ANU Curriculum Framework & Graduate Attribute Implementation Guide

Australian National University

See also:

Future of Curriculum Resource Hub

ANU Curriculum Framework Implementation Case Studies

Contents

1. Context

This document serves as an initial reference point for advice and guidance around the implementation of the ANU Curriculum Framework and ANU Graduate Attributes, which were endorsed by Academic Board in 2022, and enable and are enabled by other strategic work.

This guidance draws heavily upon the extensive consultation and advice through 2022-23 evidenced in working group reports, which are referenced where appropriate, and subsequent regular meetings and bottom-up dialogues with Colleges.

1.1 A Vision for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at ANU

Our graduates will have a positive influence on the future. They are passionate, creative, and capable of solving critical problems not yet imagined. They create and apply knowledge to improve the lives of people, the nation, and the world.

1.2 Alignment with ANU Strategic Plan 2021–2025

The ANU 2021–2025 Strategic Plan states:

The education our students engage in will be intellectually stimulating and broad. It will include disciplinary depth and transdisciplinary breadth to provoke critical thinking and problem solving. It will join academic and experiential learning to encourage our students to employ their knowledge in local, national, and global contexts. Our students will be digitally literate and the way we teach them will reflect contemporary ways of learning.

And:

We will support the study of First Nations traditional knowledge and demonstrate its social value to all.

1.3 Alignment with ANU Learning & Teaching Strategy

Alongside the ANU Learning and Teaching Strategy, the ANU Curriculum Framework and ANU Graduate Attributes provide clarity on the overall education direction, which communicates our distinctive approach to learning and teaching. All 12 stated goals in the Learning & Teaching Strategy should be considered if adjusting programs and courses to align to the Curriculum Framework requirements.

1.4 Resources Hub

Case studies, guidance, advice and implementation conventions with endorsed programs illustrating how programs have incorporated the Graduate Attributes and Curriculum Framework can be found on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub.

2. ANU Curriculum Framework

The ANU Curriculum Framework:

- Builds a distinctive ANU experience across all undergraduate programs
- Creates space for graduate attributes complementary to discipline/area depth
- Enables collaboration across academic areas/disciplines
- Encourages flexibility within Flexible Double Degrees (FDD)

2.1 Design Principles

Undergraduate Bachelor degree programs must demonstrate five common principles:

1. Distinctiveness Principle

Programs of study are distinct and self-contained.

Implementation description: *Overlap between programs with programs and majors with majors do not exceed 50%.*

2. Developmental Principle

Programs of study incrementally scaffold development of discipline/area knowledge.

Implementation description: *Students are required to follow a minimum sequence of courses designed to build towards discipline/area depth and relevant graduate attributes.*

3. Depth Principle

Programs of study contain discipline/area depth

Implementation description: *Students are required to complete of a minimum of 18u of 3000-level courses in a discipline/area.*

4. Broader Context Principle

Programs of study embed opportunities for applying discipline knowledge in broader contexts, including transdisciplinary problem-solving and other forms of experiential learning

Implementation description: Programs contain a pathway for a minimum of 24 units of transdisciplinary and other forms of experiential learning (see §3.4). Students are required to complete a minimum of 12 units of Transdisciplinary courses.

5. Flexibility Principle

In Flexible Double Degrees, programs of study provide flexibility between programs

Implementation description: *Except where external requirements (such as professional accreditation) limit, programs contain 24 units of flexibility between degrees through double-counting or specifying less than the maximum available volume of learning.*

See further information on Design Principles, Curriculum Framework components, governance, considerations, timelines, volume of learning, realisation and case studies on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub.

3. ANU Graduate Attributes

3.1 Insight into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledges and Indigenous peoples' perspectives (IP-GA)

3.1.1 Description

To know the true nature of things, ANU graduates acknowledge and understand our history. At ANU, we are committed to knowing our country and learning its rich history. To do this, we recognise and incorporate Indigenous Australian peoples' diverse languages and knowledges into the fabric of our University and our curriculum. ANU graduates continue to learn from and respect the knowledges and cultures that First Nations peoples have been developing and nurturing on their lands for millennia.

3.1.2 Intent

The intent of the Indigenous Perspectives Graduate Attribute is to:

- Include Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other Indigenous content and contexts in curricula that is meaningful, appropriately developed, and appropriately resourced
- Celebrate and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, principles, and ways of learning in curricula
- Reflect content and context for both historical and contemporary Indigenous knowledges and perspectives-encompassing Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing
- Ensure that students who graduate from the ANU have started on their lifelong learning journey of cultural competency and reflection with respect to all Indigenous peoples
- Prepare ANU graduates to demonstrate leadership and engage in respectful and informed debate required for harmony and collaboration between the diverse cultures and lived experiences in Australia and beyond
- Recognise, value and demonstrate respect for the role of Elders, Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people for our shared future

This graduate attribute recognises Australia's place beyond our borders, particularly throughout Asia and the Pacific and the knowledges and cultures that Indigenous peoples have been developing and nurturing on their lands across the world for millennia.

3.1.3 Implementation and cultural endorsement

Disciplines/areas are encouraged to consult, collaborate, develop, and adopt a coherent position on Indigenous perspectives into the discipline/area to align curriculum and activities.

In addition to regular governance processes, programs should demonstrate cultural endorsement in the Relevant Internal and External Consultation section in CMS for the pathway of courses that are being used to achieve the graduate attribute. Cultural endorsement should also be evidenced at a course level where the course is contributing significantly to the program-level achievement.

See further information on the Indigenous Perspectives Graduate Attributes on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub.

3.2 Expertise for Critical Thinking (CT-GA)

3.2.1 Description

ANU graduates are critical thinkers, they actively challenge what and how we know the nature of things. They engage in cutting edge debate on topics of relevance and importance to them. They ask judicious questions, design systematic methodologies and use data to analyse, synthesise, extrapolate and predict. ANU graduates demonstrate logical, rational and ethical patterns of reasoning to represent and communicate their understandings. They support their arguments with evidence and pioneer positive change and innovation.

3.2.2 Intent

The intent of the CT-GA is to:

- Scaffold and intentionally develop critical thinking skills relevant to disciplinary/area studies
- Explicitly articulate and surface the development of critical thinking skills
- Develop generic and broadly applicable critical thinking skills, as appropriate

3.2.3 Guidance on definitions for implementation

Disciplines/areas are encouraged to develop or adopt a coherent set of discipline/area critical thinking skills to help communicate the skills being developed and to align curriculum.

In addition to the skills outlined in the Description, the working group identified from the literature concepts such as:

> disciplined reasoning; evaluating claims; open-mindedness; thinking rationally; appropriate and effective thinking; differentiation of ideas; purposeful, reflective judgement; drawing logical conclusions; purposeful, self-regulatory judgement; interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference; explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations; reflective thinking; purposeful, self-regulatory judgment; scepticism.

Note that it is anticipated that all programs currently exceed the CT-GA, and the intent is to help identify where key or foundational critical thinking skills are developed.

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) states that all Bachelor degree holders are expected to have "cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence" (AQF 2013: 48).

> See further information on the Critical Thinking Graduate Attribute on the on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub.

3.3 Capability to Employ Discipline-based Knowledge in Transdisciplinary Problem-Solving (TD-GA)

3.3.1 Description

ANU graduates are adept at working with others to understand and creatively address the amorphous, complex problems that face our world. They are capable of critically engaging with — and integrating — diverse discipline-based, stakeholder and Indigenous knowledges for values-driven problem solving. They produce powerful, systemic, transdisciplinary solutions to address problems in local, national and global contexts.

3.3.2 Intent

The intent of the TD-GA is to:

- Encourage collaborations across difference between diverse cohorts of students, academics and/or other experts or external stakeholders
- Develop transdisciplinary problem-solving skills relevant to a wide variety of real-world situations and contexts
- Contextualise disciplinary knowledge within broader transdisciplinary learning experiences
- Gain insight into broader and alternative ways of knowing and understanding not typically considered in disciplinary studies

3.3.3 Guidance on definitions for implementation

Developing problem-solving skills and collaboration are important factors across many degree programs. Disciplines/areas are encouraged to develop or adopt a coherent position on how their discipline/area develops transdisciplinary problem-solving skills to help communicate the skills, experiences and activities around this graduate attribute and to align curriculum.

For the purposes of meeting the TD-GA, specific courses identified need to demonstrate base requirements around three pillars:

- Skills: Development of transdisciplinary problem-solving skills
- Collaboration: Collaboration across disciplinary difference
- Context: Engagement in transdisciplinary contexts.

A Likeliness scale and descriptors for each pillar is available on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub.

> See further information on the Transdisciplinary Graduate Attributes and proposing a course onto the TD Course List on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub.

3.4 Experiential Courses in the Curriculum Framework

3.4.1 Description

Experiential courses, which may form part of the Broader Context principle, provide space for students to contextualise or apply discipline/area studies, complementary to the discipline/area studies outcomes.

3.4.2 Intent

Experiential courses are recognised in the Curriculum Framework as an enriching alternative to courses that meet the TD-GA. Experiential courses are not in and of themselves a graduate attribute. However, there is a broad alignment between the Experiential courses and the intent of the Graduate Attributes, in that they can be used to:

- transfer disciplinary skills and knowledge from one domain to another
- develop real-world and other applied skills in authentic learning environments
- otherwise contextualise disciplinary learning in broader contexts.

Broadly, this could be achieved through experiences, such as:

- Research projects or other forms of research-based Special Topics
- Engagement with industry or the broader community, such as through Internships, Industry projects, Challenge courses and other industry-relevant projects or experiences
- Learning in different cultural contexts, such as exchange programs or other place-based opportunities
- Fieldwork, simulations and placements outside of traditional coursework settings
- Developing proficiency in languages other than English, where relevant
- Courses that further develop graduate attributes, as appropriate.

3.4.3 Further reading

Further details about the concept behind the Flexibility Principle (described initially as a Flexible Curriculum Block) are provided in the Curriculum Framework & Graduate Attribute Descriptions.

See further information on the Experiential Courses within the Curriculum Framework on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub.

4. Further Resources

See the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub for all future up-to-date information on the Curriculum Framework and Graduate Attribute projects.

Timeline

See the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub for an up-to-date timeline for the project.

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Changelog

See the Changelog on the Future of Curriculum Resource Hub for a description of how this document has evolved.

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