



ACHIEVE GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Personal Tutors and Graduate Attributes

In common with many other universities, nationally and internationally, the University of Aberdeen has underpinned the student experience of its curriculum and co-curriculum with a defined set of qualities that all students will have the opportunity to develop and enhance during their time at university. These form the nineteen Graduate Attributes, which students from Aberdeen will take with them into the world of further study, employment or life experience.

What are the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes?

Academic Excellence

- In-depth and extensive knowledge, understanding and skills at internationally-recognised levels in their chosen discipline(s);
- A breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills beyond their chosen discipline(s);
- An ability to participate in the creation of new knowledge and understanding through research and inquiry;
- A contextual understanding of past and present knowledge and ideas;
- An intellectual curiosity and a willingness to question accepted wisdom and to be open to new ideas

Critical Thinking and Effective Communication

- A capacity for independent, conceptual and creative thinking;
- A capacity for problem identification, the collection of evidence, synthesis and dispassionate analysis;
- A capacity for attentive exchange, informed argument and reasoning;
- An ability to communicate effectively for different purposes and in different contexts;
- An ability to work independently and as part of a team;
- A diverse set of transferable and generic skills

Learning and Personal Development

- An openness to, and an interest in, life-long learning through directed and self-directed study;
- An awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses;
- A capacity for self-reflection, self-discovery and personal development

Active Citizenship

- An awareness and appreciation of ethical and moral issues;
- An awareness and appreciation of social and cultural diversity;
- An understanding of social and civic responsibilities, and of the rights of individuals and groups;
- An appreciation of the concepts of enterprise and leadership in all aspects of life;
- A readiness for citizenship in an inclusive society

Why did the University develop the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes?

- To reflect an increased focus on the breadth of the student experience
- To encourage staff and student engagement with a reflective and developmental process that would extend across the curriculum and co-curriculum, at all levels of undergraduate study
- To enhance student employability in the global employment market

How are they embedded in the student experience?

- Through engaging staff, student and employer awareness and development of the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes
- Through stating explicitly in each course how it supports the development of Aberdeen Graduate Attributes and encouraging students to articulate their reflections and development of them
- Through establishing ACHIEVE, a central site located in MyAberdeen, which offers undergraduate students resources to assess and reflect upon their skills and development needs in the curriculum and the co- curriculum. ACHIEVE also refers them to relevant support services, including the [Student Learning Service](#) and the [Careers and Employability Service](#)

How can a Personal Tutor include discussion of the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes in PT meetings?

FIRST YEAR

September meeting: Introduction to [Graduate Attributes](#):

Before the meeting: encourage students to complete the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes topic on PD1002, the prescribed [online course](#) for level 1 students.

At the meeting:

- Now that you have had time to look at the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes, let's discuss why we have them.
- Do you have any questions about them?
- Which skills do you think you might seek to develop during year 1 at University?
- How can students reflect upon and develop them during their time at University?
- What is the difference between the curriculum and the [co-curriculum](#)?
- Where can students find resources to support them in recognising and developing these attributes? The [Careers and Employability Service](#) offers a range of initiatives to help students develop their skills. Resources are also available via [ACHIEVE](#)

November meeting:

Before the meeting: ask students if they have completed the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes topic on PD1002, the prescribed [online course](#) for level 1 students. The deadline is the end of December.

At the meeting:

- Now that you have had time to look at the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes, let's discuss why we have them.
- Do you have any questions about them?
- Which skills do you think you might seek to develop during year 1 at University?
- How can students reflect upon and develop them during their time at University?
- What is the difference between the curriculum and the [co-curriculum](#)?
- Where can students find resources to support them in recognising and developing these attributes? The [Careers and Employability Service](#) offers a range of initiatives to help students develop their skills. Resources are also available via [ACHIEVE](#)

March meeting: self-reflection of Graduate Attributes and co-curricular opportunities

This meeting might include a recap and discussion of the students' thoughts on and experience of the Graduate Attributes thus far.

Suggested activity: [DIAMOND NINE](#)

Download

- [Diamond 9 Quick Guide](#) for Personal Tutors

Download Graduate Attribute cards

- [Active Citizenship](#)
 - [Learning and Personal Development](#)
 - [Academic Excellence](#)
 - [Critical Thinking & Effective Communication](#)
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SECOND YEAR

September meeting:

Suggested questions to explore with returning students:

- Which of the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes seemed most relevant to you in your Year 1 curriculum and/or co-curriculum? Why? Can you give examples?
- With a thought for the future, which of the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes do you think you might seek to develop or enhance during Year 2 at the university?

March meeting:

Suggested questions to explore:

- How do you think you have progressed and developed during this academic year?
- What challenges have you faced or overcome?
- Can you give examples to evidence this?

They could also be directed to the [Bringing Graduate Attributes to Life](#) website.

THIRD YEAR

September meeting:

Suggested questions to explore:

How would you identify and articulate your development of Graduate Attributes to potential placement/internship providers and employers?

How could you evidence or provide examples to support what you say? Remember that the Graduate Attributes will be developed and enhanced through both the curriculum and the co-curriculum.

Suggested activity:

Repeat the DIAMOND NINE exercise. Have your priorities changed since Year 1? If so, why?

March meeting:

Employability: A Quick Guide for Personal Tutors

For students to be ready to enter the current competitive graduate recruitment market your tutees should have already started to think about their skills development, career planning or postgraduate study options. To enhance their employability in third year encourage your tutees to attend careers fairs, register for email vacancy alerts through the Careers and Employability Service, (highly recommended!) and take part in employer networking opportunities. Students are also encouraged to make appointments to help them start their career planning or to discuss their career options with the designated Careers Adviser for their degree subject.

At this stage, students also should start to think what appears or could appear on their [Enhanced Transcript](#). The transcript records students' courses and grades as well as co-curricular activities. It has impact on students' employability as it functions as evidence for recruiters and helps students to identify and make the most of their skills.

What is employability?

The University uses the term 'employability' to describe the set of skills and attributes that make graduates likely to gain employment and be successful on their chosen career path.

How do your tutees access support for their employability and career planning?

The Careers and Employability Service provides information, advice and guidance to support students with career decisions and career planning. The Service is located on the 2nd Floor of the Students' Union Building, and is available to all students at the University of Aberdeen and this is also extended to recent graduates and alumni. The Careers and Employability Service provision includes:

Information about Careers and Employability Service provision is available on the website: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/

Suggested questions to use at your meeting:

- How have you made use of the Careers and Employability Service this year?
- What careers or postgraduate options interest you? What do you know about the careers or postgraduate options that interest you? What ways can the and Employability Careers Service help with your career planning?
- How can you complete your CV to enhance your employment or further study prospects? Who can help you with this?
- What are your plans for the upcoming summer vacation? Have you managed to secure a work placement, internship or some form of work experience?
- In what ways could you identify and articulate your development of Graduate Attributes to potential placement/internship providers and employers?
- They could also be directed to the [Bringing Graduate Attributes to Life](#) website.

FOURTH YEAR / FIFTH YEAR

September meetings:

Suggested questions to explore:

- How do the challenges of final year dissertations/projects draw on your development of the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes?
- How do the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes relate to the qualities and competencies sought by employers or postgraduate course (academic or professional) recruitment teams?
- What sort of evidence/examples will you be able to give to support your employment/course applications?

Employability (refer to the [Careers and Employability Service](#))

Suggested Meeting Agenda

- Remind students about the opportunity to discuss their options and job-hunting strategy, or lack of them, with a [careers adviser](#).
- Encourage students to search and apply for vacancies in the autumn, whether this is for work or further study.
- Remind students that they can meet employers to find out more about what they offer at careers fairs and employer presentations.
- Ensure students are aware that they can receive feedback and advice on their applications before they submit – the [Careers and Employability Service](#) can help with this
- Ensure students know that they will receive [Enhanced Transcript](#) as a supplement to their degree certificate, and encourage them to find out what their transcript will include, and if they are involved with any approved co-curricular activities that could be recorded on it. The Enhanced Transcript has impact on students' employability as it functions as evidence to recruiters and helps students to identify their skills.

Suggested questions to use at your meeting:

- What are your ideas about what you would like to do after you graduate? (Online [career planning tools](#) are available on the Careers Service website.)
- Have you signed up to receive email vacancy alerts from the Careers Service? (<https://abdn.targetconnect.net/home.html>)
- Which careers fairs or employer presentations are you planning to attend on-campus?
- How do you plan to make use of the resources and support available to enable you to create an up-to-date and targeted CV, write effective applications and prepare for interviews?

Information about Careers and Employability Service provision is available on the website: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/

January meeting:

Aberdeen Graduate Attributes in practice - suggested questions to explore:

- How do the challenges of final year dissertations/projects draw on your development of the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes?
- How do the Aberdeen Graduate Attributes relate to the qualities and competencies sought by employers or postgraduate course (academic or professional) recruitment teams?
- What sort of evidence/examples will you be able to give to support your employment/course applications?

Employability (refer to the [Careers and Employability Service](#))

- Remind students that a range of employers continue to visit the University in the second-half session, depending on their circumstances encourage your tutees to attend these employer events.
- Ensure students are aware that they are welcome to continue using the Careers and Employability Service after they finish their studies at Aberdeen.
- Let students know about completing the [Graduate Outcomes Survey](#) and that they will be contacted 15 months after they finish their studies.
- Discuss [reference requests](#) as the majority of students applying for work or further study will need to include at least one academic reference. Encourage students to gain permission from their academic referee before supplying their contact details on applications.

Suggested questions to use at your meeting:

- At our September meeting, we discussed your plans for after graduation, how are your plans progressing?
- How have you sought advice on making employment or further study applications from the Careers and Employability Service?
- How will you use the Careers and Employability Service to help you prepare for interviews or assessment centres?
- Have you thought about who will provide an academic reference as this is a usual requirement for graduate applications and postgraduate study?

Information about Careers and Employability Service provision is available on the website: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/