

# Generic skills and attributes of University of Canberra graduates from higher degree by research programs

Postgraduate research programs offered by the University of Canberra include doctor of philosophy (PhD), professional doctorate by research and masters by research. Candidates in these programs undertake research that is expected to make an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the field, appropriate to the degree.

The results of the research are presented as a thesis (or its equivalent in another medium). Coursework components may be included in professional doctorate and masters programs. In addition to meeting academic requirements for the relevant degree, candidates are expected to acquire a range of generic skills and attributes through the research program. The University has developed the following vision statement for its research graduates:

*Graduates of postgraduate research programs at the University of Canberra will possess advanced skills in inquiry, communication and organisation. Research graduates will be able to reflect critically and take a creative approach to issues in and beyond their field of research expertise. They will have a positive attitude to the acquisition and advancement of knowledge, continue to learn and provide leadership in their professions. They will practise ethically and exert a beneficial influence on society. This statement of the generic skills and attributes of research graduates at the University of Canberra complements the policy statement Generic skills and attributes of UC graduates from undergraduate and postgraduate coursework courses.*

## Characteristics of research education

Research students bring to their studies a diversity of academic expertise, workplace skills and personal and professional experience. In recognition of this the University requires each candidate in a masters or doctoral by research program to develop a personal learning plan that acknowledges and builds on the capacities and skills candidates already possess. The learning plan, which is prepared by the candidate in consultation with the research supervisors and formally reviewed each year, is designed to ensure both achievement of the research objectives and acquisition of generic skills through the research education program. The specificity of the research project and the skills and attributes gained during conduct of the research are inextricably linked.

The University has identified six key learning areas of postgraduate research education:

**Knowledge:** To be able to conceptualise, acquire, apply, integrate, grow and contextualise knowledge.

**Inquiry:** To be able to develop advanced approaches and techniques for defining, investigating and resolving research questions.

**Communication:** To be able to identify, analyse, evaluate and communicate information and knowledge, using appropriate oral, visual and written mediums.

**Organisation:** To be able to develop advanced strategies to lead the planning, management and implementation of a project.

**Creativity:** To use original approaches to produce works that critique and extend current forms of knowledge and understanding.

**Ethical practice:** To respect, understand and apply ethical practices personally and professionally.

**Specific learning outcomes** in each key learning area are related to the **key attributes** of **conceptualisation** and **understanding**; **application**; and **reflection**.

## The generic skills and attributes

The University of Canberra is committed to ensuring that all graduates from higher degree by research programs have developed the following skills and attributes through their research education program.

### 1. Knowledge

- 1.1 The research graduate should be able to conceptualise, contextualise and exhibit a systematic understanding of knowledge in the research field within the wider framework of society and the professions.
- 1.2 The research graduate should be able to apply and integrate knowledge in the relevant profession or discipline and use that knowledge to develop creative solutions in new situations.
- 1.3 The research graduate should be aware of issues at the forefront of knowledge in the research field and should critically reflect and re-evaluate knowledge to address issues as they arise.

## **2. Inquiry**

- 2.1 The research graduate should understand the inquiry philosophies, theories and practices in addressing research issues and appreciate different methodological approaches.
- 2.2 The research graduate should have developed higher order critical thinking skills in order to investigate, formulate and apply a range of approaches to problems including critical analysis and interpretation of research outcomes.
- 2.3 The research graduate should be able to evaluate critically and question the philosophies, theories and practices, and research outcomes in the research field.

## **3. Communication**

- 3.1 The research graduate should understand the communication practices characteristic of the profession and their applicability beyond the discipline context.
- 3.2 The research graduate should be able to identify, analyse, evaluate and communicate information and knowledge using oral, visual and written mediums. The graduate should be able to choose the appropriate form of communication for the context and communicate clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 3.3 The research graduate should critically reflect on the effectiveness of their communication practices.

## **4. Organisation**

- 4.1 The research graduate should be able to create a shared vision and conceive appropriate and achievable goals, objectives, actions and strategies.
- 4.2 The research graduate should be able to provide leadership, develop, implement and evaluate project plans and be able to operate effectively in a changing environment.
- 4.3 The research graduate should continue to develop as a reflective practitioner/professional.

## **5. Creativity**

- 5.1 The research graduate should understand basic principles of originality and creativity in research and be able to use original approaches to produce works that critique and extend current forms of knowledge and understanding.
- 5.2 The research graduate should be able to formulate new approaches and interpret the existing bodies of work and their relevance to the new approach.
- 5.3 The research graduate should critically and creatively reflect on approaches to research methodology, implementation and outcomes.

## **6. Ethical practice**

- 6.1 The research graduate should respect the concept of ethics and the ethical process, understand ethical frameworks and codes of practice as appropriate and be able to identify and understand the ethical dimensions of a project.
- 6.2 The research graduate should practise ethically and engage with colleagues and the community in a professional way.
- 6.3 The research graduate should continue to develop a social conscience as a reflective practitioner and community member.

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