The Implementation and Embedding of Graduate Attributes: the Staffordshire University Experience

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Structure of Presentation

Two main themes:

• The implementation of the Staffordshire Graduate Attributes (SGA).

• The Staffordshire Graduate Employability Programme (SGEP) – the innovative pilot programme that forms a key part of the delivery of the Staffordshire Graduate.
Introduction and context
What are Graduate Attributes?

Graduate attributes are commonly understood as an articulation of

“…the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.” (Bowden 2000)
What’s New?

John Henry Newman (1853)

Idea of a University

A University training…is the education which gives man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them…It teaches him to go straight to the point, disentangle a skein of thought… It prepares him to fill any post with credit and to master any subject with facility.

It shows him how to accommodate himself to others. He is at home in any society;…he can ask a question pertinently;…he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect…
The Staffordshire Graduate represents a set of qualities that the University passionately believes is necessary for success in the 21st century. The Staffordshire Graduate is a reflective and critical learner with a global perspective, prepared to contribute in the world of work.
Staffordshire Graduate Attributes

- Developing Global Citizenship
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Reflective and Critical Enquiry for Lifelong Learning
- Global Citizenship
- Reflective and Critical Learner
- Lifelong Learning
- Communication and Teamwork
- Professionalism
- Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (the 3Es)
- Extra-Curricular support for 3Es and recording of achievement
Implementing the Staffordshire Graduate

Academic Board decided in October 2011 that all undergraduate programmes:

• Should be structured normally on the basis of modules of 30 credits with normally no more than two 15 credit modules per level.

• Should demonstrate in detail at each level how the Staffordshire Graduate Attributes would be addressed through the curriculum.

• A University Standing Panel (USP) considered proposals made by Programme teams. The Programme Specification, approved by the Faculty, included a detailed mapping of where in the curriculum the SGAs are located and assessed.
A degree from Staffordshire University is much more than an academic qualification.

That’s because every one of our undergraduate courses has been designed to equip you with the attitude, knowledge and skills that are essential for career success – and to catch the eye of employers.

The Staffordshire Graduate is our pledge that upon graduation you’ll have more than just a thorough understanding of your subject. You’ll also have a set of attributes that prospective employers will value and respect.

As well as being highly employable, you’ll also be enterprising and entrepreneurial – essential skills for identifying and creating new business opportunities.

Read on to discover how, as a Staffordshire Graduate, you’ll have the qualities and skills to make your mark on the world.

Equipping you for success

Taking your degree at Staffordshire University isn’t just about becoming a qualified academic. It’s about preparing the life and work skills that employers will respect and will help you stand out in the job market.

We call these skills “attributes” and, as part of the Staffordshire Graduate Pledge, we’re going to give lengthened and explained into all of our degree courses.

Whichever Staffordshire University degree you take, your course will include a range of attributes to help you achieve success.

"I graduated from Staffs with great employability skills and an excellent portfolio – something that’s essential in graphic design. I worked on real challenges and built skills, developed great communication and presentation skills, and won the London-based brand agency, Coley Porter Bell, Shine Award. This meant a £2,000 cash prize and a three-month work placement. I now work for Coley Porter Bell full-time as a graphic designer. It’s proper work with real commercial value, for global brand owners like Unilever and Nestlé."

Jia Ying Goh, BA(Hons) Graphic Design
What are the Staffordshire Graduates Attributes?

- Professional
- Global Citizen
- Teamwork
- Life-long Learner
- Reflective and Critical
- Discipline Expert
The Staffordshire Graduate Employability Project (SGEP)
The SGEP

• 6 Pilot Awards – Science, Law, Drama/Theatre, Sport, Tourism, Media

• Engage over 700 and 70 academic staff in the first year (2012-13) and 1500 students and over 100 staff in 2013-14
A new core module at each level of study

• Each Award to maintain its discipline integrity.

• To use the new module to contextualise the Graduate Attributes.

• To ensure this contextualisation was embedded across all the Award’s modules.
Compulsory engagement with work-ready experience at Level 5

• Integral to the SGEP is that every student would engage during Level 5 with a minimum of 25 hours ‘work-ready experience’ that would be recorded for evidence and assessed.
Introduction of an e-portfolio across the three levels of study

• Integral to the SGEP was the introduction of an e-portfolio to facilitate:
  
  – Recording of Learning Experiences
  – Reflecting on those Learning Experiences
  – Building a work-ready *Living CV* from Level 4
Encourage cross Award collaboration on curriculum design and delivery

- Dissemination of Good Practice/Experiences on a regular basis provided new opportunities for both students and faculty to work together on collaborative curriculum developments
University Forum Management Structure to capture the synergy and potential of the SGEP

- Critical for success was Leadership
  - Executive Level/ Award/Operational Level

- As was Engagement across the University
  - Faculties
  - University Services
  - Students Union
  - Employers
Staffordshire Graduate
Work Ready, World Ready

Thank You for Listening

Any Questions?