

Welcome to NUPAD:

Personal Development Planning
for Masters students

with MyPAD e-portfolio



You may already be familiar with keeping track of your progress during your previous study or in the workplace; in fact most employees are expected to take note of their development and keep personal records of achievements and goals, so it's a habit well worth developing!

Northampton Unified Personal and Academic Development (NUPAD) consists of materials designed to help you keep reflective notes and to plan for your next step, and may also include activities within your course programme or meetings with your personal tutor which help develop essential skills for study and work.

Thinking and reflecting on your learning experiences encourages deeper understanding of the topic and increased self-awareness. Writing down these reactions and insights from experiences of study, work and other activities, for example in a learning journal or reflective account, will prove valuable when you come to apply for jobs or placements – employers want to hear evidence of development described in detail!

Remember:

Write your thoughts down.

Work your ideas out.

Make your plans happen!!!

"Pro-active self-development is a key factor in determining successful performance on graduate recruitment programmes."

Co-operative Group Talent Manager, quoting research by Strategis, 2004

NUPAD consists of a range of activities designed to help you to:

- Identify and develop higher level skills for academic and future success
- Understand how your skills transfer to new situations or contexts
- Explore possible career routes and focus your decision-making
- Express your achievements on paper e.g. CVs, and verbally e.g. in interviews
- Clarify goals, and how to go about achieving them
- Build a bank of detailed examples for future job & course applications

You should:

- Attend tutorials and skills workshops and make the most of support available
- Reflect on comments on assignment marker sheets, and take action as suggested
- Practise making links between academic learning and skills developed elsewhere: placements, part-time jobs, voluntary activities
- Make use of your MyPAD personal e-portfolio space in NILE to keep track of your progress. MyPAD includes links to the guidance and support materials on the NUPAD web pages pdp.northampton.ac.uk

Tips to make the most of NUPAD

Getting started...

- Meet your personal/dissertation tutor, and check out any course-specific NUPAD support
- Personalise your MyPAD space on NILE - there are some suggestions for organizing your notes, but it's up to you what to include and how to present your ideas in blogs or wikis. Use the links to the web pages pdp.northampton.ac.uk (Postgraduate Masters) where there are exercises and suggestions to prompt your thoughts. When completed they can be downloaded and saved and then uploaded to your MyPAD space.
- Keep a copy of assignment front sheets, with a note of tutor's comments. When you have a similar assignment, check back to see how you can improve.
- Find a regular routine for updating. It could be once a week, or when you hand assignments in or get them back; keep sections organized and dated
- Share selected material from MyPAD in personal tutorials (take a copy of your records or use the sharing facility within MyPAD to share a site with your tutor)

What to include:

- Modules studied, assignment tasks and grades; attendance on other courses
- Discussions about choices you make and the reasoning behind those decisions
- Meetings with personal/dissertation tutor, together with any notes or documents
- Leisure /community activities, with details of any positions of responsibility/leadership
- Work-based experiences – include paid, voluntary and informal roles
- Useful contacts, phone numbers, web sites...
- Thoughts about career pathways, and steps towards achieving goals

'For my probationary review in my first graduate job, I used my PDP to help identify strengths and set targets for the future. As a result I was given a pay rise!'

- Link or combine other personal web-logs with your academic and career development on MyPAD - this will help you build an holistic picture of where you're at and where you're going

Most employers will ask you to do something similar, so getting into the habit now will give you a head start. As you keep track of your own progress, you will really be aware of how you're changing and developing.

- Interviews, dates, who you talked to, what happened, your reactions (the blog facility in MyPAD is ideal for this)
- Don't forget informal conversations with friends or colleagues – these often stimulate new ideas or insights. If it made a difference, or made you think, jot it down in your records

Write your thoughts down, develop your CV, improve your chances!

