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https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/stem-conference-2014/Post_event_resources/Bioscience/Competencies_Development

Providing Biosciences undergraduates with a good learning experience whilst enhancing their employability: The Competencies Development Scheme (CDS) at Cardiff School of Biosciences

A presentation from the STEM Annual Conference 2014.

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The presented structured and tangible system of learning and teaching activities for developing competencies, of assessing the level of achievement, and all being linked to bespoke feedback, pastoral, academic and career advice, allows for supporting undergraduates optimally in their development.

It aims to produce employable graduates with a clearly defined range of subject-specific and transferable employability-related skills (Graduate Attributes) at an acceptable competence level, developed with appropriate progression during the degree, and fostering life-long reflective practice. The eventual "Record of Competency Training" can be shown to a prospective employer.

CDS activities require and encourage a high level of student engagement. CDS is mostly run outside modules with some components embedded in core modules and supported by Personal Tutor and Research Project Supervisor. Self-monitoring allows undergraduates to assess their development, to plan further action, and to record evidence using ePortfolios. A searchable skills database aids development planning and module choice, and allows retrieving a record. Especially Level Six CDS activities require undergraduates to be proactive, thus preparing the transition of Personal Development Planning (disguised as CDS) into Continuing Professional Development. Undergraduates identify any remaining training needs (based on diagnostic tests, feedback, progress reviews) and discuss the necessary remedial action with their Supervisor.

Undergraduates become more mature throughout the process of learning and engaging with CDS. Reflection and a focus of mind support subject learning and academic achievement, which further enhances employability.