

Department Guide – PowerPoint presentation script

Slide 1: The Importance of Skills Recording

Optional Slide

The report published in 1997, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education made 93 recommendations and concluded on a number of issues. Including “employers want graduates with a range of skills”, and that “those leaving higher education need to understand how to learn and how to manage their own learning, recognising the process continues throughout life”. These conclusions are well known, and employers of chemistry graduates constantly ask for demonstrable skills in addition to specific subject knowledge.

Slide 2: The Importance of Skills Recording

Optional Slide

In 1995 the Royal Society of Chemistry workshop ‘Chemistry in the UK will it Survive?’ concluded that “Communication, team working capabilities, problem solving and organisation are becoming increasingly more important in order to succeed in the rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world of industry”

Slide 3: Progress Files

Optional Slide

One of the 93 recommendations made by the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education stated that:

Institutions should provide a transcript recording student achievement, which should follow a common format devised by institutions collectively through their representative bodies, and a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development.

This recommendation has led to the implementation of **Progress Files**. Progress Files consist of two elements – a student transcript and a Personal Development Plan

Most institutions have provided the student with a transcript for some time now, detailing their academic achievements throughout the course of study. The Undergraduate Skills Record is a framework for skills recording developed by the Royal Society of Chemistry and fulfils the requirements of the Personal Development Planning aspect of the Progress Files.

Slide 4: What is the Undergraduate Skills Record (USR)?

First and foremost, the Undergraduate Skills Record is a framework for skills recording, it encourages you to record, assess and develop your scientific, interpersonal and transferable skills throughout the course of your study. It is important to include skills development which occurs outside of your formal academic study, there are many situations where you will develop important skills, for example membership of clubs and societies, part-time or voluntary work, year-out experiences whether in industry or abroad, as well as during formal study.

Through a series of self assessment statements, the framework enables you to identify areas that require development, identify skills gaps and actively seek development opportunities.

Slide 5: Sections in the USR

There are a number of sections in the Record:

The induction Section requires you to answer Yes or No to a number of statements associated with your university induction. If you answer 'No' to any of the statements you are encouraged to seek the relevant information.

The Personal Information sections enables you to detail all your achievements to date, as well as to think carefully and document the reasons why you chose to do your course. This is a typical question asked at interviews, and so it is useful to consider your reasoning at an early stage.

The Skills Audit is the main part of the document, this will be described in greater depth later.

The section on Project work requires you to think carefully about why you are carrying out particular procedures, what the aims of your project are and what skills you are developing throughout the course of the project.

The Skills Profile is completed at the end of your studies, and when completed provides a summary of your skills development and achievements.

There are two feedback sections in the Record. The first set of feedback forms are on pages XX – XX. It is important to remember that you should include any feedback that you receive throughout your course, this could be from homework or tutorial assignments, from presentations that you give and the feedback comments you receive from practical write-ups. You will receive feedback from a number of sources, for example: fellow students, personal tutors, lectures, you should consider **ALL** feedback and use the comments to set development targets. The second feedback form is on pg XX and should be completed at the end of your studies. You should present the form with a copy of your Skills Profile to appropriate people, you may wish to invite feedback from a range of sources.

Slide 6: Auditing your skills

The Skills Audit, which makes up the main part of the document, consists of a series of statements associated with 9 different skills. Read the statements for each skill and rate yourself according to the scale given:

A = I can use this skill very well

B = I can use this skill well, but improvements could be made

C = I need to improve this skill

D = I need to put considerable work to develop this skill

E = I have not had the opportunity to develop this skill.

It is very important to provide evidence in all cases to support your ratings. It is this evidence which will help you when applying for positions after your degree. Employers want to know how you have demonstrated your ability as well as how you recognise development is needed and how you seek development opportunities.

The USR separates your development into three Phases. For each Phase you are expected to reflect on past developments, record your current ability and plan for future targets in particular skills areas.

Slide 7: Cycle of Skills Recording

Optional Slide

This slide shows the cycle of skills recording going through; What have I achieved?, Where am I now?, Where am I going? And details the processes you undertake to develop skills effectively; Reflect on current position, Plan development goals, Determine the skills required to achieve those goals, Record your achievements, Evaluate and review your position, Reflect on current position.....and so the cycle goes.

Slide 8: Summarising your development

After completing Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Skills Audit, you are expected to complete your Skills Profile. By reflecting on your development through the three Phases you can summarise your development and achievements for each of the 9 skills. This summary is your Skills Profile.

Slide 9: The Skills

The nine skills categories are:

Planning and Organisation; Study Skills; Handling Information; Communication Skills; Working with Others; Scientific & Practical; Problem Solving; Information Communication Technology; Improving Learning and Performance.

Slide 10: Why is it important?

Documenting your skills progression is very important. When you graduate you will have the evidence of a full range of subject specific and transferable skills that ALL employers look for. We have seen from previous workshops and reports that the skills involved are essential in all walks of life. The permanent record that you will have can be used when completing application forms and CV's, it also serves as a launch pad into Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Last but not least it is important to remember that by developing and recording your skills will give you an advantage over others who have not set about this essential preparation for the world of work.