

## USQ GRADUATE QUALITIES AND SKILLS – CUSTOMISATION, MAPPING AND ALIGNMENT TEMPLATE

### Definition and rationale for USQ graduate qualities and skills

*Graduate qualities* are ‘vision statements’ that describe five broad domains of student learning, capability and engagement whereas *graduate skills* are specific, assessable sub-sets of student learning. Teaching and assessing USQ graduate skills in programs and courses ensures that students are given the opportunity to graduate with the qualities described in USQ policy.

The aim of developing these qualities is so that graduates can: manage, apply and communicate discipline knowledge purposefully, ethically, sustainably and with originality to different audiences; apply their learning across a range of contexts; and work with a diverse range of individuals and groups, in local, national and international environments to attain personal and professional goals.

### Using this Template

This template is designed to guide program or discipline teams through three required stages of *customising, mapping and aligning* USQ qualities and skills to their discipline or program. Exemplars have been included for each stage of the process.

### Stage 1: Describe USQ Qualities in terms of your own program

For this stage of the process program/discipline teams develop customised statements under each of the five domains listed below, which express their disciplinary or professional context. The following list represents the five USQ qualities that every graduate is expected to exhibit:

1. *Discipline Expertise:*  
Evidence of analytical engagement with the theoretical knowledge of students’ chosen disciplines
2. *Professionalism:*  
Evidence of the skills required for effective participation in students’ chosen working environment.
3. *Global Citizenship:*  
Evidence of students’ ability to connect discipline-based theory and practice to the sustainability of communities, economies and environments in a global context
4. *Scholarship:*  
Evidence of students’ capabilities to make a scholarly contribution in their workplaces and wider communities
5. *Lifelong Learning:*  
Evidence of students’ academic and lifelong independent learning skills

### Examples

#### 1. *Discipline Expertise: Economics*

A graduate in economics requires an awareness of the relationships between the main economic variables, an understanding of the nature and causal-chronological direction of those relationships and, finally, an ability to measure economic variables and utilise those measurements to assist decision-makers and policy-makers.

#### 3. *Global citizenship: Mass communications*

Upon completion of this program students will demonstrate the ability to understand the global implications of contemporary communication and media. Graduates will understand how the concept of sustainability impacts on their practice, value diversity, and possess a highly developed ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders - often with competing interests and from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

## **Stage 2: Customisation and mapping of USQ skills**

The next stage (2) requires you to customise and map the list of ten graduate skills across your discipline/program.

Unless you are accrediting an entirely new program it is a good idea to begin by mapping skills already targeted by existing assessment in courses, which will enable you to identify any existing gaps.

Once you have mapped existing skills, ***it is important to amend course specifications using standard faculty approval processes to include learning objectives for any skills assessed.***

You can print multiple copies of the next page to use for this stage, or make up your own table or spreadsheet.

Stage 2: Mapping USQ graduate skills

Program or disciplinary major: \_\_\_\_\_

Course	Sem	Yr.	Skills assessed	Objective	Assessment tasks	USQ graduate skills
CMS1000	1	1	1. <i>Ethical research and enquiry</i> (principles of referencing)  3: <i>Academic and professional literacy</i> (information literacy, including referencing and analysis)  4. <i>Written communication, and oral communication skills</i>  8. <i>Management, planning and organisation</i>	1  2  2  4	Referencing for essay plan, essay and report  Essay plan, essay and report  Essay plan, essay and report; Oral presentation Essay plan and essay.	<p><b>1. Ethical research and inquiry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethical knowledge required by graduates in your discipline/profession</li> <li>processes, such as decision-making that incorporate ethical issues and considerations.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Problem solving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in cases that highlight common problems in your discipline/profession</li> <li>using professional decision-making models</li> <li>as part of processes of creation or production.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Academic, professional and digital literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>types of literacy required for students' disciplinary/professional practice: information literacy, digital or computer literacy, numeracy, language literacy and critical literacy (application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation).</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Written and oral communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>types of written and oral communication graduates are required to use as part of their professional practice, including appropriate distance communication that is mediated by different technologies.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Interpersonal skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work well with others, collaboration.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Teamwork</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete tasks and projects as a team.</li> <li>understand and evaluate teamwork processes</li> </ul> <p><b>7. Cultural literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehend local and national contexts such as Indigenous and multicultural contexts</li> <li>comprehend diverse international contexts</li> <li>work with diverse groups, cultures and individuals and to value diversity.</li> </ul> <p><b>8. Management, planning and organisational skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ability to learn from feedback</li> <li>judge performance of self and peers</li> <li>set and achieve goals</li> <li>apply learning in different academic/organisational contexts.</li> </ul> <p><b>9. Creativity, initiative and enterprise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>create new knowledge, products or artefacts</li> <li>act and solve problems without direction</li> <li>identify opportunities and novel applications.</li> </ul> <p><b>10. Sustainable practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>knowledge and skills required in your discipline to develop sustainable practice in relation to communities, economies and the environment.</li> </ul>

### Stage 3: Customising and representing graduate skills as learning objectives and assessment criteria

After skills have been mapped for each course in the discipline or program, write them as learning objectives using language to contextualise for the discipline or study area. *These learning objectives can now be incorporated into each course specification using standard faculty processes<sup>1</sup>.* Next, clearly identify graduate skills amongst your assessment criteria. Please note right-hand column below, which provides a list of words to use when writing learning objectives and assessment criteria.

#### Expressing skills as stated course objectives

Any skills explicitly assessed in a course should be expressed as a separate learning objective for the course. See right-hand column for suggested words to describe knowledge-based objectives. See different levels guide for words to express skill-based learning objectives.

**Example:** *written communication skills in Political and Economic Ideas*

Relevant learning objective → “Demonstrate written communication skills by planning and submitting a report that follows \*basic disciplinary or professional requirements”.

**Please note:**

When writing learning objectives, consider the *level of learning* for skills assessed in the course, and whether this is appropriate for position of the course within the recommended enrolment pattern of the overall degree(s). See [different levels guide](#) for help with language to express different levels of skill-based learning.

#### Expressing skills as assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are specific qualities we expect to find in completed student work for a particular task. These criteria will include skill as well as knowledge components. For example, for a report you will be assessing structure and quality of students’ writing *as well as* their understanding of particular ideas, theory or concepts.

**Example:** *written communication skills in Assignment 2 (Final Report), Political and Economic Ideas*

*Criterion 1:* It is well structured – does the report adhere to appropriate structural and formatting requirements? Does the report follow appropriate paragraphing conventions?

*Criterion 3:* It is well written – is the writing grammatically correct, clear, succinct and coherent?

#### Words to describe performance objectives – listed in order of complexity

**1. Knowledge** – Define, describe, identify, label, list match, outline, reproduce, select, state, recall, recognise, acquire.

**2. Comprehension** – Interpret, reorder, rearrange, represent, give in own words, illustrate, read, translate, transform, convert, defend, distinguish, estimate, explain, extend, generalise, give examples, infer, paraphrase, summarise, relate.

**3. Application** – Change, compute, demonstrate, discover, manipulate, modify, predict, produce, transfer, restructure, classify, apply, operate, use.

**4. Analysis**- Break down, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, infer, outline, point out, relate, select, separate, sub-divide, detect, deduce, illustrate, identify, analyse.

**5. Synthesise** – categorise, combine, compile, compose, create, devise, design, generate, modify, organise, plan, rearrange, reconstruct, relate, reorganise.

**6. Evaluation** – appraise, argue, assess, compare, conclude, contract, describe, discriminate, justify, interpret, relate, support, judge, argue, validate, explain, assess<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To find out how to update learning objectives for course specifications please contact the relevant program coordinator or faculty associate dean (academic).

<sup>2</sup> Graduate Attributes – Verbs for cognitive objectives, Murdoch Teaching and Learning website, [www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/gradatt/verbsCognitive.html](http://www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/gradatt/verbsCognitive.html), Accessed 18 Feb, 2008.