

## 14.2.5 Academic Board Resolutions: Generic Attributes of Graduates



# The University of Sydney

## Academic Board Resolutions: Generic Attributes of Graduates of the University of Sydney

**Approved by:** Academic Board in June 1993

**Amended:** [date]

**Date of effect:** [date]

### 1. Policy Outline

This policy sets out the generic attributes which characterise graduates of the University of Sydney. Generic attributes go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses and describe the qualities that also equip graduates for their role in society and the world of work.

### 2. Background

The University of Sydney 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 are in turn supported by generic foundation skills and abilities underpinned by basic competencies.

### 3. Coverage

This policy applies to graduates of all undergraduate degrees of the University.

### 4. Policy and Procedures

The University's graduate attributes are ultimately developed through students' successful engagement with the teaching and learning experiences of their disciplinary and professional courses and their participation as active members of the university community. However the development of these abilities can be supported by foundation skills programs and presumes basic competencies on entrance to university.

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

**4.1.1 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.

**4.1.2 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.

**4.1.3 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.

- 4.2 Each of these overarching attributes can be understood as a combination of five overlapping clusters of skills and abilities developed in disciplinary contexts.
- 4.2.1 **Research and Inquiry:** Graduates of the University will be able to create new knowledge and understanding through the process of research and inquiry.
  - 4.2.2 **Information Literacy:** Graduates of the University will be able to use information effectively in a range of contexts.
  - 4.2.3 **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.
  - 4.2.4 **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.
  - 4.2.5 **Communication:** Graduates of the University will use and value communication as a tool for negotiating and creating new understanding, interacting with others, and furthering their own learning.
- 4.3 The particular abilities and skills that comprise each of these five clusters of abilities might be interpreted differently in different disciplines or domains. Each faculty of the university is encouraged to develop a contextualised statement of the abilities that comprise these five clusters. An example of the way these attribute clusters might be interpreted by a discipline or faculty is provided below.
- 4.3.1 **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 judgement 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
  - 4.3.2 **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
  - 4.3.3 **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

**4.3.4 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 judgements 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

**4.3.5 Communication:** Graduates of the University will use and value communication as a tool for negotiating and creating new understanding, interacting with others, and furthering their own learning. This might be understood in terms of the following:

- 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

**5 Quality Assurance:** The teaching and learning of these attributes within coursework degrees is assured through the usual quality assurance processes outlined in the Academic Board Resolution: The Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching. These processes include:

- 5.1** Monitoring of students' experiences of the teaching and learning of graduate attributes in their units of study through the Unit of Study Evaluation (USE) process.
- 5.2** Monitoring of students' experiences of the teaching and learning of graduate attributes in their degrees and courses using the Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ).
- 5.3** Monitoring of the (Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching) policy requirement for the integration of the revised generic attributes in the learning outcomes communicated to students in unit of study outlines.
- 5.4** Monitoring of the (Assessment and Examination of Coursework) policy requirements relating to integration of generic attributes in assessment standards and tasks.

These processes are audited through Academic Board Reviews of faculties.

**6. Authority**

**6.1 Development/consultation**

The development of the revised university policy and the contextualised faculty interpretations of attributes has been a collaborative undertaking by members of the University's academic community. This collaboration was facilitated in part through the establishment of a Working Group. The group comprises a Deans' nominee from

each faculty, representatives from relevant University Centers such as the Library, Careers and the Learning Centre, as well as the PVC - Teaching and Learning and the previous Chair of Academic Board. A member of the ITL convenes and chairs the group.

The development of the policy by the Working Group members has been supported by extensive internal and external consultation. As well as seeking input from students, graduates and academic colleagues in their faculties, Working Group members have sought comment from disciplinary associations and professional accrediting bodies in relation to the faculty statements, and also from peak national higher education and government bodies. The aim of the consultation process has been to ensure the relevance of the University's statement of generic attributes to the staff and students of the University, the future employers of our graduates and to society at large.

The Working Group will also facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

**6.2 Management responsibility**

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)

**6.3 Implementation and monitoring**

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)

**6.4 Review**

For review 2007 - Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)

**6.5 Communication**

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)

**6.6 Contact**

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<http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/GraduateAttributes>

**7. Related information**

**7.1** Related University legislation, resolutions, policies and procedures include:

**7.1.1** Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework.

Available at [http://fmweb01.ucc.usyd.edu.au/pol/FMPro?-db=pol\\_main.fp5&-lay=www&-format=pol\\_summary.html&-error=pol\\_error.html&DocID=10&-find](http://fmweb01.ucc.usyd.edu.au/pol/FMPro?-db=pol_main.fp5&-lay=www&-format=pol_summary.html&-error=pol_error.html&DocID=10&-find)

**7.1.2** Academic Board Resolutions: The Management and Evaluation of Coursework Teaching.

Available at [http://fmweb01.ucc.usyd.edu.au/pol/FMPro?-db=pol\\_main.fp5&-lay=www&-format=pol\\_summary.html&-error=pol\\_error.html&DocID=394&-find](http://fmweb01.ucc.usyd.edu.au/pol/FMPro?-db=pol_main.fp5&-lay=www&-format=pol_summary.html&-error=pol_error.html&DocID=394&-find)

**7.2** University policies superseded or replaced by this policy:

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