

SOFA Deliverables - Guidelines

This document describes requirements and guidelines for all SOFA deliverables as described in the module description, being a personal development plan, an individual reflection, and a group project repository.

Personal Development Plan

The idea of a personal development plan is to create awareness about your strengths and weaknesses and to improve your competences in a structured way. It's also meant as preparation for your graduation project, in which you have to prove your competences on level 3, according to the HBO-I competence framework (HBO-i, 2018). In the end, your PDP is not a document that you write for someone else, but for yourself!

Your personal development plan contains at least:

- An estimation of your current competence level – in general (e.g., soft skills) and specifically regarding the competences/activities Analyse, Design, Realize, Manage and Advice. You have gained valuable experience during the study program and especially during your internship; ask yourself what went well, what could be improved.
- A learning goal regarding the activity REALISE.
- A learning goal regarding one of the other activities ANALYSE/DESIGN/MANAGE/ADVICE.
- A third learning goal regarding any of the activities ANALYSE/DESIGN/REALISE/MANAGE/ADVICE or another general competence (e.g. regarding self-confidence, communication skills etc.).

Feel free to add additional learning goals! The goals ANALYSE/DESIGN/REALISE/MANAGE/ADVICE are allowed to be defined on any architectural layer (User Interaction, Organizational Processes, Infrastructure, Software, Hardware Interfacing).

Regarding the definition of learning goals:

- They must be defined in a SMART (Specific – Measurable – Acceptable – Realistic - Timebound) way (Boogaard, 2021). **We don't want to see SMART literally as part of your learning goal definition (!);** it's nothing more than a checklist to verify if you have defined your learning goal in a usable way.
- You have to describe **how you'll prove** that you've worked on your goal. Part of this is that you'll always ask at least two other persons for feedback explicitly.

N example. “I want to develop my design skills by working as architect in our project” is not a well-defined goal. It is not Specific and definitely not Measurable. A better goal would be: “To improve my Software Design competence, I’ll take the responsibility to develop a class diagram and to document relevant decisions in a Design Decision Document. I’ll ask feedback from the lead designer of our customer’s company and from one of my fellow students, once after creation of a first draft and once at the end of the project.”. As you can see, this goal way better meets the SMART-requirements.

Another example. “I want to improve my project management skills by being project manager and stay in contact with our customer” is not a well-defined goal. Better would be “To improve my Project Management competence I’d like to prepare at least two customer meetings and I’ll focus on preparation, chairing the meeting and taking care of communication with our customer. After the meeting, I’ll ask specific written feedback from our customer contact person as well as from our group tutor”.

Of course, it's important to inform your environment about your goals and to inform people you expect to give feedback (in advance, so they can monitor your performance). It might happen that more students within one group have a learning goal in common. That's not a problem, but an opportunity! Looking at the examples above, you'll have many customer meetings, so each student can do a few of them. The other student with the same learning goal is the perfect reviewer. If two students would like to develop their software design competence, both create the mentioned artefacts independent of each other, afterwards sit together and discuss differences. Maybe not the most efficient approach, but definitely resulting in high-quality artefacts in the end. Giving feedback is not having a quick glance and saying, “looks good”. It's about carefully thinking how you would do things yourself (expectation) and compare this to the result of the work/performance you're reviewing. Compare both and derive positive remarks and improvement potential.

Your PDP is to-the-point. A one-pager (core) would do, maximum size is three A4-pages (core).

Individual Reflection on project AND Personal Development Plan

The individual reflection document is written at the end of the semester and is the follow-up of your development plan. Its evidence based.

Your reflection document contains at least:

- The learning goals of your Personal Development Plan, including the plan how to achieve these (we don't want to read your original PDP again, items must be integrated in the reflection).
- A reflection on each of your learning goals, showing **how** and **to which extent** you managed to reach the goal. You have to reach level 3 on the learning goals related to the HBO-I framework.
- The required review / feedback artefacts provided by your reviewers as appendix.
- An individual reflection on the overall project and your role/performance in the project (you will and have to work on more than just your individual learning goals).
- A business reflection on the work / performance of the group as a whole.

In general, YOUR contribution to the project must become clear. Check the assessment form to see which elements are important to us. Pay special attention to criteria-based decision making in your project; make well considered choices and decisions, using criteria, and considering alternatives.

Your individual reflection is to-the-point again and the core text has a maximum of 10 pages A4. Appendices are the individual feedback artefacts. Your reflection does NOT contain any artefact that is part of your group repository already; simply use references to the repository!

As you hopefully know, the reflection typically answers the questions "What went well and will I do again in the next project" and "What can be improved to perform better next time".

Group project repository

Your group repository contains ALL GROUP project artefacts, including project-, product- and process-documentation and a clear clickable index / table of contents. Documentation must be directly readable and NOT refer to file formats of specific tools like Visual Paradigm that are not readable in a browser (to images of diagrams instead). How the repository is structured / organized, is up to the team.

The group repository is preferably hosted on GitHub under FontysVenlo. If there are reasons to work on the customer's repository management platform, this is no problem, as long as the requirement above is still fulfilled and your coach and your examiner can have full access to the external system, now and also in the future.

As stated in the module description, some specific artefacts must be in your group repository:

- Hand-over documentation, for the company and for a next SOFA-group, clearly describing the "current" state at the end of the project, next development steps / recommendations and an instruction on how to setup the development environment. Furthermore, both customer and Fontys coach will be provided with credentials / keys to access environments.
- A project poster (banner) for the final exposition, you will be provided by a Microsoft PowerPoint template and guidelines available in Canvas (sofa_poster_example.pptx).
- A video of the final product / process. max 2 minutes and make sure you send us the URL

Peer assessment

One or two times during the semester, the student has to fill out a peer assessment form. This peer assessment will not be graded as such, but showing the ability to give valuable feedback to group members positively contributes to showing your professional skills.

The SOFA-assessment

At the end of the semester, the individual SOFA assessment takes place. For the assessment, one hour per student will be reserved. The typical setup is:

- 10 minutes for lecturers to prepare,
- 20 minutes for the student to present their work,
- 20 minutes for discussion / questions,
- 10 minutes for lecturers to process results.

The assessment will not take place in case the student doesn't hand-in and provide access to all artefacts described above, in time. In that case, a student can only take part in the retake.

General remarks

- The structure and style of all above mentioned documentation is up to you as individual (PDP and reflection) and as group (repository / video).
- The PDP and your personal reflection document are handed-in as pdf-file. Other formats will NOT be accepted!
- Your report and presentation meet all standards regarding professional skills as discussed within the study program (e.g., referencing).

References

- Stichting HBO-i (2018) – *HBO-i Domain Description 2018*
url: <https://www.hbo-i.nl/publicaties-domeinbeschrijving/> -> PDF Domain description 2018 EN
Accessed: 1 September 2023
- Boogaard, K. (2021) – Atlassian Worklife/Productivity
<https://www.atlassian.com/blog/productivity/how-to-write-smart-goals>
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