

# ENHANCING STUDENT EXPERIENCE WITH THE USE OF AN INTERACTIVE ACADEMIC PLANNER

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## Introduction

### Background

There is growing use of distance learning in Higher Education in the UK; this method of delivery having been accelerated by the COVID-19 Pandemic (POST, 2021; Xiao, 2018). The Postgraduate Clinical Pharmacy Programme is one of the established part-time, distance learning programmes at De Montfort University. Qualified pharmacists enrolled onto the Programme carry out further education to enhance their clinical knowledge, develop transferable skills and to support their career progression. (De Montfort University, 2022)

Whilst distance learning offers a convenient method of study for adult learners, they can face significant challenges. Kara et al (2019) report some of these are 'internal challenges', such as 'difficulty in time management' and an 'inability to balance education and work'. They argue students need to be informed of what learning will entail and should be provided with guidance and strategies around how to take control of their learning and time.

Similar to most distance learners, students on the Clinical Pharmacy Programme undertake this further study alongside full-time work and often express a feeling of overwhelm and not knowing 'where to start' or how to plan their study. This required a solution.

### The Planner

An interactive academic planner was therefore created, on Microsoft Excel, to address these challenges. The planner included:

- A homepage with 'live' countdowns to key dates for the module (countdowns automatically updating themselves)
- Portrait and landscape calendars with key tasks for the module pre-populated and cells which are personalisable. A printable calendar area was also pre-set.
- A page to plan own tasks and goals, to be updated as students progress through the module.

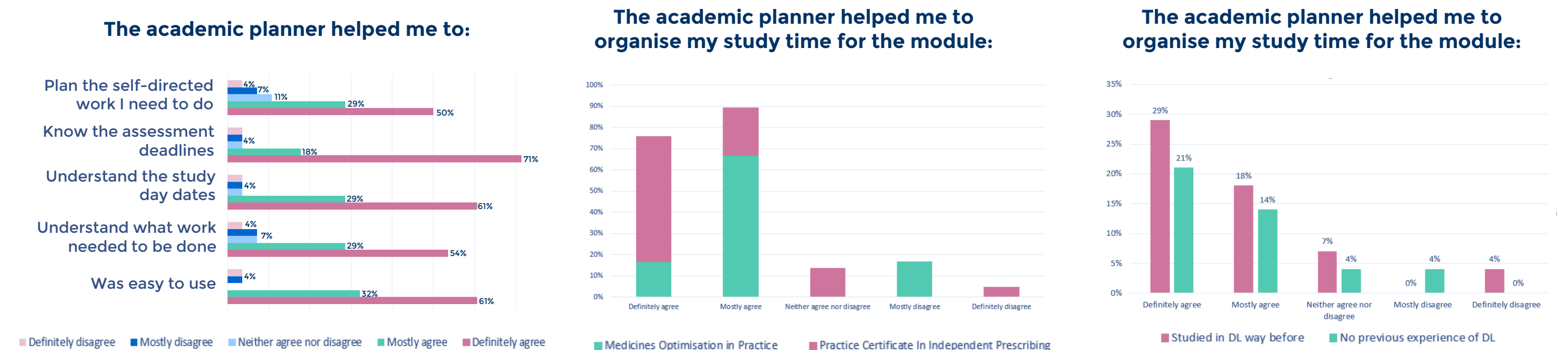
### Aim:

To evaluate whether the use of an interactive academic planner empowers pharmacists studying on the DL Pharmacy programme at De Montfort University to plan their studies.

## Results

**Questionnaire:** 28 responses were received (MOIP Module - 6 students and IP Module - 22 students). **Focus Group:** 2 attendees.

**Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data thematically analysed.**



**The questionnaire and focus group revealed three themes:**

### Motivating due its 'live'/dynamic nature

The countdowns on the homepage and automatically highlighted 'current week' provides motivation and a reminder of progression of the module and approaching deadlines.

### Valuable in being able to add own goals

Students appreciated the ability to personalise the planner to add their own goals and tasks. However, not every cell can be personalised.

### Presents big picture and helps to plan

Provides an overview of the module, which helps with planning and provides a 'snapshot' visual aid of all learning to be completed (described by one student as putting all the 'jigsaw pieces together')

## Methods

**NAME** Trisha Roshni (Type your name)

**MODULE** Independent Prescribing (6 month course) (Type the module name)

**Group Number** Group 3 (Type the group number)

**Use Student:** This planner has been designed to help you to plan and organise your work for the module. It includes a homepage with 'live' countdowns to key dates for the module (countdowns automatically updating themselves), portrait and landscape calendars with key tasks for the module pre-populated and cells which are personalisable. A printable calendar area was also pre-set. A page to plan own tasks and goals, to be updated as students progress through the module.

**Click here to view your submission deadline**

**Click here to view your assessment deadline**

**Record any notes for yourself here:**

**Deadlines:**

**OSCE Assessment Part 2** 07/04/2022 In 32 Days

**Structured Case Report** 13/05/2022 In 68 Days

**Portfolio Assessment** 08/07/2022 In 124 Days

Study Days		
Task	Task Completed?	Task Started?
Induction Day	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 1	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 2	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 3	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 4	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 5	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 6	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 7	Task Completed	Task Started

Task	Task Completed?	Task Started?
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Study Day 1	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 2	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 3	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 4	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 5	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 6	Task Completed	Task Started
Study Day 7	Task Completed	Task Started

### Planner Homepage

### Planning My Tasks Page

### Portrait Calendar

Students studying on two modules (Module 1: Medicines Optimisation in Practice (MOIP) and Module 2: Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing (IP)) were provided with the Planner during their induction.

A mixed methods approach was taken; an online, anonymised questionnaire was distributed via email to 133 students four weeks later and students asked to partake in online focus groups. The questionnaire included declarative statements on a Likert scale, exploring the extent to which the planner encouraged understanding and planning of required learning and free text boxes for further comment.

Ethics approval was obtained via the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences Ethics Committee

## Discussion & Future Considerations

"The planner also allowed me to make additions/amendments that was personalised to me and my learning plan which was really helpful"

"I also like the countdown of when the submissions are due and I think this also acts as a reminder and keeps me motivated to work little bit each day"

"Puts all the pieces of the module together like a jigsaw puzzle.. I can then break down into smaller tasks... made me feel less anxious about the work in front of me"

"Everything in one place. Easy to use and organise so nothing is missed. Best part is that allow you to track progress of my work and see what has been started and what need finishing"

"Giving me a structure... of when to start on tasks as well as prioritize my work, but also incorporate this course into my work and life"

The planner motivated students, encouraged metacognition relating to their learning approaches and inspired students to take control of their time and study plans.

The questionnaire was designed to be completed easily and in less than 5 minutes. However, the low response rate and participation in the focus group limits applicability of results to all learners. Evaluation was of subjective experiences when using the planner and there is a diverse range of learners on both modules, therefore, results may not apply to all. Future evaluation should involve incentive for participation and be extended to a wider range of modules.

Two themes for improvements to the planner arose; for every cell on the planner to be personalisable and to include adjustable print areas. This will be amended prior to collaborating with colleagues to use the planner on a wider range of modules, followed by further evaluation.

Learning Outcome	Topic	Topic	Topic	Topic	Topic
Learning Outcome 1 (Cross-Module)	History of Prescribing Decisions	History of Prescribing Decisions	History of Prescribing Decisions	History of Prescribing Decisions	History of Prescribing Decisions
Learning Outcome 2 (Cross-Module)	Family, Social, Cultural, and Ethnicity	Family, Social, Cultural, and Ethnicity	Family, Social, Cultural, and Ethnicity	Family, Social, Cultural, and Ethnicity	Family, Social, Cultural, and Ethnicity
Learning Outcome 3 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 4 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 5 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 6 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 7 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 8 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 9 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 10 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 11 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 12 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 13 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 14 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 15 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 16 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 17 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 18 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 19 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 20 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 21 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 22 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 23 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 24 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 25 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 26 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 27 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 28 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 29 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 30 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 31 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society
Learning Outcome 32 (Cross-Module)	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society	Pharmaceuticals and Society

Example of a planner personalised by a student: new tabs added for tracking achievement of learning outcomes