

Graduate Attributes in Higher Education

Graduate Attributes (GAs) are the high-level qualities, skills, and understandings a university community commits its students should develop during their duration at the university. These attributes are intimately associated with employability. GAs prepare the students and graduates for lifelong personal development, learning, and be productive in society. They must be reinforced for graduates using high-quality academic programs. Graduates must have and enhance the high-level qualities on their educational track. Further, graduates must utilize those qualities beyond their educational journey into their professional careers.

Graduate-level skills are promoted by universities as wanted by employers and will strengthen students' employment positions. Each university promotes its GAs, which often differ from others since the competitiveness exists among the universities. This difference aids the university in attracting students and building its brand. Also, universities progressively use these attributes as markers for quality of learning, teaching, and organizational culture.

The essential for GAs in higher education arises due to the i) mismatch between the student's acquired skills and the skills required by employers, ii) necessity of integrating the common characteristics and qualities of graduates into the curriculum to confirm the progress of students' skills and offer them with a better working environment to raise their employability, and iii) requirement for getting accreditation.

While designing the GAs, the university should define its GAs that derive the institutional-level learning outcomes (Los) in line with its mission, educational goals, growth requirements, and labor market. Also, GAs for each program should be in line with the institutional GAs, the program

mission, professional standards, and the labor market desires. The academic programs should integrate Los with GAs to meet the expectations of internal and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, GAs were measured through direct observation, indirect measurement, and indirect feedback. Proper and well-organized assessment methods/tools are required for measuring GAs. It is also essential to align the assessment methods with GAs/Los. The university should confirm that its graduates attain targeted attributes using suitable assessment mechanisms. The principles and practices of assessing the attainment of GAs include a) invest in developing GAs and their alignment, b) assess at various levels, c) use direct and indirect assessment methods, d) re-test the assessment.

Besides, the university should reinforce the quality practices of faculty members to attain the intended outcomes relevant to the GAs. It should monitor and develop the faculty performance by integrating and interacting with the global trends, using the recent teaching and learning methods and international standards to improve graduates' skills. It should have an innovative curriculum to cover new fields. It should also offer the students with indicators of their progress in obtaining the GAs to qualify for their future careers. Further, it is essential to forecast and analyze the national and international labor market requirements. The university should maintain the synergy between education, skills, and employability. In the current scenario, the universities should adopt appropriate strategies to improve and sustain their position in the competitive higher education sector with the unique GAs and competent graduates.