

Graduate School of Life Sciences

Guidance for completing your Personal Progress Log

Your Personal Progress Log serves as a record of your training and development as a graduate student. Its purpose is to help you to plan your own training and to record the outcomes. As well as gaining valuable skills through the training itself, you will find that the information accumulated in this Log will prove helpful when you come to rewriting your c.v. and applying for jobs. The document belongs to you - it is your responsibility to keep it up to date.

Starting out: you will find it particularly helpful to log your meetings with your supervisor in the first few months and you are encouraged to log strategic meetings with your supervisor. You will also use your log to record the results of your initial skills survey.

First Year Assessment: your Log is an essential part of your first year assessment and must be submitted with your first year report (details on the GSLS website).

Final Examination: The Degree Committee reserves the right request a copy of your log, and a copy should be provided to your Department. Make sure your Log is in a final form and up to date when you submit your dissertation.

On certain pages you will notice a column for your supervisor to sign to indicate that you have participated in the activities described. It is your responsibility to ensure your supervisor is aware of the training activities you have undertaken.

How to Use Your Student Log

Your Student Log is partly intended as a means of recording and reviewing your **skills training**. The varied backgrounds and prior experience of graduate students means that this training needs to be tailored to the needs of the individual. However the log should also be used to record any training undertaken.

You should **discuss your training requirements with your supervisor** at the start of your first year, and you are advised to re-evaluate your progress regularly – at least at the beginning of each subsequent year. It is particularly important to carry out such a review at the start of your first year to help you make the most of your time in Cambridge. We have also designed a **self-assessment tool** to help you to do this; you should keep the results in this log (see Section 7).

During the course of your study in Cambridge, you will be expected to engage in **about 10 days** (or equivalent) of transferable skills training **per year** for the first three years. Transferable skills are skills that will help you with your research in the short term but also help you with your

personal development in whatever career direction you take after your studies. You can find out more about these skills on the GSLS website. Your engagement with transferable skills development is recorded in the form of '**credits**', one credit being the equivalent of a half-day spent on the development of your transferable skills. This does not mean that you will have to attend 10 days of formal courses. Many activities, such as presenting your work at a seminar, or writing a report, are part of everyday life in your Department. More information about the credit system can be found on the GSLS website. Your Department will issue you with a programme of **compulsory activities** (Section 3), some of which will be departmentally-based, others involve attendance at **Graduate School of Life Sciences Induction** or University-run courses (such as computing courses). It is likely that this compulsory programme will be heavier in your first year than in subsequent years. It will then be up to you and your supervisor to determine what other personal development needs you have and to ensure that you meet them. These **optional elements** may include activities from demonstrating to undergraduates, to writing a scientific paper or attending a course in Project Management.

How the Credit System Works

One credit is approximately equivalent to half a day spent on the development of your transferable skills.

To complete the equivalent of about ten days per academic year you must therefore aim to achieve approximately 20 credits in a one-year MPhil (research), 60 credits over the course of a three-year PhD, or 80 credits for four-year (1+3) Integrated Doctoral Programmes. This need not be spread uniformly over the period; indeed you may well find that it is appropriate to undertake more training activities during your first year.

Some activities, such as attendance at a formal course, will be credited pro-rata, e.g. attending the half-day work shop on supervising undergraduates will earn you one credit. Other activities, such as writing your First Year Report, as well as some courses with several goals, receive credit for the transferable skills element only, and are thus not credited pro-rata. Examples of credits for particular training courses are listed on the GSLS website (<http://www.gradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/Skills/Credits>)

Compulsory Departmental Training Activities

A customized template outlining compulsory training activities will be provided by your department. This, together with confirmation of attendance, should be appended to your log.

Skills Survey

You will be contacted by email in the Michaelmas Term with your unique access link to the Skills Survey. You should complete this survey each Michaelmas term throughout your degree programme (or in your start term and subsequent Michaelmas terms if you started at a later point in the year). It should take no more than 15 minutes. Each time you complete the survey, **print the result** and file it here in this log book.

It will help you to:

- (i) understand what transferable skills are
- (ii) access what transferable skills you have
- (iii) decide on your needs to develop new ones

It will help us to:

- (i) find out what transferable skills our students have
- (ii) plan how we can help you to develop these skills further

What will happen to the data?

The total collected data will be analysed as a group, without analysis of individuals; we can then see whether our training is being effective.

What can you do with the data?

Discuss your data with your supervisor and other university staff, who can advise you about what training might help you (**Personal Development Planning**). When you repeat the survey in the future, you will have a record of how you have developed new skills.

Will we contact you?

The survey is anonymous and we will not contact you about your results, but we will know if you have completed it, and you will receive an email reminder if you have not done so.



Graduate School of Life Sciences

Personal Progress Log

Student	
Start date	
Degree sought	
Department	
Supervisor	
Adviser	

Section 1:

You should sign the appropriate statement below when you submit your Personal Progress Log:

First Year Report:

I confirm that the information I have given in this Log is a true and accurate record:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Thesis Submission:

I confirm that the information I have given in this Log is a true and accurate record and that I have provided a copy to my Department:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SECTION 2. Record of Strategic Meetings with Supervisor/ Record of Meetings with Advisor

Meeting	Date	Supervisor's initials	Student's initials
Initial (first month)			
Discuss training needs (year 1)			
Project Feasibility (c 3 months)			
Progress (1 st year report)			
Discuss training needs (year 2)			
Progress (year 2)			
Discuss training needs (year 3)			
Progress (year 3: start)			
Progress (year 3: end)			
Progress (10 th term, if needed)			

Record of meetings with Adviser

The frequency of meetings with advisors varies, but a minimum of two meetings per academic year is generally expected.

Meeting	Date	Adviser's initials	Student's initials

SECTION 3. Compulsory Departmental Training Activities

A customized template outlining compulsory training activities will be provided by your department. This, together with confirmation of attendance, should be appended to your log.

SECTION 4. Formal courses attended

***Academic Year:**

*Print pages for each academic year from this template as needed

List all the formal taught courses you attend:

Course attended	Date	*Credits	Comments (if any)	Supervisor's Signature

*For further information on Credits see: <http://www.gradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/Skills/Credits>

SECTION 5. Other training activity

Academic Year:

*Print pages for each academic year from this template as needed

List all other training activities in which you participate.

Training Activity	Date	*Credits	Comments (if any)	Supervisor's Signature

*For further information on Credits see: <http://www.gradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/Skills/Credits>

SECTION 6. Final record

Record the total credits that you accumulate during the course of your PhD

Credits accumulated during PhD training				
	Section 3 (Dept)	Section 4 (courses)	Section 5 (other activities)	Total
Year 1				
Year 2				
Year 3				
Year 4 (if relevant)				
Total:				

SECTION 7. Skills Survey

You will be contacted by email with access to the Skills Survey. You can print out your data and insert it here.