

Getting PDP to Work!

A pilot project by the College of Life Sciences & Medicine for 250 Level 1 students registered for a Cell Biology course.



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Project Outline

- An assessed PDP activity was introduced as part of the final practical class.
- The PDP activity involved students completing a SWOT analysis of their first year performance.
- Academic staff, PhD demonstrators & careers staff were available to assist students with any queries.



SWOT TEMPLATE – AN A4 SHEET

NAME: _____

Aim: To undertake a SWOT analysis of your first year performance.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

SWOT

SWOT Analysis: Top three strengths indicated by Aberdeen students

1. Enjoyed a particular subject, course, module or topic (83%).

2. Improved transferable skills e.g. laboratory or IT skills (57%).

3. Mixing with a diverse range of students improved people and social skills (36%).

Other strengths highlighted include:

- Hard working, dedicated and motivated (19%).
- Increased confidence (15%).
- Good attendance/time keeping (13%).

SWOT

SWOT Analysis: Top three weaknesses indicated by Aberdeen students

1. Struggling or not enjoying a course, topic, module or subject (45%).

2. Poor attendance or time management (25%).

3. Lack of study (19%).

Other weaknesses highlighted include:

- Not completing enough exam revision (18%).
- Struggling with basic maths or calculations (17%).
- Not being able to concentrate for long periods (14%).

SWOT

SWOT Analysis: Top three opportunities indicated by Aberdeen students

1. The opportunity to gain work experience as part of a degree programme (34%).

2. The opportunity to get involved with extra-curricular science activities (18%).

3. The opportunity to join a university club or society (15%).

Other opportunities highlighted include:

- Improved career opportunities for graduates (17%).
- The opportunity to seek staff help to improve academic performance (10%).

SWOT

SWOT Analysis: Top three threats indicated by Aberdeen students

1. Managing study with extra-curricular distractions such as family, hobbies, friends (41%).

2. Managing part-time work with academic studies (19%).

3. Not enjoying or struggling with a course (14%).

Other threats highlighted include:

- Lack of self-motivation (11%).
- Poor organisational skills (11%).
- Coping with living away from home (10%).

INTERESTING COMMENTS

Strengths

"I enjoy biology but there is so much more to Biology than I originally thought."

Weaknesses

"Loads of 'hot girls' in the library made studying difficult."

Threat

"My main obstacle has been getting used to being on my own. In relation to University, High School was like being spoon-fed, now I have been cut-off – cold turkey!"

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Excellent

An in-depth and thorough SWOT report showing both detailed content and evidence of reflective analysis and student effort.

Good

A reasonable SWOT report but lacking either some detailed content OR reflective analysis. Reasonable student effort is also evident.



Bare Pass

A SWOT report with some content but showing insufficient effort or attempt to carry out reflective analysis.



KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Provided an opportunity for students to reflect on their first year performance.
- Enabled staff and students to interact to discuss student performance, future academic opportunities etc.
- Provided staff with a valuable insight to the first year experience.
- Helped to establish a PDP activity that could be developed for future students.