

INTRODUCTION

Progress Files have to be available for all students by 2005. This means that most courses will need to begin implementation, starting with year one intakes, by Sept 2002. Support for planning and implementation is available from the Progress Files Task Group and to access such support you should contact your LTA Coordinator.

This pack is designed to offer you some initial support and contains;

- A copy of the approved Policy and Strategy for the implementation of Progress Files at the University of Northumbria.
- Guidance notes for Course Leaders, Tutorial Advisors and Guidance Tutors
- Exemplars of Progress files developed at the University of Northumbria.
- A list of resources and references on Progress files
- A support pack from the Careers Service

In addition there is a Progress Files public folder (All Public Folders - Registrar's Department – LTA - Progress Files Task Group). The public folder contains relevant documentation for reference and an exemplar of an "electronic" version of a Progress File.

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Policy and Strategy.

Have you read the Progress Files Policy and Strategy? The Policy and Strategy is concise and should give you a clear sense of what is required. A copy is enclosed in this pack and again is available via the Progress Files public folder. For more information and discussion about Progress Files refer to the enclosed list of resources and references and perhaps in particular to the QAA requirements.

2. Review.

The first stage in developing a strategy for introducing Progress Files onto your course is to review your existing provision and processes.

- (a) To what extent do your current arrangements already offer the key elements of Progress Files? Consider course content, teaching and learning processes and assessment methods. The two broad elements you are looking for are;
- Opportunities for students to practise the processes of review, planning, reflection/ review both in terms of their subject knowledge and understanding and in terms of the wider context of their personal development. (Consider using the file at key moments in a student's learning life e.g. as part of induction, immediately after an assessment, just before placement etc.)
 - Opportunities for students to identify the transferable skills being developed directly and indirectly through their course of study and the relevance of these skills to their longer term development and employability. (For example, a useful starting point would be those skills identified in your programme specification.)
- (b) What is the relationship between your course and your current Guidance Tutor arrangements? To what extent do unit tutors currently offer the broad elements identified in (a)

3. Planning

Will you introduce Progress Files by adapting and / or reframing current provision or do Progress Files represent something radically new for your course? The University policy allows for a great deal of flexibility in how you approach Progress Files. It might be helpful to consider the following issues;

- *Content and Process.* What (if anything) needs to be done to ensure that the content and processes implicit in Progress Files are available to all students?
- *The "vehicle" for Progress Files.* The Progress File itself must be "student owned". Some courses already have Progress Files and others something very close to being Progress Files. What sort of file would be most appropriate for your course? Look at the exemplars. Consider the electronic example. Draw on these to develop a framework suited to your situation.
- *Resources.* Beyond the initial "start up" funding there is no additional resource for Progress Files. How can you make best use of the contribution of Guidance Tutors? To what extent will unit and course tutors be involved in delivering the Progress Files? Are particular academic units resourced in such a way that they can make a direct contribution to the Progress File? If not, and where appropriate could they be reviewed and revalidated to do so?

4. Support

Clearly course tutors and Guidance Tutors need to be involved in Progress Files development. You may want to access the Progress Files Task Group for support and help in the process of planning

and implementation. You can do this via your LTA Coordinator who is a member of the task group. The University's Student Services Department is also committed to supporting this development, in particular the Counselling Service and the Careers Service, both of which can be accessed through the LTA Coordinator or contacted direct.

We will learn much during implementation and the Task Group will work hard to ensure that lessons learned are shared widely.

5. Quality Assurance and Evaluation

Progress Files are not an initiative exclusive to H.E.. Increasingly we can expect students to join us with previous experience of Progress Files from their Secondary and Further Education experience. It will be important to integrate Progress Files into the rationale of your course. Progress Files will (probably) be an integrated element in your Programme Specification. In any case you will want to ensure that your approach to Progress Files is clearly explained to students from the outset and the rationale and processes will be included in Course Handbooks.

It will also be important to consider how you are going to evaluate your approach to Progress Files. It is likely you will consider progress Files as part of your course review processes.

Clearly an important aspect of this evaluation will be student "feedback". It is probably a mistake to think of Progress Files success in terms of "completion". The range of "levels" of completion is likely to be very wide. The completed files themselves are not assessed as a whole (although there is no reason why assessed work might not be included in the file). The files as a whole are not likely to be of direct interest to employers. However it is intended that through the files students will develop clearer understanding about what they can offer to employers and through the process of the files that they begin to develop reflective and planned approaches to their personal and career development. It is these broader aims which should steer both how Progress Files are shaped by courses and how they are evaluated.

JT
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