

# **Embedding a Graduate Attribute (Professional Approach to Learning and Work) in a First Year Psychology Unit:**

**Keywords: Graduate Attributes; Psychology; Assessment**

## Abstract

Graduate Attributes (GAs) have recently made an appearance on the education agenda of many Australian universities. The GA framework allows universities to determine their own GAs which balances the top – down directives initiated by the Australian Federal Government, Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC), and university hierarchies. From these external forces the Australian Federal government has encouraged Australian universities to adopt a graduate attributes framework as part of their core business. Edith Cowan University (ECU) has made a commitment to a broad GA framework which includes its guiding themes of service, professionalism and enterprise. The importance of GAs at the coalface is that students need to be of the highest quality in their discipline in order to optimise their ability to obtain employment once they have graduated. As a School of Psychology (SoP) we are interested in the experience of the student in tertiary education. The adoption of the GA framework was a natural progression from our existing support programs as it allows us to embed the focus on student-centred processes into the core business of teaching and learning in the undergraduate curricula. Professional Orientation was selected as the most appropriate GA to adopt for the pilot investigation. It was decided to initially embed this GA in a first year unit in Social Psychology because the content and context of social psychology lends itself to dealing with individuals and their interactions with others. This paper will outline the process taken by the SoP in implementing assignments and content relevant to the professional orientation attribute in a unit on social psychology.

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