

**Pacific Rim Real Estate Society (PRRES)
Conference 2000**

Sydney, 23-27 January, 2000

**GRADUATE QUALITY APPROACH TO
PROPERTY EDUCATION**

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Keywords: Graduate Qualities, graduate achievements, internationalisation

The University of South Australia embarked on a graduate qualities approach in 1995. The Academic Board agreed to adopt this approach in response to a working party report stating that:

- The desired outcomes of higher education are much broader than control over an area of content. Higher education must inculcate values and develop skills to be applied in professional, social and international contexts.
- The University would develop a statement, which defined a unique set of generic attributes or qualities of graduates to define the intended outcomes of all courses.

This initiative was undertaken at the time most areas of vocational and professional education were grappling with the development of competencies and the need to focus less on inputs and more on the outcomes of education.

The University was also looking to identify a distinctive way of marking their graduates relative to their local competitors.

The University Council subsequently approved documentation which declares that a graduate of the University of South Australia –

- *operates effectively with and upon a body of knowledge of sufficient depth to begin professional practice*
- *is prepared for life-long learning in pursuit of personal development and excellence in professional practice*
- *is an effective problem solver, capable of applying logical, critical, and creative thinking to a range of problems*
- *can work both autonomously and collaboratively as a professional*
- *is committed to ethical action and social responsibility as a professional and citizen*
- *communicates effectively in professional practice and as a member of the community*
- *demonstrates international perspectives as a professional and as a citizen.*

The University has provided a number of supplementary statements or ‘indicators’, which give further meaning to the statement of each particular quality. These are aimed at assisting with the interpretation and application of generic qualities to particular areas. The examples of indicators of the achievement of a particular quality given in Table 1, promote an understanding of the possible scope of a graduate quality.

Table 1 Indicators of achievement of the quality.

Graduate quality	Indicators of achievement of the quality
<i>A graduate of the University of South Australia...</i>	
<i>operates effectively with and upon a body of knowledge of sufficient depth to begin professional practice.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding in broad outline of a whole discipline or professional area (concepts, theories, proponents) including a knowledge of the boundaries • apply knowledge (demonstrate application of theory to practice in real situations, appreciate limitations of theory, use materials, devices, safety codes and practices, specific equipment and techniques appropriately) • identify the methodological and

	<p>substantive limitations of the field and apply the discipline or professional area's mode of inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the social and historical context of knowledge • demonstrate appropriate understanding of current research areas in the discipline or professional area
<p><i>is prepared for life-long learning in pursuit of personal development and excellence in their professional practice</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate, evaluate, manage, and use information in a range of contexts – ie be information literate • understand the limitations of, and have the capacity to evaluate, their current knowledge • understand and accept personal weaknesses, strengths, and preferred learning styles, have knowledge of a range of learning strategies, and take responsibility for their learning and development • maintain a positive concept of self as capable and autonomous • sustain intellectual interest and critical thinking as a mature professional
<p><i>is an effective problem solvers capable of applying logical, critical, and creative thinking to a range of problems</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather, evaluate and deploy relevant information to assist problem solving – ie analysis and synthesis • define researchable questions in the discipline or professional area • apply strategies to conceptualise problems and formulate a range of solutions
<p><i>is able to work both autonomously and collaboratively as a professional</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in a self directed way • use logical and rational argument to persuade others, to negotiate with others • work collaboratively with different groups, identify the needs of others and build positive relationships • work in a team (cooperate with all team members, share ideas, forgo personal recognition, negotiate solutions when opinions differ, resolve conflict, recognise strengths of other team members, share responsibility, convey a shared vision for the team, display a commitment to make the team function effectively)
<p><i>is committed to ethical action and social responsibility as a professional and citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a commitment to personal ethical actions within professional contexts • define social aspects of a particular

	<p>technology (political, economic, legislative, sociological, environmental etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appreciate the impact of social change, the political decision-making process and economic imperatives of business and industry • recognise social justice issues relevant to the discipline and professional area • appreciate the importance of sustainable development • demonstrate responsibility to the community – be aware of safety, efficiency, innovation, cost-effectiveness
<p><i>is able to communicate effectively in professional practice and as a member of the community</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate oral, written, mathematical, and visual literacies as appropriate to the discipline or professional area • display sensitivity to their audience in organising and presenting ideas • communicate appropriately with professional colleagues and the public
<p><i>demonstrates international perspectives as a professional and citizen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • display an ability to think globally and consider issues from a variety of perspectives • demonstrate an awareness of their own culture and its perspectives and other cultures and their perspectives • appreciate the relation between their field of study locally and professional traditions elsewhere • recognise intercultural issues relevant to their professional practice • appreciate the importance of multicultural diversity to professional practice and citizenship • appreciate the complex and interacting factors that contribute to notions of culture and cultural relationships • value diversity of language and culture • appreciate and demonstrate the capacity to apply international standards and practices within the discipline or professional area • demonstrate awareness of the implications of local decisions and actions for international communities and of international decisions and actions for local communities

The University then developed a guide that:

- explained the graduate qualities and provided a list of indicators for each quality (Table 1)
- explained the processes that link the desired graduate qualities to teaching, learning and assessment arrangements
- supported the writing of subject statements
- provided a list of teaching and learning arrangements to assist in developing a profile of graduate qualities

These guidelines were approved in 1997. By 1998 all new course accreditation documents required subject and course profiles of graduate qualities. During the period of 1999 – 2001, the graduate qualities have to be developed in existing courses and subjects. Courses nominated as implementation pilots for the University achieved some funding towards trying to implement particular graduate qualities. The Bachelor of Business (Property) program was successfully nominated as a pilot program for the internationalisation graduate quality. This was important for the property course as most of our successful graduates work interstate or overseas early in their careers. The factors that are being documented and changed are outlined below.

How do we do it?

The ways in which student's experience of the property program is enhanced with an Internationalisation graduate quality is provided by:

program delivery

Most directly through content of courses in terms of subject material, use of examples, forms of assessment, teaching practices, presentation of information, reading materials and cited references. All of these give opportunity for exploration, exchange and critique of concepts, methodologies and practices within a multicultural and international framework. This has meant a change from using Australian references to more international references and examples and using international currency symbols and not just \$A.

Educational profile

International recognition of the program has been fostered over many years by encouraging a diverse range of international students to study at University of South Australia programs. The program has also sought professional and government recognition of the degree so that graduates can work widely.

Staff development

Staff development has included encouraging staff to attend international conferences on a regular basis, such as PRRES, IRES, FRES and AREUA. Overseas staff have also been encouraged to come to the University of South Australia. The University has also encouraged staff to research collaboratively with staff in other countries and for all of our staff to teach off-shore. Staff development makes staff less accessible to students and this creates problems. Students still expect staff to be accessible on a demand basis.

Student development

The University provides and develops subjects targeted at internationalisation and provides the opportunity for students to undertake a semester off-shore or a short-term study trip. Advantage can also be taken of the large number of international students studying in the program. The linkage of property award with

International Business award and many common subjects also strengthens this approach.

RECORDING OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The recording of Students Achievement Project involves students in using specially designed software to make records of their achievements throughout their course. Their records can also be selected and organised for inclusion into a resume or portfolio, thus enabling them to provide a detailed record and evidence of the skills and abilities that they offer to potential employers. These skills and abilities are organised within a 'graduate qualities' framework as developed by the University of South Australia.

This project is informed by similar projects and development in universities in the United Kingdom and activities on recording of student achievement in the other Australian Technology Network universities (R.M.I.T, Q.U.T, U.T.S and Curtin).

The portfolio is being developed using a proforma with instructions to guide students in its use. The final form of the portfolio will be determined as the project proceeds and after consultation with a reference group (consisting of industry and professional representatives, course coordinators and students). However, it is envisaged that it may include some of the following elements:

- A well designed front cover including the university logo;
- One or two pages explaining Graduate Qualities and the philosophy behind them;
- A grid for students to complete which contains a row for every year of their degree, room to add in subjects for each year with their graduate quality weighting's; and a total for each GQ;
- A section where students self-assess their level of achievement in each Graduate Quality and relate this to their ability to complete 'workplace tasks';
- A section of evidence/justification compiled by the students to support their self-assessment claims regarding their levels of achievement of the Graduate Qualities, possibly for each year of their course showing how students have progressively achieved graduate qualities; and
- A section demonstrating skill levels in particular areas eg communication, statistical skills etc (this section will be developed by the student but gained from independent skills testing designed by the reference group)

The portfolio will provide:

- students with the stimulus to review their achievement and thereby to identify Graduate Qualities on which they need to concentrate;
- academic staff with the stimulus and opportunity to review their assessment practices in relation to the Graduate Qualities; and
- employers with a detailed statement on a graduate's level of achievement in relation to Graduate Qualities.

The reference group is providing advice on:

- the design of the portfolio
- the development of a set of criteria by which students can assess their level of achievement in relation to each Graduate Quality
- a standardised assessment instrument, which will be part of the portfolio.

IMPLICATIONS

The local profession/property industry is currently struggling with the adjustments to Graduate Quality. The transformation of our Institution into a University and the reduction in funding over time has meant that we have removed most of the training from the property award. It was once recognised for the degree

of practical training and analytical skills with many second year students undertaking valuations unsupervised. The graduates now need some guidance into some workskills.

The changes that following the Graduate Qualities approach will improve the flexibility of the graduates and their further career development. They will, however, frustrate some of the older profession as they will not be able to quote all the regulations, know to the same degree all the components of buildings and farms and local style house names. They should, however, be better at sourcing of information, problem solving and dealing with the implications of the world globalisation of property strengths.

Students should also be better prepared in informing employers of their potential strengths.

There will be a period of adjustment which will require the University to be more pro-active in informing the profession/industry of changes that will be occurring in the graduates which affect both their initial employment and longer term employment.

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EuroRecord Software 1.0

<http://www.stud.ee.ethz.ch/~ckuendig/indexER.html>

RoAMS - Record of Achievement Management System

<http://www.zen.co.uk/home/page/p.box/roams.html>

Software for the UK's National Record of Achievement

<http://www.mirage1.u-net.com/ppf.htm>

Categories of computer assisted assessment software

<http://www.tft.co.uk/products/cdaguide/7cda.html>

Oxford Brookes University, - includes details of the ABC network. Search under key skills

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk>

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Activities and skill sheets

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