

## AccessEd: Researcher Development Programme Researcher Engagement and Reflection Log

### Workshop: **Developing Great Professional Skills**

#### Outline

This worksheet is designed for you to reflect on the key learning steps from the training workshop you attended and think about workshop learning outcomes in line with your learning portfolio.

We encourage you to make a note of your responses in a word document or otherwise, ensuring your record your reflections and consider what legacy this will have after the training has finished.

Consider the following actions that you might take in relation to this workshop engagement and reflection log:

- ✓ Consider sharing your reflections with your peers – Commonwealth Scholars and others
- ✓ How can you best record your notes and reflections to best suit your own individual style of learning?
- ✓ How might you use reflections from this worksheet log in the future to contribute towards learning in other workshops?

#### A. Self-reflection: Skills development

1. Rate your confidence in the following 'characteristics of a true professional', which were covered during the workshop. Rate the skills from 1-5 (1 = least confident, 5 = most confident):

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Positive attitude – how you approach your work  |
|  | Respect – considerate of the opinions of others   |
|  | Communication – good writing, listening and speaking skills adapted to your environment |
|  | Ethics – displaying ethical conduct   |
|  | Reliability – meeting deadlines, turning up on time                                     |
|  | Expertise – professionals never stop learning   |
|  | Organisation – staying on top of your workload  |
|  | Honesty – telling the truth, owning mistakes  |
|  | Appearance – meeting the dress code if there is one, looking professional               |
|  | <b>Total ( max: 45)</b>   |

- Below is a list of soft skills that professional employers are looking for, as discussed during training.

Rate your perceived strengths in the following areas. This is helpful in understanding what further training opportunities you could pursue (1 = no expertise, 5 = high expertise):

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Responsibility - accepting fault, not "passing the buck" to others                  |
|  | Teamwork and collaboration - ability to work in team and achieve goals of the team  |
|  | Time management skills - ability to prioritise tasks and ensure deadlines are met   |
|  | Flexibility, adaptability - able to change/adapt to new procedures and environments |
|  | Commitment - dependability, reliability, willingness to work hard                   |
|  | Decision making/ problem solving - making decisions and solving issues              |
|  | Leadership skills - leading others and yourself                                     |
|  | Handling pressure - ability to work under potentially stressful situations          |
|  | Creativity skills - applying both logic and creativity to tasks                     |
|  | <b>Total (max: 45)</b>  |

- What was your biggest learning takeaway from the workshop?

- How will you apply what you have learnt today to your research/studies, and how does it complement your learning portfolio?

- What is one commitment you will make to improving your professional skills?

E.g.

*Skill: Decision making and problem solving*

*Action: Speak to my project's leader or my line manager. Actively raise that I would like to work on my problem solving skills and be given the responsibility to make decision on the next project. Request that I am given further opportunities to apply myself in 'problem solving' scenarios. When a scenario comes up, request feedback on performance.*

Skill:

Action:

## B. Self-reflection: Learning in relation to Developing Professional Skills

6. During training, we discussed professional expectations in different country contexts.

Write down three examples of professionalism expectations that you have observed in the UK, and how these either differ or are the same to your country context. For each of these examples, write down how you might adapt your behaviour to succeed in each professional context example.

|                   |
|-------------------|
| (1)<br>(2)<br>(3) |
|-------------------|

7. The workshop covered how different skills you have gained in academia can be translated to the professional world. In other words, how your current skills relate to other careers. Examples include 'academic content and review skills', which could be translated to writing papers, reports or newsletters in the workplace.

Write down one example of a skill you have from academia (interpersonal skills; research skills etc.) and how you would see this as being useful in another professional workplace. Name which type of workplace this could be useful in.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

8. During training, we discussed 'a practical approach to task management' – rating tasks by important / not important and urgent / not urgent. Use the grid below and populate it with your current task or to do list to help you project manage your time.

|               | Not Urgent | Urgent |
|---------------|------------|--------|
| Important     |            |        |
| Not important |            |        |

9. The workshop covered 8 practical steps you can take in any conflict situation in the workplace to resolve it and create a learning opportunity. Think about a conflict or difficulty that you have either had in the workplace or currently on a project. Make notes against each of these steps for how you will personally approach the situation.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) Arrange to speak with the person                 |  |
| (2) Focus on behaviour and events, not personalities |  |
| (3) Listen carefully                                 |  |
| (4) Identify points of agreement and disagreement    |  |
| (5) Prioritise areas of conflict                     |  |
| (6) Develop a plan to work on each conflict          |  |
| (7) Follow through on the plan                       |  |
| (8) Build on successes; develop the relationship     |  |

10. We discussed continuous professional development (CPD) and the steps to continuing development once in work, which are: 1) Identify and plan opportunities, 2) Doing the learning activity, 3) Reflect on your learning, 4) Apply your learning, 5) Share your learning with others. Practice this on-going cycle going forward. Use the example development plan from training to set your related goal, needs and activities.

## C. Tools to takeaway: Developing Professional Skills

Below is a list of further tools that can be used for research project management.

### (i) Skills Builder

The Skills Builder framework breaks down eight essential skills into tangible, teachable measurable steps. This free toolkit has been created to offer advice for embedding these essential skills and principles into everyday work:

<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/framework-old>

### (ii) UK National Careers service

Visit [The Skills Toolkit](#): free courses to help you learn new skills, change jobs. Including general skills that apply to all sectors and more specialised skills.

## D. Further reading tip....

### Books:

- Tribe of Mentors (Timothy Ferriss)
- Insight (Tascha Eurich)
- The New Rules of Work (Alexandra Cavoulacos and Kathryn Minshew)

### Online:

- Harvard – [10 Emerging Skills for Professionals](#)
- [Linking personal objectives to organisation](#) objectives – Mind Tools