

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

(This statement complements “Generic skills and attributes of graduates of University of Canberra coursework courses https://guard.canberra.edu.au/policy/policy.php?pol_id=3030)

As Australia’s Capital University, the University of Canberra offers professional education and applied research tailored to the distinctive needs of a capital city, with its international, national and local dimensions. The University is committed to applied research and research training. In its application, this research may provide innovative responses to contemporary challenges in environmental sustainability, good governance and policy development, and the fostering of resilience and creativity in communities.

Research training is vital to the University of Canberra’s research vision. Higher degree by research (HDR) candidates are integral members of our research communities. We recognise that our HDR candidates bring to the graduate research journey a diverse range of motivations and skills sets. Our aim is to further equip our graduates with the skills and expertise required to be workforce ready¹, with the understanding that our graduates will be influencing practice and leading innovation across a broad range of work environments.

The skills and attributes statement recognises that the development of advanced disciplinary knowledge is inextricably linked to the development of the skills and attributes listed below. The scope of this statement includes graduate skills and attributes alone, however the University expects graduates to also demonstrate deep content knowledge. Demonstrable disciplinary knowledge outcomes, together with the statement below, form the framework for the learning outcomes that will be assessed across the candidature milestones.

The statement applies to all HDR candidates and graduates, however doctoral candidates are expected to acquire generic skills and attributes at a more advanced level than masters by research candidates. This expectation reflects the differences between Level 9 qualifications (Masters Degree (Research)) and Level 10 qualifications (Doctoral Degree) set out in the AQF. Further, the University recognises that skills and knowledge outcomes may differ between the Doctor of Philosophy and Professional Doctorate qualifications. Differences between doctoral qualifications awarded by the University are captured in the learning outcomes to be assessed throughout candidature.

The skills and attributes statement will:

- cater for the diversity of research areas in the University while providing a framework for the University as a whole;
- be supported and understood by HDR candidates and staff involved in supervising and managing candidature
- be embedded at Faculty or University of Canberra Research Centre (UCRC) level;
- be supported through a University level programme as well as activities in Faculties and Centres; and
- be regularly reviewed.

It is expected that the skills and attributes listed below will be fostered throughout candidature, supported by an ongoing professional development programme, and monitored through the attainment of milestones and via annual progress reporting. HDR candidates will develop these skills and attributes in the context of disciplinary knowledge; personal goals and career aspirations; and opportunities.

¹ The Australian Government recognises the need for generic skills training to support HDR graduates’ productivity across diverse work environments in their Research Workforce Strategy: “Research Skills for an Innovative Future” (2011).

Statement of Generic Skills and Attributes

The University of Canberra's HDR courses will provide graduates with the opportunity to develop or build upon the following generic skills and attributes.

Innovation and creativity

HDR graduates will be able to:

- apply existing skills and knowledge to new situations;
- recognise a problem and identify the core issue/s;
- develop inventive solutions, demonstrating flexibility, resourcefulness and enthusiasm;
- take intellectual risks; and
- identify and engage with research opportunities.

Critical judgement and reflection

HDR graduates will be able to:

- operate effectively in a changing environment;
- reflect critically and undertake systemic investigation into a complex body of knowledge;
- analyse and synthesise information from a variety of sources; and
- make rational conclusions based on evidence derived from the research.

Communication

HDR graduates will be equipped with:

- an understanding of the practices and methods in place for the transfer of knowledge to specialist and non-specialist audiences; and
- the capacity to engage with stakeholders and to influence practice.

Management of research

HDR graduates will be able to:

- prioritise tasks and work under pressure;
- design, use and evaluate research methods as appropriate to the field/s of investigation;
- develop and implement project plans and lead projects; and
- select and apply appropriate digital tools to support the conduct and management of research.

Professionalism and social responsibility

HDR graduates will be equipped with:

- the capacity and intention to apply professional knowledge and skills with full responsibility and accountability for self;
- a commitment to the conduct of research in a manner which is ethical, and conforms to appropriate health and safety principles;
- an understanding of intellectual property protocols as they pertain to the conduct and dissemination of research;

- an insight into the global context in which they operate as research practitioners, and the potential for research to benefit society;
- an awareness of the transferability of research skills to other work environments and the range of career opportunities within and outside academia; and
- the ability to work collaboratively and effectively with others, within a range of teams and contexts.