Higher Degree Research Graduate Attributes Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) Graduates of the Southern Cross University will possess the skills and knowledge necessary for a career related to their chosen field(s) of study, and for scholarly engagement in those fields.

(2) The purpose of this Policy is to clearly articulate the University's Higher Degree Research (HDR) Graduate Attributes which serve to:

a. define what the University values as outcomes of HDR university learning;
b. prepare students for continued learning and activity beyond university;
c. Support assurance of learning and compliance with agreed national standards associated with teaching and learning.

Section 2 - Scope:

(3) This Policy applies to Higher Degree Research awards (Masters by Research, Professional Doctorates (excluding early exit from Professional Doctorate awards - candidates that early exit from a Professional Doctorate award must refer to the Coursework Graduate Attributes Policy), Doctor of Philosophy awards).

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) For the purposes of this Policy:

a. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):
    i. The AQF 'is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework' (AQF, 2013, p. 9).
b. Course:
    i. An approved plan of study with specific award rules leading to an award of the University
c. Course Learning Outcomes:
    i. Course Learning Outcomes identify what a student is expected to know and be able to do by the end of a Course.
d. Generic Learning Outcomes:
    i. 'Generic learning outcomes refer to transferable, non-discipline specific skills a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts. The four broad categories in the AQF are: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills and personal skills' (AQF 2013, p.95). According to the AQF (2013, 'In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education provider' (e.g., see pp. 46, 49).
e. Graduate:

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Southern Cross University Policy Library for the latest version.

i. 'A graduate is a person who has been awarded a qualification by an authorised issuing organisation' (AQF, 2013, p 95).

f. Graduate Attribute:
   i. Graduate Attributes are 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.' (Bowden et al 2000).

g. Higher Degree Research Graduate Attribute:
   i. Higher Degree Research Attributes are the 'qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its HDR research students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes differ significantly from those acquired through coursework awards.

h. Higher Degree Research Award:
   i. Research Doctorate or Research Masters Degree (Masters by Research Professional Doctorate, Doctor of Philosophy)

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(5) The University's seven Higher Degree Research Graduate Attributes must be explicitly developed in all Higher Degree Research Graduate Research awards AQF level 9-10, through research training, experience and outcomes.

(6) The Higher Degree Research Graduate Attributes are:

Higher Degree Research Attribute 1

(7) Expert knowledge and understanding of the field of study.

Higher Degree Research Attribute 2

(8) Capacity to critically evaluate and synthesize information, and formulate research questions/hypotheses at an advanced level.

Higher Degree Research Attribute 3

(9) Ability to develop original and innovative responses to complex problems

Higher Degree Research Attribute 4

(10) High level of ethical awareness and commitment to the responsible conduct of research

Higher Degree Research Attribute 5

(11) Advanced collaborative and leadership skills, and enhanced ability to exercise initiative and take responsibility

Higher Degree Research Attribute 6

(12) Specialist skills to communicate expert knowledge to audiences of all levels.

Higher Degree Research Attribute 7

(13) Cultural competency to interact respectfully in a diverse community

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Southern Cross University Policy Library for the latest version.

Descriptors for the Higher Degree Research Graduate Attributes across AQF levels

(14) Graduate Attributes and by design the Course Learning Outcomes that emerge from them are general.

(15) At completion of this award the graduate should be able to:

Higher Degree Research Graduate Attribute	AQF 9 and 10
Expert knowledge and understanding of the field of study.	Demonstrate a systematic and critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice.
Capacity to critically evaluate and synthesize information, and formulate research questions/hypotheses at an advanced level.	Locate, analyse, evaluate, formulate and manage information in order to create new concepts or to create new information.
Ability to develop original and innovative responses to complex problems.	Demonstrate innovative thinking and high level problem solving. Generate new ideas, approaches, and perspectives to solving problems.
High level of ethical awareness and commitment to the responsible conduct of research	Demonstrate expert judgement and use of ethical framework(s) in scholarly and professional situations.
Advanced collaborative and leadership skills, and enhanced ability to exercise initiative and take responsibility	Work collaboratively with individuals and teams to achieve research outcomes.
Specialist skills to communicate specialist knowledge to audiences of all levels.	Communicate effectively complex ideas, findings and knowledge to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
Cultural competency to interact in a diverse community.	Demonstrate cultural competence in local, Australia-wide and global settings.

Section 5 - Procedures

(16) Nil.

Section 6 - Guidelines

(17) Nil.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Southern Cross University Policy Library for the latest version.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	8th June 2018
Review Date	8th February 2021
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	8th June 2018
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Andrew Rose Chair, Academic Board +61 2 66203189
Author	Helen Wolton Manager, Graduate School +0011 612 66269426
Enquiries Contact	Helen Wolton Manager, Graduate School +0011 612 66269426

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Southern Cross University Policy Library for the latest version.