



## Enhancing Student Support: Personal Tutor group sessions

### Introduction to Graduate Attributes and Employability

The **aim** of this session is to introduce UG students, particularly 1<sup>st</sup> year ones (however, the session plan can be adapted for more senior years and PG students; notes to tutors do include some ideas on adaptation or modification) to the University's Graduate Attribute Framework, to challenge their assumptions about the concept and relevance of Graduate Attributes, and to encourage students to make full use of the University's wide range of opportunities in the formal curriculum, as well as in co-and extra-curricular activities.

The plan below outlines potential activities that may be undertaken by the tutor during the session in order to meet the objective and the outcomes; *it isn't however a fixed structure and should be adjusted according to the needs and expectations of the learners.*

This introductory session is planned to take between 45 and 60 minutes (depending on group size, level and needs of students, etc), with an interactive, student-centred and reflective focus from the start. Considering it is an introductory session only, the transfer between activities should be swift and dynamic. Tutees will be encouraged to record and share any reflections with their peer group after the session and possibly design a plan for working with the Graduate Attributes Framework.

#### SESSION OBJECTIVES

By the end of the session learners/tutees will have:

1. Challenged own potential assumptions relating to Graduate Attributes and Employability concepts
2. Appreciated the dynamic wider context within which Graduate Attributes are used and developed (with links to Employability)

3. Introduced the University's Graduate Attributes Framework and discussed ways in which the outer ring (overarching attributes) can guide and inspire our thinking and the inner ring can act as a unique and individual toolbox for impact
4. Introduced and discussed ideas and opportunities for Graduate Attribute and Employability opportunities offered by the UoE
5. Reflected on own understanding of, motivations and aspirations with regards to Graduate Attributes and Employability development and encouraged students to seek and make full use of the available opportunities from the start

Activity and proposed timing	Learning approaches or methods used	Resources	Outcome	Comments (e.g. adapting)	Potential challenges	Potential benefits
Introduction and warmer 5 mins	Proposed activities/introductions: <u>Slide 2:</u> - students get into pairs or groups of 3 (max!) and define what graduate attributes are - scaffolded and more in-depth approach (optional, may be used with PG students or those who are not new to GAF): get them to define what graduate attributes are NOT. Students may be encouraged to swap their sheets and definitions with another group for peer learning. The activity should be kept to 5 mins max and timed accordingly to keep the discussions focused and get students' 'very first' thoughts.	Blank sheets of paper (one per group), pens	1	Scaffolded activity may be suitable for PG students or more senior UG	Students may find the second part (what GAs are not) a bit challenging; peer discussion may be beneficial here.  Timing should be kept to 5 mins max to keep students' discussions focused	Working in small groups encourages sharing, discussion and different viewpoints. Asking for definitions at start may reveal students' way of thinking and potentially exposes and challenges any assumptions (to be

						discussed in the following stage of the session)
Common questions and/or assumptions : reflections  3 - 5 mins	<u>Slide 3:</u> The questions are presented to connect with the audience (some assumptions may have come up in the students' definitions), and to encourage students' wider and deeper thinking in relation to GAs. At this stage the tutor can present the questions for reflection, without answering them. At the end of the session, the tutor will come back to these questions and students will discuss their answers.	PowerPoint (enclosed), projector	1	Some students (particularly 1 <sup>st</sup> year) may seem to be confused by these 'reflective questions' with no given answers. The purpose as to why this is done can be explained by the tutor		Excellent potential here for individual students to safely reflect on the common misconception, without necessarily revealing their own (if any)
Wider context: the University  3-5 mins	<u>Slide 4:</u> To avoid 'talking at them' about the University, tutors may here briefly provide some relevant examples of the University's achievements, breath of research, impact and values from their own Schools or others; or/and ask the students what examples they could already provide from their own experience of being a student member of the Edinburgh University.	PowerPoint, projector	2	This section should be adapted to suit the students and their level of university life awareness.		Opportunity to build on the sense of belonging and putting the 'EdGE' into institutional context. Raising students' awareness of the strategic nature of Graduate

						Attributes Framework.
Wider context: Employability 3 - 5 mins	<p><u>Slide 5:</u> This session is predominantly aimed to focus on Graduate Attributes but GAs do not exist in isolation to Employability (and are in fact an intermediary between good learning and teaching, and employability) hence the thought-provoking quote on employment and employability. The tutor may at this point go back to one of the initial questions/assumptions: 'is it all about getting a job?'</p> <p><i>Note: a separate session has been designed to focus more on employability</i></p>	PowerPoint, projector	3		Some students may struggle to see the difference between concepts; personal stories of resilience in securing and progressing employment and careers are useful to add credibility	
Graduate Attributes Framework: explanation 10 mins	<p><u>Slide 6:</u> tutors are encouraged here to emphasise the uniqueness of each student's experience of Graduate Attributes.</p> <p><u>Slide 7:</u> This slide illustrates SOME of the skills, behaviours and attitudes corresponding to the inner ring 'clusters' (Research and Enquiry, Personal and Intellectual Autonomy, Personal Effectiveness, Communication). Students here can match which heading goes with which text box. If time allows, tutor can choose to ask students to expand on the lists (they are not exhaustive), or choose to elicit these skills and behaviours from students BEFORE</p>	PowerPoint, projector	3	Notes for this slide are provided in the PowerPoint.		Providing examples and contextualising the inner ring skills would be very beneficial to emphasise the need for a disciplinary approach to GAs.

	<p>showing this screen.</p> <p>For indicative descriptions of each of the outer ring and the inner ring clusters, please see 'Indicative Interpretation' document (NB: this is <u>indicative</u> interpretation only):  <a href="http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/documents/GA%20-%20Framework%20+%20Indicative%20Interpretation.pdf">http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/documents/GA%20-%20Framework%20+%20Indicative%20Interpretation.pdf</a>  <i>Note: a refreshed Graduate Attributes Indicative Interpretation is currently being created to update the language for students' needs.</i></p>					
<p>'Adopt the EdGe' activity: seeking and using opportunities</p> <p>5 mins</p>	<p><u>Slide 8:</u> This is a useful intro to opportunities for students particularly 1<sup>st</sup> years, but a useful refresher for the more senior ones.</p> <p>It is important though to emphasise the opportunities that exist within the formal curriculum and learning for the development of Graduate Attributes: the (research) projects, assessment types and tasks, the learning process</p>		4	<p>This is a slide very much open to adaptation and contextualising (e.g. adding other opportunities, links, etc)</p>		
<p>Recap and reflection: going back to the initial questions: some</p>	<p><u>Slide 9:</u> a simple pictorial equation is given here to recap the importance of approach/thinking (outer ring) and the uniqueness of 'tool choice and usage' (discipline specific), with the potential of making real impact, of growing,</p>		1 and 5	<p>If students leave their new individual definitions for the tutor, this is a good</p>		<p>A real opportunity for a more in-depth reflective approach in the form of 'why'</p>

discussion 10 mins	<p>contributing. <u>Slide 10:</u> questions are answered, but each is followed by <b>'why'</b>: students should be encouraged to come up with answers to these 'whys', to foster an even deeper level of reflection.</p> <p>Slide 11: Students compiling (individually this time) their own 'new' definitions of graduate attributes, hopefully taking into account the learning/understanding from the session. For tutor's evaluation and feedback purposes, these definitions can be collected in a 'hat' when students are leaving the room. Students should be encouraged to contextualise the benefits (Slide 11) they see in the development of Graduate Attributes.</p>			chance to get feedback on the learning from the session		questions
Conclusion: 2 -3 mins	<u>Slide 12:</u> The aim of the cartoon is to again challenge any perceptions (misconceptions) of Graduate Attributes as generic, transferrable 'survival skills' (the cheeky cartoon can be left out and answering the initial questions can be used as a conclusion in itself).	PowerPoint, Post-It notes for new definitions	1 and 5	Slide is optional and can be left out		
Questions Close	Open plenary					