

## WHAT SHOULD AN ACTION PLAN INCLUDE (POSTGRADUATE)?

The Action Plan is prepared by the Faculty Board in response to the report from the Faculty/Program Review Panel. Within 30 working days of receipt of the final Faculty/Program Review Panel's report, the Faculty Board produces the action plan to address points raised and recommendations made in the Faculty/Program Review Panel's report. The Action Plan is sent by the Dean to the Faculty/Program Review Panel and to the Learning and Teaching Committee, and the Learning and Teaching Committee monitors its implementation and effects in a time scale that it (the Learning and Teaching Committee) determines.

An Action Plan address questions such as:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we have got there?
- How will we know if we have been successful?

Put into greater detail it raises questions such as:

- Where are we now?
- What is the staff capability/capacity to move ahead?
- Which existing staff have the required expertise?
- What are the specific goals and targets?
- What is to be done (clear, specific, concrete action/activities)?
- Who is to do it (responsibilities)?
- When it is to be done by?
- How progress will be monitored (by whom, when, how)?
- How progress will be evaluated (by whom, when, how)?
- What are the success criteria (with quantitative targets against which to judge progress)?
- What timescales are there for different stages of implementation?
- What resources are required?

The Action Plan comprises:

- A series of 'SMART' objectives to address the areas of need identified in the Faculty Review report, e.g.:
  - a. **Specific**/Significant/Short-term
  - b. **Measurable**/Motivating/Manageable
  - c. **Achievable**/Agreed/Aligned/Advantageous
  - d. **Relevant**/Realistic/result-oriented/Resourced
  - e. **Time-framed**; Time-bound/Timely/Tangible

- Intended outcomes and success criteria;
- A detail of what is to be addressed (the contents and priorities);
- How the objectives and intended outcomes will be met;
- Defining tasks, targets and responsible individuals, resource allocation and costings, and time frames/dates for completion;
- Success criteria and evidence;
- Monitoring progress;
- Producing the public version of the plan in summary form.
- Targets, tasks and success criteria to check progress (monitoring) and to evaluate/check success
- Initial tasks and checks for readiness
- Tasks and routes to the achievement of targets, and means to monitor and check progress;
- Targets and intended destinations, and success criteria to check when and how well these have been achieved/reached.

A good action plan:

- Addresses all the key issues;
- Is concise and clearly written;
- Identifies priorities, specific targets and outcomes;
- Is clearly focused on classroom improvement;
- Lists manageable steps towards raising standards of achievement;
- Includes reference to monitoring and evaluation of intended outcomes and student achievement;
- Provides indicators and criteria to recognize improvement;
- Identifies and quantifies resources;
- Is drawn up consultatively.

The action plan can be set out following these headings, for each item:

- (a) Recommendation
- (b) Response
- (c) Objectives of the action
- (d) Action proposed
- (e) Responsibility
- (f) Time frame
- (g) Progress indicators
- (h) Expected outcome
- (i) Success criteria and indicators

An action plan works when:

- Leaders have a clear oversight of its implementation;

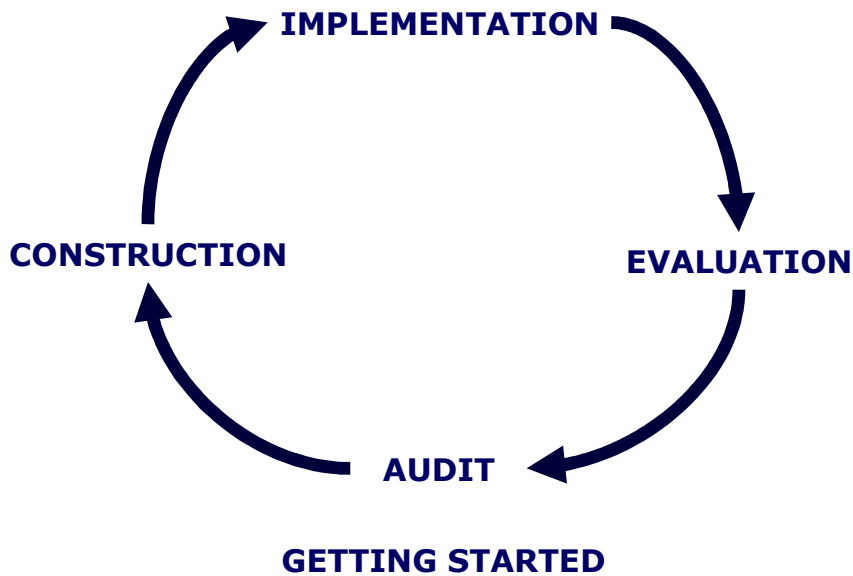
- Everyone knows what they are expected to do;
- Strategies are implemented to address under-achievement, raise expectations, and improve the ethos and standards of education;
- Resources are available;
- Mechanisms are used for monitoring the implementation and progress of plan;
- Mechanisms are in place for evaluating the effectiveness of the action.

Steps in action planning include:

1. Select the issue and decide whom to involve;
2. Review evidence of existing performance;
3. Make a self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses;
4. Describe the ideal future state of affairs;
5. State the objectives concisely and recognizably;
6. Select key features of the 'ideal future state' for use as indicators and evaluation headings;
7. Generate a list of options for action to be taken to lead to the objective;
8. Select a limited, related set of these actions;
9. Cost the actions proposed, Show plans for acquiring or allocating further resources;
10. Define tasks, targets and responsible individuals, resource allocation and dates for completion;
11. Complete a project planning chart to show how different tasks are related;
12. Choose an evaluator and agree stages and audiences for reports on progress;
13. Produce the public version of the plan in summary form.

Processes in development planning can be set out thus (Hargreaves, D. and Hopkins D. (1991) *The Empowered School*. London: Cassell):

## FOUR PROCESSES IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING



The process of development planning can be set out thus:



The development planning process (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991)

**ACTION PLANS:  
targets, tasks and  
success criteria**

	<b>IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>EVALUATION ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>STAGE 1</b>	<b>PREPARATIONS (Initial tasks)</b>	<b>CHECK FOR READINESS</b>
<b>STAGE 2</b>	<b>ROUTES (Tasks)</b>	<b>CHECK PROGRESS</b>
<b>STAGE 3</b>	<b>DESTINATIONS (Targets)</b>	<b>CHECK SUCCESS</b>

**THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS**  
(Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991)