

POLICIES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

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PREVIOUS POLICY NUMBER:	POA050510000 (<i>updated 13/11/08 via review</i>)
POLICY NAME:	VU Graduate Capabilities
DATE APPROVED:	13 November 2008
POLICY TYPE AND CATEGORY:	Academic and Educational
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)

1.0 PURPOSE

Victoria University values the development of graduate capabilities. Graduate capabilities transcend technical skills and curriculum content. They are overarching capabilities that enable our students and graduates to be work, career and future ready. These capabilities are developed throughout a person's life and in multiple settings, including work, community and life settings and educational contexts.

Victoria University is focusing on the work, career and future readiness of its graduates through the statement of Strategic Direction and Priorities *Making VU 2016: A Statement of Purpose* along with the Making VU Commitments and University policies including Learning in the Workplace and Community. To this end, the University is working towards developing meaningful ways of measuring graduates' employment outcomes, including through the Australian Graduate Survey and a range of Employer Surveys. The ACER VU Student Dividend Project is designed to measure the extent to which VU adds value and assists students to become work, career and future ready.

On graduation, students will receive a VU Graduate Capabilities statement as part of the Graduation Statement provided by VU in line with national policy directions. The VU Graduate Capabilities statement will identify the Graduate Capabilities that form part of the student's course.

This policy provides a framework to embed VU Graduate Capabilities in specified courses offered by the University across the sectors.

The implementation of this policy is intended to:

- enhance student employment outcomes;
- provide a framework for enabling VU graduates to be work, career and future ready;
- facilitate students' lifelong learning in the University, workplace and community; and
- contribute to the implementation of *Making VU 2016: A Statement of Purpose* and of the Making VU Commitments.

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2.0 BACKGROUND

This policy supersedes and extends the VU Core Graduate Attributes policy which previously applied to Higher Education undergraduate courses only.

The University is a multisector institution and offers courses from Certificate I through to postgraduate qualifications. In all cases we aim to develop the VU Graduate Capabilities 1-6 outlined in this policy. Each sector plays a role in helping students to develop their generic skills. In Vocational Education and Further Education, where qualifications are primarily developed and approved through external processes, the Employability Skills identified by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) are deemed equivalent to Graduate Capabilities 1, 2, 3 and 4. This means that VE and FE courses which incorporate the principles underpinning Training Package qualifications and accredited curricula will be compliant with this policy for Graduate Capabilities 1-4. For all specified courses the University requires GCs 5 and 6 to be explicitly addressed, noting that some Training Package qualifications and accredited curricula may already include these capabilities.

A map that documents the alignment between the existing Core Graduate Attributes (CGAs) and DEEWR Employability Skills (and their facets) will be available as a resource on the [VU Graduate Capabilities website](#) (*currently under development*).

In recognition of the scope and breadth of achievement required of graduates attaining qualifications from Certificate I through to postgraduate coursework qualifications, a VU Graduate Capabilities level matrix has been developed which identifies different levels of achievement within each of the VU Graduate Capabilities. This matrix will inform the development of field of study-specific matrices and specify minimum exit levels for VU courses.

The matrix is attached to this policy as an appendix and will be updated by the Policy Advisor as required.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Graduate: a student who has received a sealed award conferred at a University Graduation Ceremony.

Field of Study: a classification of courses based on similarity of specialisation or principal subject matter in the course

Specified Courses: all AQF and VU accredited courses excluding short courses, skill sets and postgraduate degrees by research

4.0 KEY WORDS

Graduate Capabilities, Employability Skills

5.0 POLICY

- 5.1 The University accepts that it has the dual responsibility of enhancing the employability of its students and developing their effectiveness as lifelong learners in work, citizenship and community contexts. To this end, all courses will include a focus on VU Graduate Capabilities. Further, the University will pursue all opportunities to develop VU Graduate Capabilities, for example, in the context of Student Leadership and Learning in the Workplace and Community.

The University is committed to achieving these aims, in part, by a focus on the development of VU Graduate Capabilities that all graduates should possess, in addition to the specific knowledge and skills of their field of study. While these attributes are generic in nature, they are context-dependent and will therefore be expressed in different ways in different fields of study.

- 5.2 Victoria University's six Graduate Capabilities (GCs) are generic skills that must be developed in every specified course at Victoria University, in the context of the knowledge and skills of a field of study.

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VU Graduate Capabilities

In addition to their technical and field of study-specific knowledge and skills, the VU graduate is able to:

1. problem solve in a range of settings;
2. locate, critically evaluate, manage and use written, numerical and electronic information;
3. communicate in a variety of contexts and modes;
4. work both autonomously and collaboratively;
5. work in an environmentally, socially and culturally responsible manner; and
6. manage learning and career development opportunities.

In Vocational Education and Further Education, the DEEWR-identified Employability Skills are deemed equivalent to Graduate Capabilities 1, 2, 3 and 4. This means that VE and FE courses which incorporate the principles underpinning Training Package qualifications and accredited curricula will be compliant with this policy for Graduate Capabilities 1-4. For all specified courses the University requires GCs 5 and 6 to be explicitly addressed, noting that some Training Package qualifications and accredited curricula may already include these capabilities.

5.3 The VU Graduate Capabilities must be:

- embedded in all specified courses from Certificate I through to postgraduate coursework qualifications;
- interpreted in the context of the relevant field of study;
- conceptualised at the course level;
- explicitly included in the learning outcomes of each course;
- developed in conjunction with the specific knowledge and skills of the field of study, as an integral component of the normal learning activities in the course; and
- assessed in conjunction with assessment of the specific knowledge and skills of the field of study, as an integral component of the normal course assessment
- developed and assessed to a minimum level in VU courses consistent with the AQF as follows:

- Certificate I and II AQF level courses	Matrix Level 1
- Certificate III and IV AQF level courses	Matrix Level 2
- Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Associate Degree AQF level courses	Matrix Level 3
- 1st year Degree units of study	Matrix Level 3
- 2nd year Degree units of study	Matrix Level 4
- 3rd year Degree units of study (completion of AQF bachelor Degree)	Matrix Level 5
- Postgraduate coursework degrees	Matrix Level 6

6.0 PROCEDURES

General

The University will:

- make its focus on VU Graduate Capabilities explicit to students in relevant course documentation;
- provide opportunities for students during their courses to learn and practice the skills of self-assessment, reflection and presentation of VU Graduate Capabilities;
- make available a student portfolio system to all students and support the student portfolio system as an evidentiary base for the demonstration of the VU Graduate Capabilities by VU students to employers; and
- provide a VU Graduate Capabilities Statement in relation to each course as part of the Graduation Statement provided by VU in line with national policy directions.

Faculty Boards of Study are responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and for reporting to the Education and Research Board via current reporting arrangements.

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Higher Education Responsibilities (for all undergraduate and postgraduate courses)

- 6.1 The University's course approvals and course review processes will include specification of the matrix level of achievement of VU Graduate Capabilities and documentation of how all six VU Graduate Capabilities are developed and assessed in the course.
- 6.2 Course Co-ordinators are responsible for documenting VU Graduate Capabilities for each course at the unit of study level, using the standard template provided within the HE course approvals process.
- 6.3 Course Co-ordinators and Unit of Study Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that:
 - formal course documentation includes a general statement about the level of achievement expected of graduates of that course for each VU Graduate Capability;
 - each unit of study outline includes a statement specifying which VU Graduate Capabilities will be developed and assessed in that unit and how they contribute to the overall Graduate Capabilities for that course; and
 - each unit of study outline identifies the VU Graduate Capabilities associated with each assessment task and the level of achievement required for that task.
- 6.4 Teaching staff are responsible for implementing teaching and assessment strategies which facilitate the development of Graduate Capabilities and for providing opportunities for students to practice the skills of self-assessment and presentation of VU Graduate Capabilities.
- 6.5 Course information provided to students will include information about the student portfolio and how students can use it to demonstrate their acquisition of the VU Graduate Capabilities, as well as evidence of technical and field of study-specific achievement.

Vocational Education and Further Education Responsibilities (for all Training Package qualifications and accredited curricula)

- 6.6 The University's course approvals and review processes will include specification and documentation of how all six VU Graduate Capabilities are developed in the course and specification of the matrix level of achievement for Graduate Capabilities 5 and 6.
- 6.7 Program Managers are responsible for ensuring that teaching staff are aware of how VU Graduate Capabilities 1-4 have been embedded in the relevant Training Package qualifications and accredited curricula and for embedding Graduate Capabilities 5 and 6.
- 6.8 Program Managers are responsible for ensuring that student course information includes a statement about each VU Graduate Capability which students will develop through completion of the course.
- 6.9 Teaching staff are responsible for developing learning and assessment plans which are inclusive of VU Graduate Capabilities and for providing opportunities for students to practice the skills of self-assessment and presentation of VU Graduate Capabilities.
- 6.10 Course information provided to students will include information about the student portfolio and how students can use it to demonstrate their acquisition of VU Graduate Capabilities, as well as evidence of technical and field of study-specific achievement.

Approved Pathways, Dual Awards, Integrated Courses and Associate Degrees

- 6.11 In the development of course pathways, dual awards, integrated courses and Associate Degrees, VU Graduate Capabilities must be explicitly addressed to ensure their coverage and their incremental development through the appropriate matrix levels. Where the full range of VU Graduate Capabilities cannot be demonstrated, students must be offered adequate opportunities to develop these capabilities in their subsequent VU course.

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Recognition

- 6.12 Assessment of prior, formal, non-formal and informal learning through RPL and/or individual credit transfer will also include consideration of VU Graduate Capabilities, along with specific achievements in the field of study. Where the full range of VU Graduate Capabilities cannot be demonstrated, students must be offered adequate opportunities to develop these capabilities in their subsequent VU course.

7.0 CONGRUENCE WITH LEGISLATION AND RELATED POLICIES

DEEWR Employability Skills
All of VU's Education policies

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TLS Grant Project: Harmonising Employability Skills and Core Graduate Attributes and embedding them in the curriculum and assessment regime to facilitate student transition. Project Manager: Paul Whitelaw

9.0 CONSULTATION

A workshop was conducted in June 2008 to obtain initial feedback from teaching staff across the faculties and this feedback has been included in the revised policy.

10.0 REVIEW

Three years from commencement date.

11.0 ACCOUNTABILITIES

11.1 IMPLEMENTATION

The faculties will be responsible for implementation in consultation with the Teaching and Learning Support (TLS) policy advisor.

11.2 TRAINING

The faculties will be responsible for the training associated with the implementation of the policy with support from Teaching and Learning Support.

11.3 COMPLIANCE

Faculty Boards of Study are responsible for monitoring compliance, including across entire pathways, dual awards, integrated courses and Associate Degrees, and will report to the Education and Research Board via current course reporting arrangements. Full compliance of all specified courses is required by December 2009 (HE, VE and FE) for implementation in 2010, unless a major external review is scheduled within that time.

12.0 POLICY ADVISOR

Associate Director, Portfolio of Language and Learning, VU College, Teaching and Learning Support

13.0 APPENDIX

VU Graduate Capabilities Level Matrix

VU Graduate Capabilities Level Matrix

The VU Graduate Capabilities Matrix is designed to assist course developers to identify appropriate **minimum** levels of achievement in terms of the VU Graduate Capabilities. These minimum levels represent the **lowest** level expected of VU students successfully completing the type of course specified. A **higher** level of any or all of the GCs may be expected of graduates in a specific course, due to the nature of that course. This decision is to be made by the course team after consideration of, for example, the field of study and the intended employment outcome.

A number of underpinning variables have been embedded in the indicators which are progressively developed through the levels of the matrix. These are:

- complexity, familiarity and predictability of context
- degree of task definition provided
- degree of advice and guidance provided
- range of knowledge, techniques, technologies, strategies etc required to be learned, known, used or created
- depth of reflection required
- degree of responsibility taken for self and others

For each Graduate Capability below, additional variables specific to that Capability are included in the matrix itself.

Each course will have its own unique Graduate Capability profile which contextualises and interprets these skills in distinct ways. The VU Graduate Capability matrix can be used to assist in the development of these unique course profiles and in developing course pathways so that they explicitly consider progression in Graduate Capabilities. In addition the Matrix identifies a minimum level of achievement in each of the Capabilities for graduates of courses at levels from Certificate I to Doctorate, so that while particular courses may vary in their emphasis on individual Graduate Capabilities, in response to the particular needs of students in these fields of study, a minimum level in all Capabilities can be guaranteed to all successful graduates.

VU's Graduate Capabilities have been mapped to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Employability Skills, as contextualised and embedded within Training Packages and accredited curricula. The Employability Skills (ES) can be deemed equivalent to VU's Graduate Capabilities, 1-4. This means that VE and FE staff following the principles underpinning the Training Packages and accredited curricula will be complying with this policy for Graduate Capabilities 1-4. For all courses the University expects that GCs 5 and 6 will be explicitly addressed, noting that some Training Package qualifications and accredited curricula may already include these capabilities. The relationship between VU's Graduate Capabilities and the Employability Skills is demonstrated in the matrix below.

Minimum levels

Students should be provided with opportunities to develop skills to **at least** the following minimum levels, and course assessment should incorporate these minimum levels:

Certificate I and II AQF level courses	Matrix Level 1
Certificate III and IV AQF level courses	Matrix Level 2
Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Associate Degree AQF level courses	Matrix Level 3
1st year Degree units of study	Matrix Level 3
2nd year Degree units of study	Matrix Level 4
3rd year Degree units of study (completion of AQF bachelor Degree)	Matrix Level 5
Postgraduate coursework degrees	Matrix Level 6

VU's Graduate Capabilities

The Graduate Capabilities apply to the learning and assessment context identified for the course. The aim is to develop and assess the Graduate Capabilities in a way which is appropriate to the field of study and associated work and community contexts.

VU Graduate Capability	1. Problem solve in a range of settings	2. Locate, critically evaluate, manage and use written, numerical and electronic information	3. Communicate in a variety of contexts and modes	4. Work both autonomously and collaboratively	5. Work in an environmentally, socially and culturally responsible manner	6. Manage learning and career development opportunities
This row shows how the Graduate Capabilities map to the Employability Skills facets.	Addressed fully by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Solving Addressed partly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative and Enterprise; and • Technology 	Addressed fully by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Addressed partly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Organisation; and • Communication 	Addressed fully by: Communication	Addressed fully by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork; and • Self management. Addressed partly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative and enterprise 	Addressed partly by: Teamwork	Addressed partly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning; and • Self management
Definition	The ability to apply knowledge to problems in appropriate work, community and learning contexts	The ability to think critically about the need for, and the status of, information including numerical/statistical and electronic information, and to apply this information appropriately	The ability to engage with and create a range of verbal and written texts in appropriate work, community and learning contexts	The ability to work with minimum supervision and the ability to work effectively with others	The ability to work inclusively in settings of social and cultural diversity and to act responsibly as a worker, citizen and learner to build sustainable futures for self and others.	The ability to apply knowledge and skills to engage with work and learning opportunities.
Specific variables relating to this Graduate Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity of the problem and of the environment in which the problem has to be solved • Degree to which the exact problem is defined for the student • Degree of innovation required for the solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of techniques and sources required to be used • Structure and clarity of material • Complexity of content and argument of material involved • Complexity of purpose for which information is to be used • Student's existing knowledge of field of study, to enable evaluation of information sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity and complexity of topic, purpose, audience and academic or other discourse • Degree of structure and supervision of discussion and degree of preparation allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of definition of individual and/or group roles provided • Degree to which guidance in and monitoring of individual or group processes is provided • Degree to which individual or group roles and responsibilities are required to be formalised and documented • Levels of autonomy, discretion and judgement required. • Size, familiarity and diversity of group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth and depth of cultural, social and environmental awareness • Complexity of the situation and the environment in which the situation has to be addressed • Levels of discretion, judgement and creation of new knowledge to apply to situations • Sustainability and sensitivity to other peoples, cultures and the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophistication of understanding of relationship between own learning and career goals/opportunities • Breadth of knowledge of learning, work and career choices and requirements

The VU Graduate Capabilities Matrix is designed to assist course developers to identify appropriate **minimum** levels of achievement in terms of the VU Graduate Capabilities. These minimum levels represent the **lowest** level expected of VU students successfully completing the type of course specified. A **higher** level of any or all of the GCs may be expected of graduates in a specific course, due to the nature of that course. This decision is to be made by the course team after consideration of, for example, the field of study and the intended employment outcome.

LEVELS	1. Problem solve in a range of settings	2. Locate, critically evaluate, manage and use written, numerical and electronic information	3. Communicate in a variety of contexts and modes	4. Work both autonomously and collaboratively	5. Work in an environmentally, socially and culturally responsible manner	6. Manage learning and career development opportunities
Level 1	P1 Identify and solve problems in a clearly defined and familiar range of contexts, using known routines.	I1 Find, organise and record familiar information on a defined range of topics.	C1 Communicate with others, using speech and writing, on familiar topics and in predictable contexts.	W1 Work individually and/ or with others to complete clearly prescribed tasks.	S1 Identify and adopt institutionally-endorsed environmental, social and cultural policies in work, community and learning contexts.	CD1 Identify own learning and career goals.
Level 2	P2 Identify and solve problems in a variety of contexts through the application of specific knowledge and skills.	I2 Find, organise and evaluate information on a range of topics for defined purposes.	C2 Communicate with others, using speech and writing, on a range of topics using appropriate language.	W2 Work individually and/or with others to complete and reflect on tasks.	S2 Demonstrate awareness of environmental, social and cultural perspectives that impact on work, community and learning contexts.	CD2 Demonstrate a capacity to link own learning to career goals.
Level 3	P3 Identify and solve problems through the application of broad knowledge and skills.	I3 Find, organise, evaluate and synthesise information on a broad range of topics for defined purposes.	C3 Communicate with others, using speech and writing, on a broad range of topics using appropriate language and demonstrating increasing control over key genres/text types.	W3 Work individually, and/or with others, as both a team member and group leader, to complete tasks and evaluate own and others' performance using given parameters.	S3 Respond to diverse work, community and learning situations in an environmental, socially and culturally responsible manner.	CD3 Demonstrate emerging knowledge and understanding of own learning in relation to work and career choices and requirements; reflect on and evaluate a range of strategies for achieving own career and learning goals.
Level 4	P4 Identify and solve complex problems, selecting from a range of strategies and drawing on broad knowledge and skills.	I4 Find, organise, critically evaluate and synthesise information on a broad range of topics.	C4 Communicate with others, using speech and writing, on a broad range of topics using appropriate language and demonstrating significant control over key genres/text types.	W4 Work individually and/or with others, as both a team member and leader in both formal and informal teams, to complete tasks, evaluate and respond to own and others' performance using given parameters.	S4 Apply and evaluate a broad range of environmentally, socially and culturally responsible strategies in work, community and learning contexts.	CD4 Demonstrate significant knowledge and understanding of own learning in relation to work and career choices and requirements; develop, reflect on and evaluate a broad range of strategies for achieving own career and learning goals.
Level 5	P5 Identify and solve a broad range of complex problems, drawing on in-depth knowledge, understanding, reflection and evaluation.	I5 Find, critically evaluate, synthesise and generate ideas through the application of complex information on a broad range of topics, for a range of purposes.	C5 Communicate with others, using speech and writing, on a broad range of complex topics using specialised and appropriate language and demonstrating control over key genres/text types required.	W5 Work individually and/or collaboratively with others, to complete tasks and critically evaluate and respond to own and others' performance using established parameters.	S5 Reflect on own and others environmental, social and cultural practices in work, community and learning contexts and respond appropriately.	CD5 Demonstrate significant knowledge and understanding of own learning in relation to work and career choices and requirements; develop, reflect on and evaluate a broad range of sophisticated strategies for achieving own career and learning goals.
Level 6	P6 Identify and solve a broad range of complex problems, creating new strategies and drawing on in-depth knowledge, understanding, reflection and evaluation.	I6 Find, critically evaluate, synthesise and apply complex information on a broad range of topics context for a range of purposes, including the creation of new knowledge.	C6 Communicate with others, using speech and writing, on a broad range of complex topics using specialised and appropriate language and demonstrating control and authority in the use of a broad range of genres/ text types.	W6 Manage self and others in both individual and collaborative contexts and critically reflect on, respond to and evaluate own and others' performance, designing and using the appropriate parameters.	S6 Critically evaluate, create and apply socially responsible solutions to complex environmental, social and cultural situations in work, community and learning contexts.	CD6 Demonstrate critical reflection on own learning in relation to work and career choices and requirements, and capacity to autonomously manage own learning to achieve career and learning goals.