

Policy Framework

This document provides an overview of the University of Sydney's Statement of Generic Attributes of Graduates which was approved by Academic Board in 2004. The Statement of Generic Attributes is based on a conceptual framework identified through research conducted at the University of Sydney. Based on this framework, the University has identified three overarching graduate attributes-Scholarship, Lifelong Learning, and Global Citizenship - which reflect the research-intensive nature of the University, its scholarly values in relation to research-led teaching, and the place of its graduates in a global society. These overarching attributes represent combinations of clusters of more specific attributes, which can be interpreted or contextualised differently in different disciplinary domains. These graduate attributes are ultimately developed through students' engagement with the teaching and learning experiences of their disciplinary courses, and their participation in University life. However the development of these abilities can be supported by foundation skills programs and presumes basic competencies.

Generic Attributes of Graduates of the University of Sydney

Graduates of the University of Sydney will have a stance towards knowledge, the world, and themselves that sets them apart from other graduates in their lives and work.

SCHOLARSHIP: An attitude or stance towards knowledge:

Graduates of the University will have a scholarly attitude to knowledge and understanding. As Scholars, the University's graduates will be leaders in the production of new knowledge and understanding through inquiry, critique and synthesis. They will be able to apply their knowledge to solve consequential problems and communicate their knowledge confidently and effectively.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: An attitude or stance towards the world:

Graduates of the University will be Global Citizens, who will aspire to contribute to society in a full and meaningful way through their roles as members of local, national and global communities.

LIFELONG LEARNING: An attitude or stance towards themselves:

Graduates of the University will be Lifelong Learners committed to and capable of continuous learning and reflection for the purpose of furthering their understanding of the world and their place in it.

Each of these overarching attributes can be understood as a combination of five overlapping clusters of skills and abilities.

1. **Research and Inquiry:** Graduates of the University will be able to create new knowledge and understanding through the process of research and inquiry.

2. **Information Literacy:** Graduates of the University will be able to use information effectively in a range of contexts.

3. Personal and Intellectual Autonomy: Graduates of the University will be able to work independently and sustainably, in a way that is informed by openness, curiosity and a desire to meet new challenges.

4. Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding: Graduates of the University will hold personal values and beliefs consistent with their role as responsible members of local, national, international and professional communities.

5. Communication: Graduates of the University will recognise and value communication as a tool for negotiating and creating new understanding, interacting with others, and furthering their own learning.

The particular abilities and skills that comprise each of these five clusters of abilities might be different in different disciplines. As such, it is envisaged that different faculties and disciplines will identify different specific attributes to include under each of these five clusters. Following is an example of the way these attribute clusters might be interpreted by a discipline or faculty.

Indicative Interpretation: Five Clusters of Abilities

1. Research and Inquiry

Graduates of the University will be able to create new knowledge and understanding through the process of research and inquiry. This might be understood in terms of the following:

- be able to identify, define and analyse problems and identify or create processes to solve them
- be able to exercise critical judgment and critical thinking in creating new understanding
- be creative and imaginative thinkers
- have an informed respect for the principles, methods, standards, values and boundaries of their discipline and the capacity to question these
- be able to critically evaluate existing understandings and recognise the limitations of their own knowledge

2. Information Literacy

Graduates of the University will be able to use information effectively in a range of contexts. This might be understood as:

- recognise the extent of information needed
- locate needed information efficiently and effectively
- evaluate information and its sources
- use information in critical thinking and problem solving contexts to construct knowledge
- understand economic, legal, social and cultural issues in the use of information
- use contemporary media and technology to access and manage information

3. Personal and Intellectual Autonomy

Graduates of the University will be able to work independently and sustainably, in a way that is informed by openness, curiosity and a desire to meet new challenges. This might be understood in terms of the following:

- be intellectually curious and able to sustain intellectual interest
- be capable of rigorous and independent thinking
- be open to new ideas, methods and ways of thinking
- be able to respond effectively to unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar contexts
- be able to identify processes and strategies to learn and meet new challenges
- be independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning, and are committed to continuous reflection, self-evaluation and self-improvement
- have a personal vision and goals and be able to work towards these in a sustainable way

4. Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding

Graduates of the University will hold personal values and beliefs consistent with their role as responsible members of local, national, international and professional communities. For example:

- strive for truth, honesty, integrity, open-mindedness, fairness and generosity
- acknowledge their personal responsibility for their own value judgments and behaviour
- understand and accept social, cultural, global and environmental responsibilities
- be committed to social justice and principles of sustainability
- have an appreciation of and respect for diversity
- hold a perspective that acknowledges local, national and international concerns
- work with, manage, and lead others in ways that value their diversity and equality and that facilitate their contribution to the organisation and the wider community

5. Communication

Graduates of the University will recognise and value communication as a tool for negotiating and creating new understanding, interacting with others, and furthering their own learning.

- use oral, written, and visual communication to further their own learning
- make effective use of oral, written and visual means to critique, negotiate, create and communicate understanding
- use communication as a tool for interacting and relating to others