

Graduate Attributes Spotlight

Advisory Meetings

The role of an Adviser of Study is increasingly shifting away from what some have perceived previously as an administrative gatekeeper to providing a more proactive, pastoral influence on students' personal and intellectual development.

The University's graduate attributes provide a comprehensive framework for advisers to discuss their advisees' continuing development and draw their attention to the wealth of opportunities available to them as students at Glasgow.

Overview

Discussing your advisees' graduate attributes is useful at all stages of University life. Once introduced, students' progress in developing their graduate attributes is a topic you can return to again and again in future meetings to provide a focus to your discussions and ensure productive and useful outcomes.

This spotlight paper suggests an approach for first introducing advisees to their graduate attributes. There are three key steps:

Approach

1. [Introduce our graduate attributes](#)
2. [Talk about students' own progress in developing the graduate attributes](#)
3. [Make them aware of Mahara and the graduate attributes website](#)

Introduce our graduate attributes

Show advisees the graduate attributes matrix and illustrate some examples drawing upon your own teaching experience. You can view the matrix online at www.glasgow.ac.uk/ourattributes. The key messages you should stress are:

- I. Graduate attributes are the academic abilities, personal qualities and transferable skills which all students have the opportunity to develop in the course of studying for a degree – both inside and outside the formal curriculum. The three dimensions of each attribute illustrate how each of the attributes are used within students' three main social spheres – the University, their personal life and in professional settings.
- II. Students should involve themselves fully in the student experience to get the most out of University life and to benefit from opportunities to develop their attributes in all three social spheres. For example, writing essays will teach them to construct logical and persuasive arguments, but joining the Debating Society would enable them to practice this skill in a different context and medium, and develop an overall richer understanding of that particular attribute.
- III. Focusing on developing their graduate attributes will not only ensure students are more employable post-graduation, it will make them better students while they're at University; all ten attributes are the basis of essential skills at undergraduate level, and provide an excellent base to build upon should they

wish to pursue postgraduate study after graduation.

Talk about students' own progress in developing the graduate attributes

Although often hesitant at first, students genuinely welcome the opportunity to informally reflect and take stock of their experiences – and the simple act of talking about their time at university is one of the most effective positive interventions we can make for their intellectual and personal development. Some example topics for discussion are given below:

- What have you found surprising/challenging about university study so far?
- What else have you been doing around campus or externally? (e.g. sports, volunteering...)
- Which attributes do you feel most confident that you have improved so far?
- Which attributes haven't you had the opportunity to use as much?
- What would you like to attempt or achieve before you graduate?
- What do you think you might do after you graduate?
- How can you use your time at University to explore your options and make sure you make the right choices?

Don't forget there are a variety of specialist University Services such as Careers and The Student Learning Service that you can refer students to – you shouldn't feel that you have to be able to deal with all problems that your advisees bring, but rather to help them to identify the positive steps they could take to get the most out of their university experience.

Make them aware of Mahara and the graduate attributes website

Mahara is the University's electronic portfolio software – a tool for students to record reflections on their experiences, store examples of their best work, construct their CV and plan out how they will achieve their life goals.

- I. Run through the features and uses for Mahara – you can learn more about these on <https://portfolio.gla.ac.uk/>
- II. Show them how to log in: students log into Mahara via Moodle – explain that you have to log in by clicking on the Mahara logo on the right hand side of Moodle pages.
- III. Show them example Mahara portfolios to inspire their own efforts: a recent LTDF project employed students to create example portfolios to aid other students in carrying out reflection (see resources).

Finally, reinforce all that you have discussed within the meeting by giving them a copy of the student guide to graduate attributes to take away (available on request).

<p>Careers Service website: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/careers/</p> <p>Student-facing graduate attributes website https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/students/attributes/</p> <p>Student Guide to Graduate Attributes (PDF) http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_191877_en.pdf</p> <p>Introduction to Mahara https://portfolio.gla.ac.uk/</p>	<p>Resources</p>
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