

Doctoral Graduate Attributes

Office of Graduate Research

The Doctoral Graduate Attributes have been created to support PhD students in developing, recognising and demonstrating the core skills that they bring, and build, while undertaking a PhD. Doctoral students develop a number of attributes and skills through the practice of undertaking a complex, significant and original research project.

While the Doctoral Graduate Attributes are consistent across all PhD programs, each PhD student will develop these attributes in the context of their personal goals, doctoral focus, career aspirations and discipline. Ultimately, the Graduate Attributes enable PhD students to demonstrate their competencies to pursue the career of their choice whether in academia, industry or another pathway.



1

Research & critical thinking skills

- Utilises comprehensive knowledge of relevant theoretical frameworks and research methods to apply the appropriate framework to new, abstract and complex research problems.
- Collects, synthesises and evaluates complex data, followed by insightful and critical analysis of results.
- Articulates, understands and questions ideas, assumptions, evidence and information to develop independent and critical thinking.
- Applies high level research and critical thinking skills to formulate unique hypothesis, alternative arguments and novel approaches.

2

Depth of disciplinary expertise

- Systematically acquires in-depth strategic understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of their discipline internationally.
- Understands the boundaries of their primary discipline's knowledge base and knows when to access multi-disciplinary knowledge to enable an inter-disciplinary solution.
- Applies academic/intellectual rigour to challenge the status quo and develops new and innovative ways of understanding.
- Creates a significant, original contribution to knowledge through the production of relevant research outputs.

3

Personal & professional awareness

- Continually reflects on practice, experience and own strengths and weaknesses to further develop the professional and personal self.
- Operates strategically in an independent and self-directed manner, identifying milestones, prioritising, planning, setting and meeting deadlines.
- Maintains motivation and demonstrates perseverance when significant setbacks and obstacles arise, seeking support and advice when needed.
- Curious, willing to learn and keeps an open mind, adapting to change by acquiring knowledge and identifying opportunities.

4

Project management & research strategy

- Plans and implements complex, multiphase projects including stakeholder and resource management.
- Maintaining awareness of potential challenges and risks, adapting and re-aligning research to ensure strategic outcomes are achieved.
- Aligns research project to institutional governance and strategic direction of the college and university.
- Understands that no one solution is perfect and can reconcile research imperatives with competing outcomes, reconsidering decisions when needed.

5

Integrity & ethics

- Respects the standards, policies and practices of Flinders University and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
- Demonstrates research integrity and ethics in the collection, processing and dissemination of data and information.
- Develops an awareness of their professional and personal ethics, seeking to reconcile differences.
- Actively contributes to a culture of respect and ethical behaviour, including respectful interactions with a wide variety of research stakeholders.

6

Effective communication skills

- Communicates and explains complex ideas to diverse audiences, including both specialist and non-specialist, through a range of methods.
- Determines the channel, method or mode of information dissemination in relation to the aims of communication, audience and type of information.
- Participates in positive critical dialogue, presenting ideas clearly and logically, actively reflecting on others' arguments and contributing to the information presented.
- Writes coherently and convincingly, constructing an academically rigorous argument to communicate an evidenced body of research.

7

Teamwork & collaboration

- Establishes and builds relationships, maintaining cooperative networks with a diverse range of people and stakeholders across discipline, international and sector boundaries.
- Works effectively with supervisors and colleagues by building professional relationships, maintaining open communication, resolving conflicts and working towards joint goals.
- Guides and motivates others in achieving goals, providing constructive and positive feedback and clear direction when required.
- Influences others' understanding of and interaction with their research through establishing credibility, trust and open engagement.

8

Engagement & impact

- Understands the potential impact of their research, particularly the contribution their research makes to the economy, society, environment or culture.
- Seeks opportunities to create two-way knowledge exchange, sharing skills, technology, methods and expertise, with relevant audiences in Australia and internationally.
- Understands IP and copyright as they apply to their research and is aware of the importance of appropriate research dissemination.
- Ability to explore potential for international dissemination and application of their research, both within and outside of universities.

For more information or support, contact:

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