. The routes applicable to this stage of planning are:

- ◆ progression to degree study
- ◆ progression to employment
- ◆ further development of Core/Key Skills

The next section will show you how to use seven steps to the make your PDP process effective.

Steps to planning

Throughout this Unit, and irrespective of which route you choose as the area of focus for planning, there is a step-by-step approach and framework for analysing, planning, implementing and evaluating.



Becoming a self-directed and independent learner

As a learner whose aspiration is to build on your HNC/HND by further developing your Core/Key Skills you will need to develop the ability to plan and direct your own work and to work independently. There is no mystery to acquiring this ability. It is gained through a mixture of self-knowledge, making the most of your strengths, tackling areas that might let you down, being able to plan and evaluate what you do and taking appropriate action, where necessary.

Undertaking HN study provides the perfect opportunity to work on these aspects of your development and this will stand you in good stead for future study or work and prepare you for the opportunities and challenges that these will bring.

How can the Personal Development Planning Unit help?

To help you towards becoming an independent learner, an HN Unit on Personal Development Planning has been devised, which you are taking as part of, or in addition to, other Units in your course. The PDP Unit is worth eight SCQF credit points at level 7. It is an assessed Unit which, if achieved, will appear on your SQA certificate.

The Unit has three Outcomes, which are:

- ◆ Outcome 1: Create and maintain a Personal Development Portfolio and Personal Action Plan.
- ◆ Outcome 2: Implement a personal action plan.
- ◆ Outcome 3: Monitor and evaluate the plan and its implementation

What will I gain from completing this Unit?

There are three main benefits in the completion of this Unit. These are as follows:

- ◆ You will be able to demonstrate to potential employers and/or educational advisors that you can plan your development, learn from experience and adapt your choices and options as appropriate.
- ◆ You will learn to apply sound criteria in your choices and decision-making. This is important as asking the right questions, honest self appraisal and making the right choices will have a significant impact on your chosen career-path.
- ◆ Your aim is to develop your core or transferable skills which will, in turn, enhance your employability, assist you in progressing to further study or help in reaching a personal or professional goal. Once you have achieved your goal, the skills gained through the PDP process will provide you with the opportunity to achieve much more. Think beyond getting a job or meeting an interim goal — think about career/life/personal development.

Guidance on assessment requirements

These Outcomes will be assessed by a personal development portfolio, which will include a personal action plan.

In order to achieve this Unit, you will have to produce a personal development portfolio, which will include a personal action plan that covers at least one year of a full-time HN course or two years of a part-time course. The portfolio and action plan will be assessed on a number of aspects including:

- ◆ your ability to reflect on your personal qualities and skills
- ◆ evidence of your achievements
- ◆ your ability to weigh up your options for post HN study
- ◆ how you monitor and amend activities planned to achieve current and post HN aims and goals
- ◆ how you take responsibility for achieving aims and goals
- ◆ how you manage the opportunities offered to you during your course

- ◆ your ability to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) objectives
- ◆ lessons learned

Guidance on assessment process

Guidance on creating, maintaining and presenting the portfolio and action plan are given in this guide. Your tutor will also give you support and advice on assessment throughout the completion of this Unit.

In putting together a portfolio and devising an action plan you will need to engage in several processes. These include:

- ◆ gathering evidence of skills and achievements
- ◆ analysing current work and personal qualities and skills
- ◆ giving explanation and receiving feedback on self appraisal and plans
- ◆ investigating options post HN
- ◆ communicating with key people in relation to present course and future plans
- ◆ locating resources to help with planning and achieving goals

The personal portfolio

What do we mean by a personal portfolio and why should you develop it?

A personal portfolio is a collection of documents that details your achievements through particular stages of your educational path or career route. If you develop this portfolio of evidence over a considerable period of time it will be of real value to you in assessing the skills you have already, recording new achievements and planning future goals and objectives.

Although, in this instance, your portfolio will assist you in gaining the Personal Development Planning Unit, it has a wider significant use. For example, it has the potential to provide evidence for potential employers or other places of study that you are able to plan and evaluate your own objectives and goals. The portfolio can also be a basis for future planning in whatever context you find yourself, once your HN course is finished. Increasingly, employers are encouraging Continuous Professional Development (CPD), universities are required to ensure learners undertake PDP and many professional bodies use a portfolio approach to generate evidence of competence in a specific vocational and/or professional field. The process of planning, portfolio building and evaluation is therefore an important building block at this stage of your academic and vocational journey.

Your personal development portfolio and action plan

The following pages give advice and guidance on completing a portfolio including a personal action plan.

Each step has:

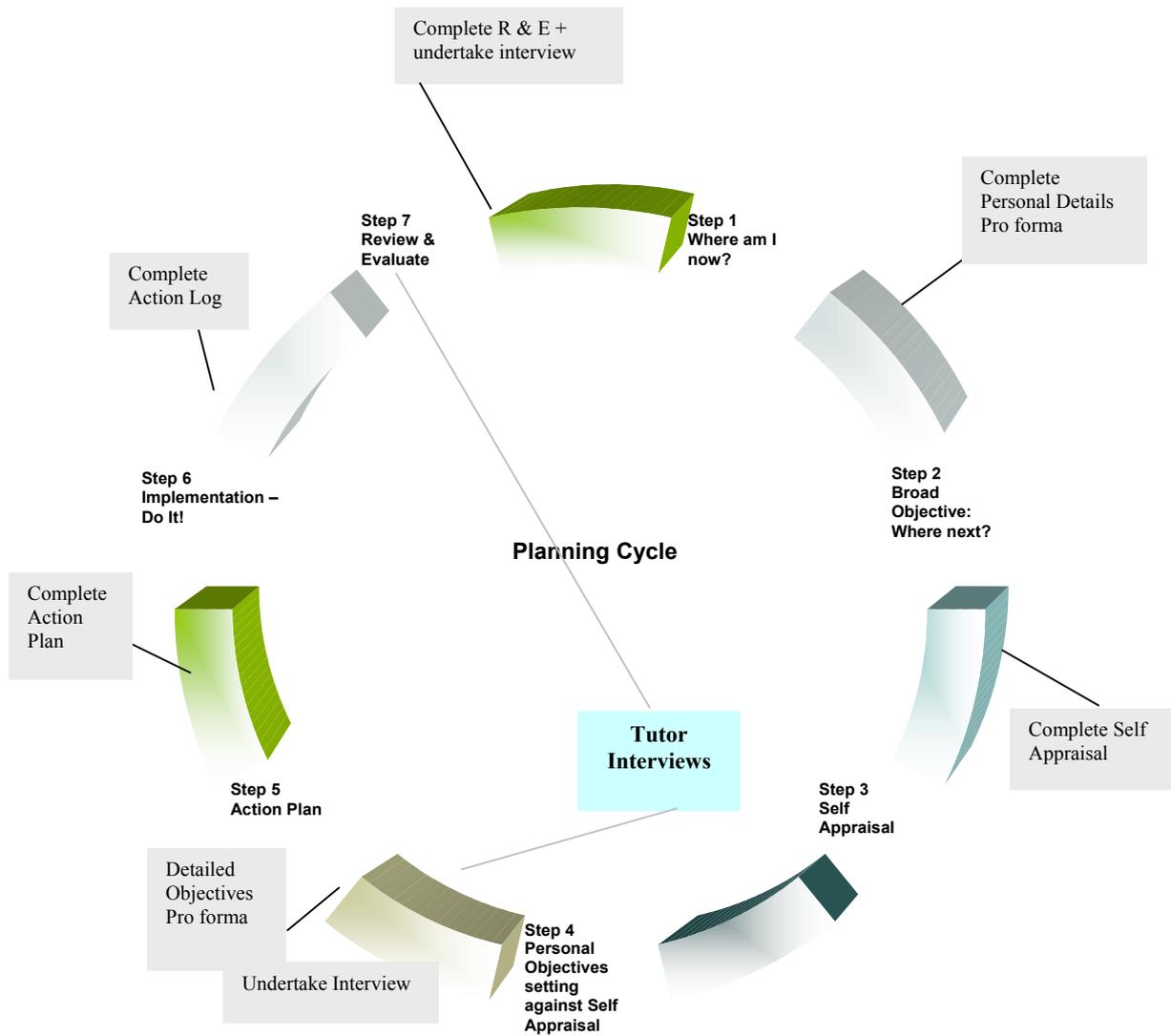
- ◆ guidance and advice, eg what questions you should ask
- ◆ advice on when you should review each part of the portfolio/action plan
- ◆ advice on how to gather evidence
- ◆ pro-formas that can be used to record activities and which can be used as the basis of your portfolio and action plan are given in the portfolio shell. These are designed for written submissions but you can use other forms of evidence such as video or sound recordings as long as they cover the assessment requirements. The guidance gives a clear indication of what must be included and some exemplars are given in the shell.

Although the development of a portfolio is a continuous process, you should set key dates for completing tasks and for meeting your tutor to review steps. You will be able to complete some things immediately, such as basic details and objectives, but you will only be able to complete other aspects after finding out relevant information.

STEPS TO PLANNING

Seven steps to planning

Remember that the Personal Development Planning process is defined by the seven steps to planning given below.



Step 1: Where am I now?

This is the starting point of your planning cycle and is simply a note of who you are, what you are studying, an outline of the content of your course and key dates. This information will be the first page of your portfolio. You can use the personal details pro forma in the portfolio shell to complete your own personal record, which must include the following:

Name	Full name
SQA number	You will have an SQA number either on previous certificates or you can obtain this from your tutor
Centre details	Name of centre, eg ***** College
HN details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ the title of your HN award, eg HNC in *** or HND in ***◆ is course full-time or part-time◆ start and finish dates◆ core Units and options
Existing qualifications	eg Highers, NC modules, SVQs

Step 2: Broad objective: where am I going next?

This step will have been discussed with you at induction and you will have considered three options. You have been asked to decide which of the following areas would be most useful for you to plan and develop:

- ◆ moving on from your HNC or HND to degree study/university

or

- ◆ moving from your HNC or HND to employment

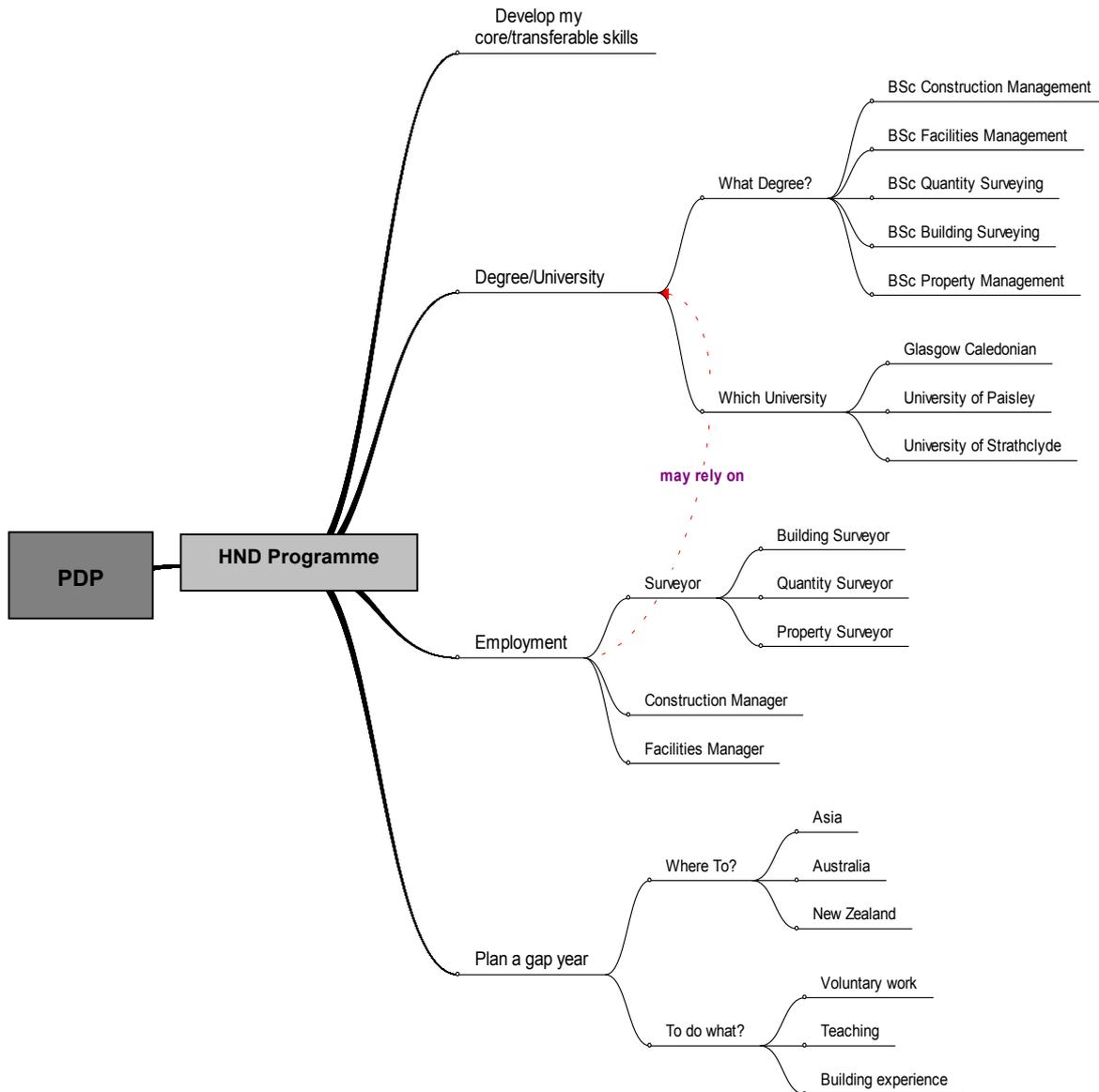
or

- ◆ looking at further opportunities to develop your Core/Key Skills

At this point you need to confirm that you have chosen the most appropriate option for your development. You can use a mind mapping process to help you with this and an example of this is given on the following page.

Deciding which optional route to develop

Mind mapping can be a useful way of clarifying your thoughts.
Which of these routes is most in need of your development focus?



This guide will take you through the requirements for assessment of the further development of Core Skills option. Some background information on Core Skills is given below.

What are Core Skills?

Core Skills (sometimes referred to as Key Skills or transferable skills) have long been respected as those aptitudes and qualities which equip us to deal with both the challenges of everyday life and the specific skills required for effective study and employment.

Core Skills and employability

It is accepted that employers want to recruit individuals who are able to function as members of a team in addition to being able to operate under their own initiative. Strong written communication skills are valued in the workplace and increasingly employees are expected to be able to participate in meeting situations, perhaps to be able to give short presentations or contribute to training sessions. Reading and understanding written instructions and the ability to analyse and organise information are features of many job descriptions today and most employers look for, and value, skills at some level in the use of information technology.

In some vocations there is a specific need to employ someone who has strong numeric skills and/or an aptitude for problem solving and analysis. Increasingly specialist or advanced IT knowledge is a feature of the skills match required for progression. Many employers look instinctively for these skills and qualities in potential employees. Others, more formally, identify these skills as essential requirements within job specifications. Increasingly employers seek evidence of formal certification demonstrating achievement of Core Skills. Your personal development portfolio provides an opportunity to identify the Core Skills that you have developed through your current programme of study and to match these to the needs of a potential career path. It will assist in developing strategies for further development or gap filling in these key areas.

Core Skills and further study

Personal Development Planning is a process rather than a closed task and as such will evolve as you do. The planning process is intended to help you in developing skills and to assist you in anticipating the skills which you must plan to develop. Your chosen route to employment may involve a course of study within a Higher Education establishment. Whilst formal qualifications required for entry to a given degree programme are often well established, the value of Core Skills may sometimes be forgotten or underestimated. The ability to source, analyse, evaluate, organise and disseminate information in written or oral format is fundamental to success in most degree level programmes. The full spectrum of Core Skill competencies will underpin successful progress in higher level study. However, a higher level of achievement in a particular Core Skill might be required in some disciplines.

Core Skills definitions and levels

The Scottish Qualifications Authority has developed a framework for developing, assessing and certificating Core Skills. This can be used to benchmark your own skills achieved through your programme of study and other achievements achieved at an earlier phase in education or in the workplace. This is shown below.

Core Skill	Components
Communication	Oral Communication Written Communication (Reading) Written Communication (Writing)
Numeracy	Using Graphical Information Using Number
IT	Using Information Technology
Problem Solving	Critical Thinking Planning and Organising Reviewing and Evaluating
Working with Others	Working with Others

The National Core Skills Framework defines each of the Core Skills at five levels. These are:

- ◆ Access 2
- ◆ Access 3
- ◆ Intermediate 1
- ◆ Intermediate 2
- ◆ Higher

The Framework provides definitions of each Core Skill component under the headings:

- ◆ General Skill
- ◆ Specific Skills
- ◆ Further information on the general skill/specific skill
- ◆ Examples of tasks

This analysis is helpful in designing opportunities for development and assessment of the complete and component elements of each Core Skill.

This Framework is available in full via SQA's website at **www.sqa.org.uk**

Click on the NQ icon.
Click on Core Skills information
Click on Framework information.

This will provide information of the types of Units/exercises and activities which help you build and develop your own Core Skills profile.

Step 3: Self appraisal

To meet set objectives, undertake appraisal of yourself and overcome any potential barriers to meeting your goals, you have to be able to make a realistic assessment of your skills, qualities and the contexts in which you live, learn and work.

Self appraisal comes from knowing yourself but should be backed up, where possible, with documentation. If you do have any documentation that supports work you have done, eg a testimonial from an employer or education you have undertaken, it should be included in your portfolio.

The main aim of appraising your personal skills and qualities is to help you set a base line of where you are now and what you will need to meet your objectives. You will then be able to incorporate any gaps identified into your action plan.

You have decided that you will focus your Personal Development Planning project on further developing your Core Skills, recognising that these will be critical to your future direction. This area of development will be the main focus of your appraisal and action plan. However, it is important to place these skills also in the broader context of your overall qualities, knowledge and abilities. This section on self appraisal, therefore, asks you to look in-depth at Core Skills, but also to consider your abilities under a number of other headings.

Core Skills

Core Skills are important in all areas of education and work. Core skills might be formal, eg in HNC/HNDs there will be a Core Skills requirement and you need to meet this to gain the award. You might also need particular Core Skills if you are progressing to a degree, eg if you want to undertake a degree in a humanities faculty then you might require a Core Skill in Communication at Higher level. This would need to be part of your action plan because you need to explore ways of gaining this if it is not a formal part of your course. Core Skills also include ‘softer’ skills such as working with others. You might not have a formal certificate for this but have had experience working in teams. If you do have any evidence, such as certificates or references, you should include these in your portfolio.

The HNC/HND programme on which you are currently studying has already been looked at in respect of its Core Skills content. SQA and your college will have considered whether the course should include specific Core Skills Units carrying a credit value, whether Core Skills can be combined and achieved and certificated within other Units in the course or whether the course provides for opportunities to develop Core Skills which are not formally certificated.

There are a number of key questions you should ask yourself:

- ◆ Do you already have a Core Skills profile from SQA?
- ◆ Which Core Skills are contained within this year of your course? Have you achieved these? How can you demonstrate that you have achieved these skills?
- ◆ Will you achieve further Core Skills in the next year of your programme?
- ◆ What are the Core Skills (and at what level) that are required for your next personal development objective, whether that be further study or career?
- ◆ What are the gaps in your skills profile?
- ◆ What are the opportunities/strategies for filling the gaps?

The following pages provide a way of assessing your existing levels of Core Skills.

Step 3: Self appraisal

Skill	Description	Checklist	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Written Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ ability to write well-structured written documentation ◆ ability to keep ideas focused ◆ ability to write clearly and concisely ◆ ability to write in a variety of formats ◆ ability to write with a clearly defined purpose and audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I use correct grammar ◆ I can clearly express my thoughts, ideas and opinions in writing ◆ I can change my writing style for different audiences, using appropriate sentence structure, paragraphing and word choice (audience examples: employers, tutors, customers, friends, colleagues etc) ◆ I can proofread and edit my own documents for spelling, sentence structure and punctuation ◆ I can summarise in my own words information I have heard or read ◆ I am confident in creating a variety of different formal documents, such as reports, letters, memos, minutes of meetings and e-mails ◆ I can document my ideas using appropriate illustrations, such as charts, tables and graphs 		

Skill	Description	Checklist	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Oral Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ convey essential information, opinions and ideas accurately and coherently ◆ skill in linking information, opinion and ideas together in a coherent structure ◆ using vocabulary and spoken language conventions in a range of situations and for different audiences ◆ taking account of and responding appropriately to the contribution of others ◆ using appropriate body language and non-verbal communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I can speak in public or make a presentation with confidence ◆ I can express my opinions, ideas and research to others so they can understand me ◆ I can give instructions or explain things clearly to others ◆ I can change the way I speak for various audiences (friends, employers, colleagues, customers) ◆ I can speak clearly and loudly enough for listeners to hear me when making a presentation ◆ I can carry on conversations with others and respond to questions they ask ◆ I am confident to contribute to discussions in meetings and respond to points made by others ◆ I am confident to ask the right questions to get the information I need ◆ I am confident using modern communication tools, like telephone and voicemail and can speak clearly and courteously ◆ I can speak tactfully when resolving a conflict 		

Skill	Description	Checklist	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Using Number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ apply a wide range of number skills in everyday and generalised contexts ◆ work confidently with numerical concepts ◆ decide on numerical operation to be carried out ◆ carry out complex calculations or a number of sustained calculations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I am able to add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals ◆ I am able to work with fractions, percentages and ratios ◆ I can work with basic statistical concepts, using quantitative and qualitative data 		
Using Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ using an IT system effectively and responsibly to process information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I can make effective and responsible use of the range of IT equipment in everyday use ◆ I can carry out straightforward processing in two types of software application (ie word processing and spreadsheet) ◆ I can carry out complex processes to use at least one software application in depth ◆ I can integrate different types of data in one piece of work ◆ I can carry out effective searches and extract and present information from electronic data sources, including the world wide web 		

Skill	Description	Checklist	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ critical thinking ◆ planning and organising a task or strategy ◆ reviewing and evaluating a task or strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I can analyse a situation or issue ◆ I have the ability to exercise judgement and develop an approach to a situation or issue ◆ I can develop a plan in relation to a task ◆ I can identify and obtain resources to implement the plan ◆ I can carry out planned tasks ◆ I can prioritise my work as required ◆ I can meet targets and manage my time effectively to achieve these targets ◆ I can evaluate the effectiveness of a strategy ◆ I can explain the relevance of evidence in a given situation ◆ I can draw conclusions from a situation or problem solved and suggest alternative approaches for further work 		

Skill	Description	Checklist	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Working with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ understand and work within the dynamics of a team ◆ recognise my own and others' contributions ◆ clarify team and individual goals ◆ clarify ground rules ◆ accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner ◆ acknowledge people's diversity, individual differences and perspectives ◆ participate in team activities (both formal and informal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I can identify roles in a group, including my own ◆ I can plan and make decision with others ◆ I can contribute/share key information and ideas to the discussion, activity or project ◆ I can show empathy, understanding the needs, opinions and points of view of others ◆ I can deal sensitively with the differences within a group ◆ I can actively participate within the activities of a group and share its successes ◆ I can contribute to an enjoyable work environment ◆ I can go along with a group's decision ◆ I can provide leadership by motivating others, taking initiative, keeping everyone involved and encouraging the group to adapt to change ◆ I can negotiate with others to achieve a group's goal 		

Skill	Description	Checklist	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Personal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ be accountable, motivated and confident ◆ deal with people, problems and situations with honesty, integrity and personal ethics ◆ recognise own and other people's good efforts ◆ show interest, initiative, effort ◆ set goals and priorities balancing work and life ◆ learn from mistakes and be willing to assess personal strengths and areas for development ◆ be innovative, resourceful and open to change ◆ manage time effectively ◆ multi-task effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I can establish realistic goals and make plans for meeting them ◆ I can manage my time effectively, prioritising tasks and multi-tasking ◆ I can show initiative by looking for what needs to be done ◆ I can produce quality work without constant supervision and I understand areas for improvement ◆ I can take responsibility for tasks given to me ◆ I respect confidentiality ◆ I can see the opportunity in change and diversity, being willing to try new things ◆ I am willing to face problems and challenges ◆ I can maintain a sense of humour even when under pressure ◆ I can respect and interact with others from diverse backgrounds and experiences ◆ I can manage and balance work and life activities ◆ I can form positive personal and professional relationships and networks ◆ I can recognise my strengths and limitations 		

Personal qualities

In defining your personal qualities, you should identify qualities that are particular to you and relevant to your current stage of development and aspects that will assist you in future development. For example, a friendly manner is something we may all think we have but this is rather non-specific. It might be more useful to think about things such as reliability, creativity, good interpersonal skills, ability to pay attention to detail, problem solving etc. You should be able to provide support for the qualities you identify, eg work/school record, testimonials etc.

When you identify your personal qualities, you might also want to think about the things you need to work on. For example, do you lack confidence? Do you do things at the last minute? If this is the case, these might be part of your immediate objectives in the HN year, eg handing work in on time will ensure that you complete your HNC/HND successfully. Are there any small goals you could set and work towards achieving? This will help to build your confidence.

Knowledge and Understanding

During your experience to date, you will have developed a wide range of knowledge and understanding. You are not expected to record everything you know but you should provide any formal certification, records of training or informal learning such as those gained through clubs, societies etc.

Technical skills

Technical skills may be formal or informal. For example, you might not have a qualification in IT but you are able to build your own website, do desktop publishing etc. On the other hand, you may have formal skills undertaken as part of a job or in school. It is important to identify all your technical skills. You may not have a formal certificate but perhaps you might have other evidence to support your claim to these skills, eg a website you have built.

Contexts

As well as looking at personal qualities and skills in relation to current and future study, the educational and domestic contexts within which you operate are important factors. These include things such as:

- ◆ current studies
- ◆ work
- ◆ time
- ◆ child care
- ◆ support of others

This list is by no means exhaustive. These and other factors will have an impact on your progression and achievement so you need to consider these carefully. These factors should not stop you pursuing opportunities to develop your Core Skills but you must take them into account when planning.

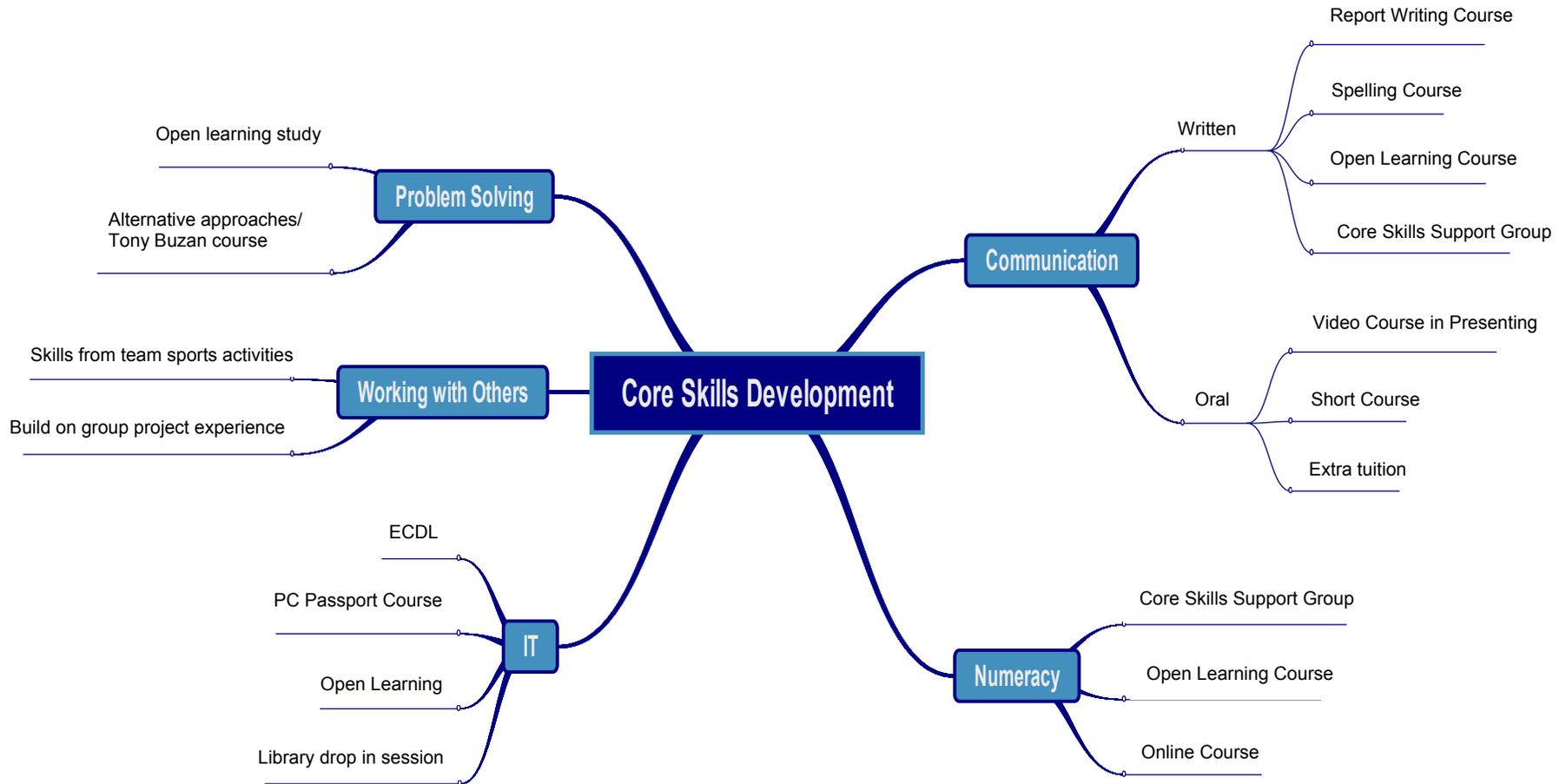
SWOT analysis

SWOT is an acronym for **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats** and a SWOT analysis is a way of looking at your skills and abilities in relation to the opportunities open to you in developing your Core Skills and any factors that might threaten that goal.

In order to do this, you will first have to do some research into Core Skills and the specific skills you are interested in developing. In particular, you need to have a sound idea of the level of your existing skills and what you need to do to develop these further. The self appraisal exercise on the previous pages should give you a sound idea of your existing skills and the mind map on the following page indicates some of the options that might be considered in obtaining relevant Core Skills.

Once you have completed your self appraisal and obtained information on the Core Skills you wish to develop you can complete a SWOT analysis. A blank pro forma is included in the portfolio shell, should you wish to use this.

Mind map for SWOT analysis



Step 4: Setting personal objectives

You need to be realistic when setting personal objectives but do not be afraid to think about what you really want or aspire to. It may be that once you have considered your options, you will need to re-think your objectives and plan, but this is what the process is about. If at the end of the process you have a clear idea of what you want to do and what you can achieve realistically at the next stage, then you will have been successful in this process.

In setting your personal objectives you should think about the following:

- 1 **Objectives for your current year of study.** This might include such things as what you want out of your HN programme, eg the specific skills you may wish to develop either through developmental activities or through certificated courses complementing your current Core Skills profile.
- 2 **Where you want to go immediately after completing your HNC/HND course.** This might include options such as completing a second year in Further Education by undertaking an HND, going on to study at a Higher Education institution or taking up a career in a particular occupational area. Whichever option you are considering, you need to think about the Core Skills that will be essential to you achieving your goal.
- 3 **What you might eventually want to do as a career.** You may have a specific career or profession in mind such as a teacher or psychologist or you may have a general area in which you are interested such as science or IT or you may have several broad interests but are unsure which you wish to pursue. Your chosen career path may require you to have specific Core Skills, such as Written Communication, Numeracy or IT, certificated or evidenced at a particular level, and you may need to plan how to upgrade your current set of Core Skills.

Before setting down your objectives, you need to think about the options in each of the three areas above and the way in which they might link to each other. For example, if you have a clear interest in becoming a computer programmer, you need to ensure that you are taking the right Units within your course and that you can identify pathways to this career and the Core Skills essential to take you through each stage to your eventual career. On the other hand you may be considering a career working with children or young people but are unsure whether this would be teaching, social work or educational psychology. In this case you need to think about a broad range of Core Skills relevant to this area such as Communication, Working with Others and Problem Solving.

Objectives can be reviewed during the PDP process but you should try to reduce glaring discrepancies such as hoping to complete an HNC in Childcare, developing Core Skills in Numeracy and then applying to study philosophy at university. Remember! This Unit is about trying to develop relevant Core Skills necessary for your eventual education and/or career development.

It is envisaged that, as you go through the process, you might change your original objectives as you find out information and choose and reject options. There will be an opportunity to do this after you have carried out your self appraisal and before you complete your action plan. If you do change your objectives you should record your reasons for changing them and record your revised objectives.

Objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound), which means thinking about specific core skills you want to develop and ways of achieving these.

Are your objectives SMART?

It will help you to achieve the objectives you include in your action plan if you have tried to make them SMART. This means that you have tried to make them

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time bound

Use the checklist below to review your objectives.

<p>Specific</p> <p>Are your objectives expressed in such a way that you are exactly clear about what you have to do to achieve them?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Measurable</p> <p>Is progress towards your objectives measurable or quantifiable? Where appropriate, do they tell you how much? How often? How many times? When or where?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Achievable</p> <p>Are your targets achievable in the time and resources available to you? Are they reasonable?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Relevant</p> <p>Are your targets relevant and appropriate to your situation and circumstances? Are they important to your wider aims?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Time bound</p> <p>Have you set a clear timescale for the achievement of your objectives? Have you identified reasonable 'milestones' along the way?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>

Here are some ways to help in setting your personal objectives.

Identifying which skills you need/want to develop can be helped by thinking about the types of things you enjoy.

For example, check all of your hobbies and interests. How exactly do you use your spare time? What interests you? What do you **enjoy**?

From attending a football match to going a shopping trip, all of us employ skills we are often unaware of. It is fundamental to understand the relationship between the activities that you enjoy, your strengths, constraints on your lifestyle and future options.

What hobbies or pastimes do you enjoy? What latent skills lie here?

Hobby	Skill/competence/strength/personal quality
Example: rowing (oars-person)	Team player Coordination Fitness Stamina Competitive Self-sufficient Spiritual Safety-aware Adventurous

Hobby	Skill/competence/strength/personal quality
Example: meditation	Concentration Ability to spend time on own Calm Self-sufficient Spiritual Self-aware

Receiving feedback on personal appraisal and objectives

Before proceeding with your action plan, you need to submit your self appraisal and objectives to your tutor. He/she will then review these with you. To help you prepare for this review you should think about the following:

- ◆ why you have chosen particular objectives and the way in which present study and future learning and development relate to each other
- ◆ evidence for qualities and skills identified, eg certificates, references, experiences etc
- ◆ be able to give reasons for qualities and skills identified where there is no direct evidence
- ◆ be able to give reasons for identifying the need for skills to meet your objectives eg a university prospectus setting out requirements for particular Core Skills or a specific Core Skill demand from an employer

Sometimes it can be difficult to be honest about ourselves. Your tutor is there to help and support you but it is his/her job to get you to reflect realistically on what you have written. PDP is largely your responsibility so you need to respond constructively to the review. For example, you might have a particular image of yourself as a reliable person but you have been late for every class since the start of your course. Your tutor may ask you to explain your perception of yourself against what others are seeing. There may be good reasons for this but if, for example, this is because of difficulty in travelling you would need to think about where you choose to study or work post HNC/HND. If there is no real reason then this might be an aspect either you want to work on or you need to remove from your list of qualities.

Step 5: Action planning

Once you have identified (and perhaps revised) your objectives, you are now ready to write an action plan of how these will be achieved. This involves planning the actions you will need to take to achieve your objectives.

Identify your objectives and against each one list the individual actions you will take to achieve it. You also need to set target dates by which you hope to achieve each objective and the actions that fall within it.

Remember that your objectives will fall into three broad categories:

- ◆ those that relate to your current year of study. What do you need to achieve or develop in order to satisfy the requirements of achieving your HNC/HND and any specific Core Skills requirement
- ◆ those that relate to your plans immediately after your HN course finishes
- ◆ those that relate to longer term goals such as pursuing a particular career — this will have a bearing on what Core Skills you choose to develop

What sort of things would be included in your action plan? There are a number of considerations that might help you prepare an action plan. These include:

- ◆ ensure you fulfil existing requirements for achieving Core Skills within your HN course
- ◆ investigate opportunities to further develop the Core Skills identified in your self appraisal
- ◆ research different options for developing Core Skills, eg open learning, specific courses, self study etc
- ◆ consider time lines for achieving Core Skills
- ◆ consider impact on other areas of study, eg achieving your HN award

You can have as many strategies as you feel are appropriate for each objective. For each strategy you need to consider five key aspects. These are:

How	—	the way(s) in which you will go about meeting your objective.
Who	—	the key people you need to involve.
Help	—	what help you might need.
When	—	target/key dates.
Hindrances	—	what obstacles might cause difficulties for you?

Before you start on your plan, it might be helpful to consider the forces that might help or hinder you in achieving your objectives.

Helping and hindering influences

Whether a plan succeeds or not can depend on other influences that are nothing directly to do with the plan but which help or hinder progress. You can increase your chances of success by trying to anticipate those influences that are likely to hinder your progress — and trying to minimise these — and those influences that are likely to help your progress — and trying to maximise these.

List below the influences that are likely to help or hinder your action.

Think of ways in which you can maximise those helping and minimise those hindering.

Helping influences

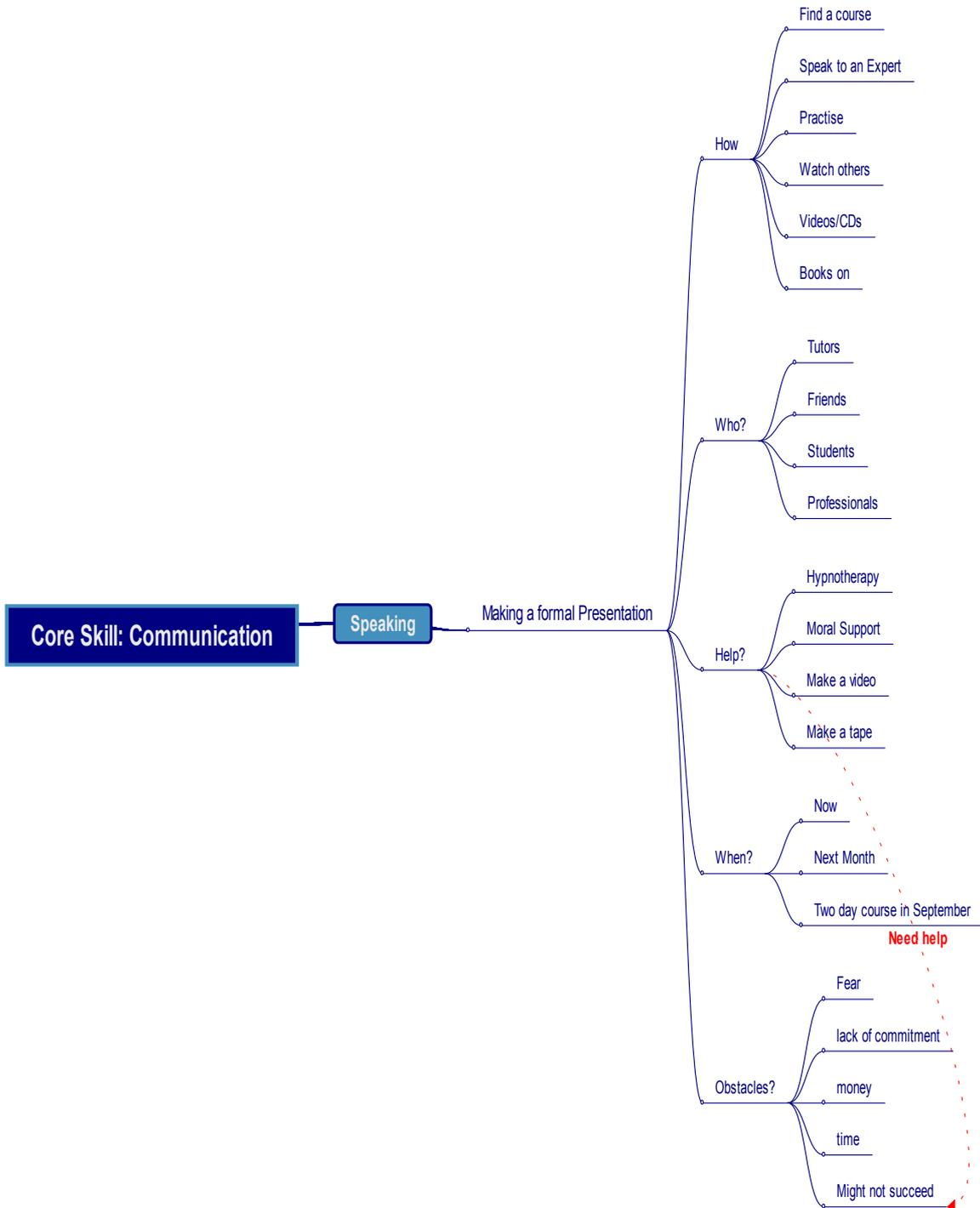


Hindering influences



A starting point

It might be useful to take a mind map approach to think about issues. For example, you know that you need to develop your communication skills, particularly you have a fear of making presentations. How might you tackle this?



Step 6: Implementing your action plan

This step of the cycle is the active phase where you will implement your action plan and, in the process, establish just how realistic your objectives really are.

It is important that you log all activities against your objectives as this will be part of your portfolio and will be important when you come to the final evaluation stage of the process.

Where your actions or objectives have to change, it is essential that you make notes to record the reason for change or modification so that you can use this in your final evaluation of the process.

Your ongoing log of activities you have undertaken in implementing your action plan should include:

- ◆ broad objective
- ◆ action(s) required to meet this objective
- ◆ completion/review dates
- ◆ key people, help and possible obstacles
- ◆ an ongoing record of what you did
- ◆ a reflection on what you learned and what you should do now

A pro forma for recording this information is given in the portfolio shell, should you wish to use this.

Step 7: Review and evaluation

As stated at the beginning of this exercise, planning and evaluation are ongoing activities. It is constructive to review the progress made against your objectives and evaluate the development yet to be achieved. At the end of the delivery of the PDP Unit your tutor will formally review your progress.

There are two purposes in undertaking this review:

- ◆ to ensure that you have completed all of the tasks required for the PDP Unit
- ◆ to establish the progress that you have made and identify your long-term development goals

In order to facilitate this process of review and evaluation you can refer to your action plan where you reviewed the success of each action, where you recorded what you did, what you learned and what you do now.

You also need to provide a final evaluation of the whole process. The form in which this is presented should be discussed with your tutor, but you need to ask yourself two main questions:

- ◆ What have I learned about myself?
- ◆ What have I learned about the Personal Development Planning process?

To help you to evaluate the Unit and present your assessment evidence you will need to review systematically what you have done, what you have learned and what you are going to do now.

It might be helpful to revisit the steps in the process you followed.

Step 1: Where am I now?

Step 2: Broad objective?

These first two steps asked you to clarify your present situation and where you hoped to move to after your HNC or HND programme? How easy did you find these tasks?

Step 3: Self appraisal?

Step 3 asked you to take a detailed look at the skills and qualities you had already developed. What processes did you use for this? Would you use them again for personal planning? What did you learn from your SWOT analysis? Did you gather comments from other people? If so, did their comments alter your initial appraisal of yourself? How and when could you use self appraisal in the future?

Step 4: Skills profile against detailed objectives?

In Step 4 you had to clarify and describe your personal objectives — in terms of your HNC/HND study; what you wanted to do immediately after your HNC/HND; and your wider career aims. Were you able to match your existing skills and abilities against the requirements of your chosen next steps? Did you find this process difficult (many have difficulties clarifying their objectives but still find it very helpful)? Were you able to identify development priorities?

Step 5: Action planning

Step 5 asked you to use the information and ideas you had gathered from the previous steps to create a plan of action to achieve your objectives. How did you go about this? Did thinking about SMART objectives help you to create a practical plan? How could you use similar planning processes in the future?

Step 6: Implementation — do it!

What did you have to do to implement your plan? Did it go to plan or did you have to amend it as you went along ?

Step 7: Review and evaluation

Step 7 is based on the review process you are just undertaking. What things have you found most useful going through the PDP process/cycle? What things would you do differently if you started the cycle again? What are the main skills, qualities, approaches and objectives you wish to develop further?

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

DE3R 34

PORTFOLIO SHELL

Contents

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Personal details pro forma◆ Personal details exemplar
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Broad objective choice form
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Self appraisal — personal, skills, qualities and contexts — pro forma◆ Self appraisal exemplar◆ SWOT analysis form
Step 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Personal objectives pro forma (prior to interview)◆ Note of interview form◆ Personal objectives pro forma (post interview)
Step 5 and Step 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Action plan and logs
Step 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Review and evaluation pro forma
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Record of supporting evidence
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Portfolio checklist

STEP 1: WHERE AM I NOW?

Personal details

Name		
SQA number		
Centre details		
HN details	Title	
	Full/part-time	
	Start and finish dates	
	Core Units	
	Optional Units	
Other qualifications		

Exemplar

Personal details		
Name	J Smith	
SQA number	12345678	
Centre details	Anytown College	
HN details	Title	HND Journalism
	Full/part-time	Full-time
	Start and finish dates	September 04 to May 06
	Core Units	Writing for Print and Broadcast Press and Broadcasting in the UK Newswriting Presenting Complex Communication Role of the Journalist in Broadcast News DTP Text input Law for Journalist Politics PDP
	Optional Units	Radio Presentation
Other qualifications	<p>2 Highers: English at B, Modern Studies at B</p> <p>7 Standard Grades: English, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Modern Studies, Art and Design, History</p> <p>Workplace training and certification in retail sales</p>	

STEP 2: BROAD OBJECTIVE: WHERE AM I GOING NEXT?

Whilst completing this Unit in Personal Development Planning, I have opted to focus on the following area of development:

- HN to degree study
- HN to employment
- Further development of Core/Key Skills

STEP 3: SELF APPRAISAL

Personal skills, qualities and contexts

Core Skill	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Communication		
Numeracy		
IT		
Problem Solving		
Working with Others		

Personal qualities

Personal skills, qualities and contexts (continued)

Knowledge and Understanding

Technical skills

Contexts, other factors to consider

Exemplar

The following pages give an example of a completed pro forma for personal skills, qualities and contexts.

Personal skills, qualities and contexts

Core Skill	Evaluation	Evidence to support evaluation
Communication	Good	Certified at Higher, enjoy writing and discussion
Numeracy	OK	Passed standard grade
IT	Getting better	Passed Units in DTP and text input, used a number of computer applications
Problem Solving	Good	Can take on a story and devise and carry out research
Working with Others	OK	Get on well with classmates, interacted with professionals during work placement

Personal qualities

Work experience: worked as newsroom gofer, Real Radio, 10–24 January. Led to verified personal characteristics.

According to my reference from Real Radio, I am self-reliant, able to work on my own. I am also described as well-motivated.

Knowledge and Understanding

Pre-college study: Higher English taught me how to use language effectively.

Higher Modern Studies has given me a basic knowledge of politics, useful to every journalist. This foundation has been built upon over my two years of HND study.

I am now much more knowledgeable about Scottish politics and media.

Exemplar

Technical skills

I have technical skills required to use a number of hardware and software systems required in modern journalism in both the broadcast and print media.

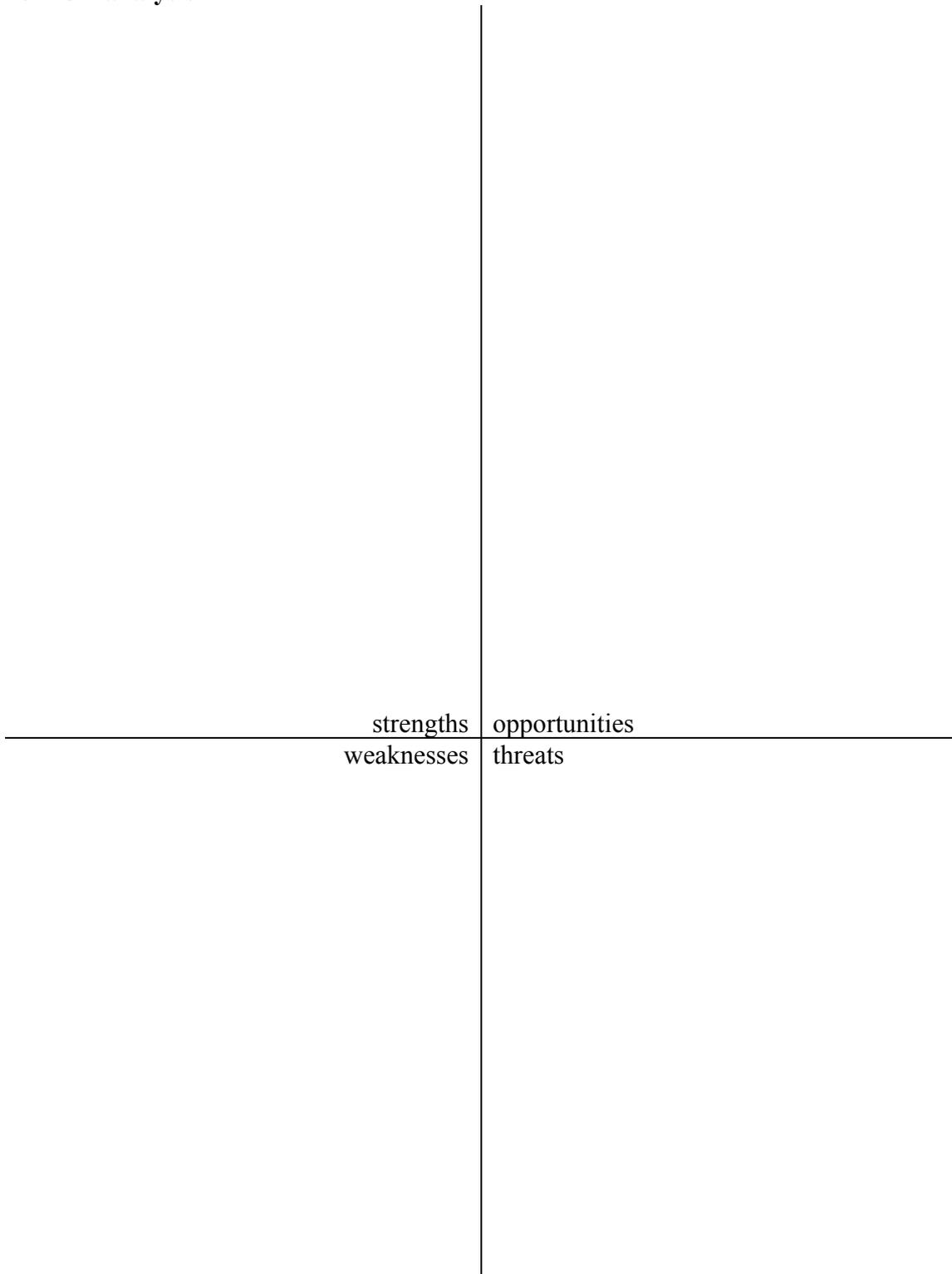
I can write effective copy and scripts.

Contexts, other factors to consider

Interests: I am very interested in current affairs. I am in the process of arranging an interview with my local MSP on asylum seekers.

I am short of money. Any activities have to be within a realistic budget.

SWOT analysis



STEP 4: SETTING PERSONAL OBJECTIVES

Personal objectives — prior to interview with tutor

Short-term (This year)

Medium-term (Next year)

Long-term

Interview with tutor — self evaluation and objectives

Note changes to objectives and any other relevant points.

Student signature: _____

Tutor signature: _____

Date: _____

Personal objectives — post-interview with tutor

Short-term (This year)

Medium-term (Next year)

Long-term

STEP 5: ACTION PLANNING and STEP 6 IMPLEMENTING YOUR ACTION PLAN

Objective	Completion/review date:
Action	Target/review date:

Key people

Help

Hindrances

What did I do? Log of activities undertaken

Dates undertaken

What did I learn?

What do I do now?

STEP 7: REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Step 1 and 2: Where am I now and broad objective. How easy did you find these tasks?

Step 3: Self appraisal. What processes did you use for this? Would you use them again for personal planning? What did you learn from your SWOT analysis? Did you gather comments from other people? If so, did their comments alter your initial appraisal of yourself? How and when could you use self appraisal in the future?

Step 4: Skills profile against detailed objectives? Were you able to match your existing skills and abilities against the requirements of your chosen next steps? Did you find this process difficult? Were you able to identify development priorities?

Step 5: Action planning. How did you go about this? Did thinking about SMART objectives help you to create a practical plan? How could you use similar planning processes in the future?

Step 6: Implementation. Did it go to plan or did you have to amend it as you went along?

Step 7: Review and evaluation. What things have you found most useful going through the PDP process/cycle? What things would you do differently if you started the cycle again? What are the main skills, qualities, approaches and objectives you wish to develop further?

RECORD OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The following documents are included in this portfolio as supporting evidence towards my personal development.

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

Step	Task	Date completed
Step 1	Personal details	
Step 2	Choice of objective	
Step 3	Self appraisal	
Step 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Set personal objectives◆ Review self appraisal against objectives (possibly through interview with tutor)◆ Revise objectives (if necessary)	
Step 5	Produce an action plan	
Step 6	Keep ongoing log of activities	
Step 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Carry out review of PDP (possibly through interview with tutor)◆ Produce a final evaluation of PDP	