



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean

Graduate Attributes Portfolio

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Aim: Describe the Graduate Attributes Portfolio

Learning Outcomes:

- Summarise research into student perceptions of graduate attributes
- Describe the use of the graduate attribute portfolio in the UHI BSc Oral Health Sciences course
- View examples of the portfolio
- Discuss the challenges associated with implementing the portfolio and how it can be improved for the future



Introduction

- Dental Therapist – BSc Oral Health Sciences Dundee 2010
- Joined UHI SOHS 2011
- Master of Education in Tertiary and Higher Education 2013-2020
- Module leader for final year Preparation for Practice
- Course lead for professionalism



Poll 1

How well do you understand the term Graduate Attributes?

- Totally understand
- I understand the basic concept
- Not sure if I understand or not
- Never heard the term



Definition

'the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, **beyond disciplinary content knowledge**, which are applicable to a range of contexts.' (Barrie, S 2004)

'The qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but **go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge** that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.' (Bowden et al., 2000)



Poll 2

How much do your students understand about how their course content and structure helps them develop their graduate attributes?

- They completely understand and regularly refer to them
- They have some awareness but its not at the forefront
- They are unlikely to have ever heard of them
- Don't know, we have never asked them



Background

- Numbers of students in higher education ↑
- Financial implications of higher education ↑
- Need to ensure education is as valuable as possible for the participants has become ever more pertinent than ever
- Despite evidence base, institutions struggled to integrate concept of GA's into their courses (Green, W., Hammer & Star 2009, Bath et al.2004, Alexander 2017)



Background

- Drive to develop GA's in FE and HE significant from government bodies
- Research found constructive alignment into curriculum to be key
- Challenges:
 - Need to change core of curriculum
 - Need to re-write learning outcomes
 - Change of language and culture
- Context is key



Background

- Assessment is the final step in gauging attainment
- Students view assessment as a learning framework
- Formative assessment good for subjective topics however difficult in large cohorts due to need for detailed feedback (Green, Hammer & Star 2009)
- Addition of summative assessments risk over assessment
- Consider methods rather than just subject matter (Treleaven and Voola 2008)



Research Question

What perceptions do undergraduate dental therapists have of the development and assessment of their graduate attributes?



Graduate Attributes in Dental Therapy Undergraduates – The Students Perspective

- Method:
 - constructionist, interpretivist approach to generate theory
 - Qualitative data from a series of focus groups
 - Asked to discuss their perceptions of the concept of graduate attributes and the processes currently utilised by the school to develop and assess them.
 - Data was analysed using a framework analysis approach.



Results

- 4 themes were identified from the data:
 - Understanding
 - Course Content
 - Assessment Process
 - Tutor Direction



Recomedations

- Investigate ways in which tutors can make their methods for developing graduate attributes more visible to students.
- Explore alternative options for assessing attainment of graduate attributes



Outcomes

- Staff aware that previous assessment lacked value but surprised at student awareness
- Need to use the language of GA's more in curriculum
- Need for longitudinal, reflective assessment



- Aim:
 - to encourage students to reflect on their development at regular intervals and provide evidence of how they are working to achieve them
- Components:
 - Module leader briefing
 - Year lead semester review
 - Reflective account



Documentation

- Student Guide
- Tutor Guide
- Mahara template
- PAT Sign-off form



Examples

1st year:

<https://mahara.uhi.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=Vk59CmxyKSreQRa8zMtp>

2nd Year:

<https://mahara.uhi.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=js3Nypf2CGdImZEhlvbw>

3rd Year:

<https://mahara.uhi.ac.uk/view/view.php?t=I2fregkUywMQZXS5Gz3L>



Successes

- Increased awareness of GA's in students and staff
- Methods of developing GA's more visible to students
- Well accepted by most students
- Reduced workload for students and staff



Challenges

- PAT's needed a lot of reminders to update sign-off sheet
- Engaging 'those' students
- Timetabling of review session



Opportunities

- Feedback from students
- Greater emphasis on evidencing development
- Simpler way to record attainment



Contact

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