

University of Waikato Graduate Attributes

These overarching graduate attributes capture the qualities—the competencies—that the University community agrees all its graduates should develop as a result of successfully completing their university studies. Through its qualifications and papers, the University aspires to provide opportunities for students not only to develop these competencies, but to be able and motivated to become active contributors to their field(s) of study, their workplace and the community at large. Through their University studies students will have opportunities to become open to experience, capable of leadership and innovation, and aware of the importance of sustainable practices, contributing to devising solutions and to decision making in local, regional, national and global contexts.

Concept	Rationale	Corresponding Graduate Attribute
1. Application of discipline- (and profession-) specific knowledge	A central goal of undergraduate programmes is to enable students to acquire knowledge in one or more disciplines and for graduates to demonstrate a critical understanding of their specialist area(s). This includes being aware of the dynamic nature of knowledge and of the importance of keeping this disciplinary expertise current. Integral to a critical understanding is the ability to identify and ask the right questions and to use the concepts and methods of the discipline to pursue research-based solutions. Students are also being increasingly encouraged to recognise that interdisciplinarity—combining or crossing disciplines—can provide new ways of thinking about and understanding the world.	<p>The ability to apply discipline-specific knowledge and concepts to professional practice and in everyday practical contexts.</p> <p>An appreciation of how discipline-specific knowledges intersect, creating new spaces of enquiry and new ways of understanding the world.</p> <p>(Where relevant) the ability to demonstrate professional competence and to meet the technical standards of their profession.</p>
2. Application of critical thinking in systematic, innovative and creative ways	A further goal is to enable students to become capable of applying their discipline-specific knowledge both in scholarly and practical contexts. This involves acquiring, practising and refining skills of critical and analytical thinking: being able to integrate and synthesise knowledge and to evaluate it for its relevance and usefulness. This requires knowledge of current and emerging research methodologies and of digital technologies and their practical applications. It also includes developing the intellectual confidence to identify and (re)solve problems by: gathering the right information; making connections across fields of knowledge; coping with open ended questions and uncertainty; and applying knowledge to new and complex situations.	<p>The ability to assemble, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information in systematic and creative ways, making connections across fields of knowledge, and identifying solutions to challenges in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.</p> <p>Knowledge of current and emerging research methodologies in particular disciplines, and the ability to apply these in systematic and innovative ways.</p> <p>The ability to engage effectively and critically with technology-enabled information, data and tools.</p>

<p>3. Effective communication and collaboration</p>	<p>A graduate should be capable of communicating clearly with others working within their disciplinary area(s) as well as to a non-specialist audience. This requires well-developed communication skills, including the ability to write to audience and to present properly structured evidence-based arguments. While working independently is a valued skill, the ability to work effectively within a team is also important. Employers seek employees who are adaptable and who can contribute expert knowledge and productive energy to their team. Many professional projects are team-based and thus require people with the ability to work constructively within diverse groups of people, contributing individual expertise while assisting the collective to achieve the team's goals.</p>	<p>The ability to communicate clearly in a variety of oral, written and digital formats to a variety of specialist and non-specialist audiences.</p> <p>The ability to contribute effectively to collaborative tasks and projects.</p> <p>The capacity for cross-cultural communication and for working constructively with diverse groups and individuals.</p>
<p>4. Competent in culturally diverse local and global contexts</p>	<p>Our graduates will find themselves competing in an international employment market with graduates who are multilingual and who have diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. Graduates with limited experiences and understanding of cultures and languages other than their own may struggle to make meaningful contributions to the world of work and to society as a whole. In the workplace they will need the capacity to work productively in multicultural and/or multilingual teams. This requires developing confidence within multicultural settings in Aotearoa/ New Zealand and in broader, global contexts, respect for a diversity of cultural perspectives, and the ability to evaluate approaches and solutions that take account of different perspectives.</p>	<p>The ability to communicate effectively in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts.</p> <p>The ability to integrate Māori and indigenous perspectives in the contexts of disciplinary knowledges.</p> <p>The ability to grasp and apply disciplinary knowledges from within local and global perspectives.</p>
<p>5. Professional and personal integrity</p>	<p>An undergraduate education aims to develop independent, self-directed learners, able to engage in life-long learning and successfully navigate inevitable and unpredictable changes that will take place in their working and personal lives. An important aspect of this is an awareness and understanding of ethical issues that relate to their area of study and to academic endeavour more widely. Also important is the ability to determine criteria for the evaluation of their own and others' performance in relation to a task and to apply these responsibly.</p>	<p>The ability to demonstrate adherence to the ethical standards of the discipline and the profession (where relevant).</p> <p>The capacity for self-reflection and ongoing learning. The ability to apply knowledge and skills for the wider benefit of society locally, regionally, nationally and globally.</p>