1. Why a National GAP initiative was needed

Australian universities have articulated policies of graduate attributes outcomes for a number of years and engaged in a range of processes to foster the achievement of these attributes by students.

Examples of successful practice do exist, but take up is often patchy and does not appear to be sustained. Various groups, including employers, government agencies, graduates as well as students and academics themselves, point to a lack of convincing evidence of successful policy implementation to achieve graduate attributes.

This project builds on what is already known about the way an individual's beliefs and conceptions about graduate attributes drives teaching and curriculum decisions, and considers current institutional strategies in relation to the achievement of graduate attributes.

2. National GAP Outcomes

A research based framework to support reflection on current institutional strategies in relation to graduate attributes (GAs).

A suite of briefing / discussion papers synthesizing the key issues associated with each of the eight factors – located on the National GAP website:

An emerging, network of different stakeholders who might collaborate to support current and future efforts to foster graduate attributes through diverse range of university experiences for students.

3. Key challenges

The eight elements of the model interact – if some elements are ignored or the connections to other aspects are not attended to. When this happens the system can get off-track and lead to unintended outcomes.

There are `dominant drivers within each aspect of the system which change with time. Some drivers can exert a powerful influence and lead to unintended outcomes elsewhere in the system.

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts - but much harder to work with and much harder to lead.

Conceptualisation: The different understandings the individuals involved have, about the very notion of graduate attributes (GAs), have been shown to influence how they write policy, design curriculum and approach the problem of integration.

Stakeholders involved: Diverse groups have different stakes in the development, articulation and application of GAs – students, teachers, policy makers, curriculum developers, marketers, professional associations, industry groups.

Implementation: The way a university coordinates and resources its approach to the integration and achievement of GAs (from university policy to quality measurement and assurance) is one of the most influential drivers of how well they are embedded.

Staff Development: The way a university supports staff in the integration and achievement of GAs is an important aspect.

Curriculum approach: The approach to curriculum planning and the models used are intimately connected to how the university goes about achieving graduate attributes.

Assessment: The explicit embedding of GAs in assessment provides convincing evidence of GA policy implementation.

Quality Assurance: The way a university monitors and assures the integration and achievement of GAs is one of the most influential drivers of how well they are embedded.

Student Centred: The ways in which students are engaged influences student thinking about graduate outcomes, their awareness of their own development and the attributes they develop.