Electronic Personal Development and Learning Plan:
Handbook for Postgraduate Researchers

Version	Author	Date Created/Updated
1.0	A.Stone	19/10/18
2.0	Z.Richards	25/10/2022
2.1	H Parkes	29/07/2025

Contents

1. Introduction

The Personal Development and Learning Plan (PDLP) is a record of a postgraduate researcher's (PGR) academic details such as the Supervisory Team, progress through formal milestones and changes to registration information.
The PDLP takes the form of a 'living' journal, accessible through the University's eVision system. It is a central electronic platform for a PGR to record their individual ongoing developmental & training needs, a log of targets and objectives and thesis progress.

It is therefore essential that both the PGR and the Lead Supervisor have a role in maintaining an oversight over the PGRs PDLP and keeping it up to date.

The electronic PDLP will be subject to periodic updates, such as format and additional features. Updated handbooks will be available from the Keele website:
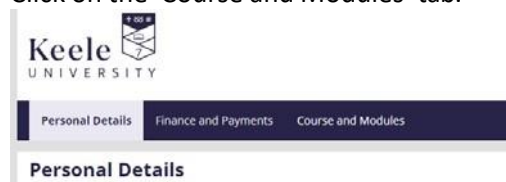www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/researchtraining/ when updates happen.

2. Accessing the PDLP

To Access the PDLP, you will need to log into your eVision account. Access to eVision is via:
https://scims.keele.ac.uk/ where you will be asked to input your Keele username and password.
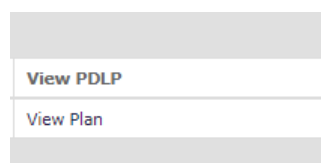
Click on the 'Course and Modules' tab.

Then click 'My PDLP Learning Plans':

Then click 'View Plan' and the main PDLP will appear:

3. Main PDLP Screen

From the main PDLP screen you will then be able to click on the tabs (as shown above) to access the different sections of the PDLP. You can also move from one tab to the next screen using the 'Next' button at the bottom of each screen.

4. Personal and Supervisory Details Tab

PDLP Section 1: Student details
This is the information that is held on your student record. If you believe that there are any errors please contact: studentrecords@keele.ac.uk

PDLP Section 2.1: Supervisory Team
These are the details of your Supervisory Team held on your student record.

To add details of your supervisors' expertise and contribution, choose from the drop down list the supervisor you want to add a description for.

Then in the 'Text to Add' box describe in detail the expertise your supervisor has in your research area. Consider how their expertise will contribute to your own research.

When you have added in your description, click the 'Update' button.

Note: After typing in your description, and before pressing 'Update', ensure that your information is correct. This cannot be changed after pressing the 'Update' button.

If you wish to add a further description, select the Supervisor from the drop down list. Then type in the 'Text to Add' box and click 'Update'. The most recent description added will be at the top of the Supervisor/ Co-Supervisor Expertise and Contribution field.

PDLP Section 2.2: Changes to Supervisory Team
Any changes to your Supervisor Team, following approval by the Faculty PGR Committee, will be shown here.

PDLP Section 2.3 Holiday Requests
This is a log of your holidays and time away from the University.

To record a holiday/ time away from the University input the date and information into the fields above using the calendar boxes, text boxes and drop down boxes.

When you have added in the details and have checked the content, click 'Add Record.'

Note: After typing in your information, and before pressing 'Add Record', ensure that your information is correct. This cannot be changed after pressing the 'Add Record' button.
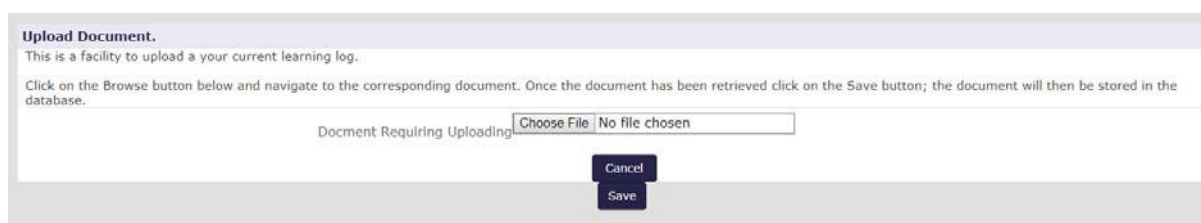
Previous Plans and Hours
If you have previously started a Paper/ Word Version of your PDLP, this can be uploaded to the electronic PDLP by clicking on the words 'clicking here.'

You can then upload your document on the next screen, by selecting the file you wish to upload.

Your previous plan will then be uploaded as a document attachment and would show in the 'Documents that have been uploaded' field, as shown below.

Note: Ensure that you upload the correct file to the electronic PDLP, as you will be unable to remove it.

5. Timetable Tab

PDLP Section 3: Timetable
This information is held on your student record and is automatically generated from the University's system.

PDLP Section 3.1: Formal Milestones
Formal Milestones are key events that show the progression of your research studies. The actual date will be shown after each Formal Milestone has been completed.

Please note, the timetable and formal milestone dates do not automatically update following a leave of absence or change in mode of attendance.

We are unable to rectify this issue currently and therefore suggest PGRs (whom this affects) use their Outlook diaries to manage deadlines.

For those PGRs who require Ethical Approval, you can enter the target date for Ethical approval. Enter the date and then click update.

The Target date for Ethical Approval will then show in the Formal Milestone section:

13/11/2018	Ethical approval sought (if applicable*)

To update the Target date for Ethical Approval, follow the same process as above.

PDLP Section 3.2: Interim Progress Reviews
This is pre-populated data that shows Target dates set and grades ratified by your Faculty PGR Committee.

Please note, Interim Progress Reviews are requested October and April every year, regardless of your start date so please disregard the deadlines noted in this section.

PDLP Section 3.3: Request for LOA or Extensions
This is pre-populated data that shows formal Leave of Absences (LOAs) and extensions to your maximum time as held on your student record.

PDLP Section 3.4: Changes to Mode of Attendance (MOA)
This is pre-populated data as held on your student record that shows your Mode of Attendance and any changes.

6. Learning Needs and Skill Development Tab

PDLP Section 4: Learning Needs and Skills Development Objectives
In this section, you will log your analysis of your research needs and how you will develop your skills needed for your research.

Your learning needs and skills can be categorised into four Research Development Framework (RDF) Domains (A-D) with a fifth (E) for other additional considerations. RDF Domains A-D each have subsets (1-3). See The Vitae Researcher Development Framework - Vitae for further details.

PDLP Section 4.1: Analysis of Needs and Objectives
To add a new RDF Domain Entry, from the drop down box choose the appropriate RDF Domain (A-E). Add in text in the 'Learning Needs, Skills, Development Objectives' field provide the RDF sub category and brief title. For example: 'A1 - Knowledge Base, Subject Knowledge'.
Then complete the 'How these needs and objectives will be met section.
When you have finished your description, click the 'Add' butt

You will then see your learning need in the corresponding RDF domain.

Note: Each time you add a new field it will be given a sequence number.

To edit a previously saved learning need, from the 'Select RDF Domain' drop down box choose the learning need you intend to edit.

Select RDF Domain to Update/Edit		
Select RDF Domain	A-4-A1 - Knowledge Base ▼	Select

The text of the learning need can then be edited in the 'Update/ Edit Selected RDF Domain' section.

Update/Edit Selected RDF Domain		
Learning Needs, Skills, Development Objectives	A1 - Knowledge Base	
How these needs and objectives will be met	Seeking out information on Research Topic Create a Bibliography and find further sources of information	Update RDF Domain

When you have finished editing, click on the 'Update RDF Domain' button.

If you have selected the incorrect learning need to edit, click the 'Clear Fields' button

Clear Fields

7. Research Training Tab

PDLP Section 5.0: Record of Research Training and Skills Development
In this section, you will record your research training and development.
PhD PGRs enrolled on or after August 1st 2013 must complete a minimum of 200 hours training in personal development and employability skills (through accredited Keele modules (10 credits is equivalent to 100 hours), non-accredited courses in a variety of formats, or a mixture of both) plus any subject-specific requirements set by the Research Centre (see 5.2).

PDLP Section 5.1: Research training and skills development prior to registration
If you have any previous research training and skills approved by your Faculty PGR Committee this will show in this section.

PDLP Section 5.2: Record of Compulsory and Optional credit-bearing Modules
This is pre-populated data as held on your student record that shows the Modules you are taking at Keele.

PDLP Section 5.3: Research Training Log

To add a new module or training activity, complete each field, adding text in the boxes as appropriate in the 'Add a new module or training activity' Section.

When you have finished your description, click the 'Add' button.

Add a new module or training activity:

Module title or activity(*MANDATORY*)	
Module Code (if applicable)	
Credit/Hours	Hours ▾
Add Date Started	dd/mm/yyyy
Add Date Completed	dd/mm/yyyy

Add

When the new module or training activity has been added it will show in the main track.

Note: New module or training activities will be ordered by date added.

If you have received a certificate or evidence of attending research training, you can upload documents to the module or training activity. Click on upload link 'clicking here'.

You can upload your certificate by clicking here

Documents that have been uploaded

You will then be prompted to upload your document from its location.

Upload Document.
This is a facility to upload a your current learning log.

Click on the Browse button below and navigate to the corresponding document. Once the document has been retrieved click on the Save button; the document will then be stored in the database.

Docment Requiring Uploading   Choose File No file chosen

Cancel

Save

When uploaded you can click on the document to view.

You can upload your certificate by clicking here

Documents that have been uploaded

Test.pdf Uploaded on 22 Oct 2018

Note: Ensure that you upload the correct file to the electronic PDLP, as you will be unable to remove it.

To edit a previously saved module or training activity, select the module or training activity to be edited in the 'Edit an existing module or activity entry' Section. Select the module or training activity to be edited from the drop down box.

The text of the module or training activity can then be edited in the 'Edit an existing module or

activity entry' section.

Edit an existing module or activity entry:

Select the module or activity:	Research Management ▼	Select

The module or training activity to be edited will appear in the 'Add a new module or training activity' Section.

Add a new module or training activity:

Module title or activity(*MANDATORY*)	Research Management	
Module Code (if applicable)		
Credit/Hours	7	Hours ▼
Add Date Started	10/11/2018	
Add Date Completed	10/10/2018	

Update Module

When you have finished editing, click on the 'Update Module' button.

If you have selected the incorrect module or training activity to edit, click the 'Clear Selection' button.

Clear Selection

Please note, any PGR (excluding Professional Doctorates) who registers for a module will need to add the training hours themselves. They should not undertake an assessment for credits, as this will result in additional tuition fee charges.

8. Targets and Objectives Tab

PDLP Section 6.0: Plan and Record of Research Activities
In this section, you will record your research activities, targets and objectives.

PDLP Section 6.1: Research targets and objectives to be achieved
This is a list of your objectives and how you are tracking your targets to meet your objectives. Any changes to Objectives and Target dates are to be agreed in conjunction with your Lead Supervisor.

To add a Research Target, complete each field, adding text in the boxes as appropriate in the 'Add a new Research Target' Section. When you have finished your description, click the 'Add Target' button.

| 6 | ACTIVE | 22/10/2018 | | 22/12/2018 | Historiography | Write a Historiography of my subject area. | IN PROGRESS |

The Research Target will then show in the track, highlighted in Green for active Targets. Each target will be assigned a sequence number.

Edit an existing Research Target above:

Select a Research Target: 6 ▼   Select

To edit a previously saved Research Target, select the Research Target sequence number to be edited in the drop down box in the 'Edit an existing Research Target' Section. (Only Active Research Targets can be edited).

The text of the Research Target can then be edited in the 'Add a new Research Target' section.

When you have finished editing, click on the 'Update Activity' button.

Note: When editing a Research Target, the original target will not be deleted from the track. The most recent version of the target will supersede this. The previous target will be marked in blue, as 'Inactive', and the updated version will be in green, as 'Active'.

| 6 | INACTIVE | 22/10/2018 | | 22/12/2018 | Historiography | Write a Historiography of my subject area. | IN PROGRESS |
| 7 | ACTIVE | 22/10/2018 | | 22/12/2018 | Historiography and Review | Write a Historiography and Review of my subject area. | IN PROGRESS |

If you have selected the incorrect Research Training to edit, click the 'Clear Selection' button.

9. Thesis Tab

PDLP Section 6.2: Thesis Chapters and progress with Thesis
In this section, you will record your Thesis Chapters and progress on your Thesis.

To add a Thesis Chapter, complete each field adding text in the boxes as appropriate in the 'Add a new Thesis Chapter' Section. When you have finished your description, click the 'Add Chapter' button.

Add a new Thesis Chapter:					
Target Date:	dd/mm/yyyy	Draft or Final:	Draft ▾	Date Completed:	dd/mm/yyyy
Proposed Chapter:					

Add Chapter

The Thesis Chapter will then show in the track. Each entry will be assigned a sequence number.

| 3 | | 30/10/2018 | Chapter 15 Outline - investigations and analysis into chapters | | DRAFT | |

To edit a previously saved Thesis Chapter, select the sequence number to be edited in the drop down box in the 'Edit an existing Thesis Chapter' Section.

Edit an existing Thesis Chapter above:

Select a Thesis Chapter:	1 ▾	Select

The text of the sequence can then be edited in the 'Add a new Thesis Chapter' section.

Add a new Thesis Chapter:					
Target Date:	30/10/2018	Draft or Final:	Draft ▾	Date Completed:	dd/mm/yyyy
Proposed Chapter:					
Chapter 15 Outline - investigations and analysis into chapters					

Update Chapter

When you have finished editing, click on the 'Update Chapter' button. The updated details will then show in the track.

| 3 | | 30/10/2018 | Chapter 15 Outline - investigations and analysis into chapters Update - add a review also. | | FINAL | 31/10/2018 |

If you have selected the incorrect sequence number to edit, click the 'Clear Selection' button.

Clear Selection

10. Downloading your PDLP

We are aware the PDLP does not have a download option, and this is something we are unable to resolve currently.

To take a copy for your Interim and Progress Review 1,2 and 3 submissions, open your PDLP and select the three dots at the top right-hand corner of your screen.

Select 'print' and change the destination to 'save as PDF'. Work your way through, repeating for each tab on your PDLP.

Once you have the saved PDF tabs, combine them into a zip folder on your desktop and then you can upload to Skillsforge as part of your review.

11. Troubleshooting

If you are experiencing any issues with logging into or accessing the PDLP from eVision, please contact IT Services at it.service@keele.ac.uk or use the Self Service Portal at https://servicedesk.keele.ac.uk/tas/public/login/saml

If you have any queries about information that is held on your student record or if you believe that there are any errors with your student record, please contact: studentrecords@keele.ac.uk