

Title: 'Bringing Graduate Attributes to Life' through engagement with students, academics and employers

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

1. Access and utilise the resources from the Bringing Graduate Attributes to Life (BGATL) project for themselves, understanding their provenance and rationale.
2. Understand and utilise three techniques to help them engage academic staff with the notion of Graduate Attributes in their own institution.
3. Share ideas regarding graduate attributes and how these might be implemented in their own institution.
4. Take a wider, critical, international perspective on graduate attributes.

Session Outline

Universities around the world are engaging in the Graduate Attribute agenda, with the aim of enhancing the education of 21st Century learners and developing highly employable graduates (Barrie *et al.*, 2009; Haigh & Clifford, 2010). However, the language of graduate attributes is frequently perceived by academic staff, students and employers as impenetrable and difficult to relate to the real world (Lian, 2012).

Through the HEA-funded *Bringing Graduate Attributes to Life* (BGATL) project we began to address the question of how to 'translate' graduate attributes into a form that can be more readily accessed and used. The project investigated how academic staff, students and employers are interpreting the University of Aberdeen's nineteen Graduate Attributes in their own disciplinary languages. Face-to-face interviews with these key stakeholders were video-recorded to capture the authentic voices of those charged with effectively translating high level statements into practical learning experiences at the academic discipline and co-curriculum level.

This workshop will introduce participants to the outcomes from this project, providing freely-accessible resources that can be used in any HEI. Following this, a structured discussion addressing issues of attribute definition, disciplinary understandings of graduate attributes including techniques that the Project Team have found useful in engaging key stakeholders, will be facilitated. This will be followed by a more broad ranging discussion, exploring the international dimensions of graduate attributes, tracking their take-up and use globally, and

posing critical questions over the issue of how graduate attributes might reflect one further aspect of the educational 'unhomeliness' (*sensu* Manathunga, 2007) of educational developers and our work.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

00.00-00.10: Introduction to the project including the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and their context within the University of Aberdeen

00.10-00.15: Showcase of sample videos and reactions

00.15-00.30: Structured discussion on defining graduate attributes within disciplines and issues around engaging academics, students, and employers in this

00.30-00.45: Plenary discussion, including national/international perspectives on graduate attributes

References

Barrie, S., Hughes, C., and Smith, C., 2009. The national graduate attributes project : integration and assessment of graduate attributes in curriculum. *Australian Learning and Teaching Council*. Available at: <http://129.78.32.124/projects/nationalgap/resources/GAPpdfs/National%20Graduate%20Attributes%20Project%20Final%20Report%202009.pdf> (accessed 30 January 2014)

Haigh, B.M. & Clifford, V., 2010. Widening the graduate attribute debate : A higher education for global citizenship. *Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching*, 2(5). Available at: http://bejlt.brookes.ac.uk/paper/widening_the_graduate_attribute_debate_a_higher_education_for_global_citize-2/ (accessed 30 January 2014)

Lian, A.B., 2012. A dialogic framework for embedding graduate attributes in discipline-based degree curricula. *Rangsit Journal of Arts and Sciences* 2(1), pp.1-14.

Manathunga, C. 2007. "Unhomely" Academic Developer Identities: More post-colonial explorations. *Int. J. Academic Development* 12 (1), 25-34.