

# REALISING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES THROUGH PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

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# GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES - PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

## GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Non-generic  
(Jones, 2013)

Debatable outcomes  
(Barrie, 2012, Manathunga et.al., 2007)

Top-down approach  
(Barrie, 2006, De la Harpe & David, 2012).

## PSGs

small group that meets to discuss  
research projects without their  
supervisors  
(Fisher, 2006)

“desired partner-like relationship”  
in a peer group that includes  
supervisee(s) and supervisor(s)  
(Stracke, 2010, p. 2)

# GENESIS AND ACTIVITIES

New Zealand  
Australia  
Malaysia

Research  
Research process  
Career  
Practical matters  
Social activities

## THE STUDY

### Exploratory opinion survey

To find out how past and current PSG members reflected on their peer learning experiences in relation to the development of graduate attributes.

[Written responses to select 5 attributes]

# STUDENTS' TOP 5 GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES AT OTAGO, UC AND UPM

	Otago	UC	UPM	all unis
communication	3	2	8	13
creativity	3	0	1	4
critical thinking, problem solving, inquiry, innovation	5	2	4	11
cultural understanding	1	1	4	6
ethical and professional practice	4	0	1	5
information literacy and management skills	1	0	4	5
knowledge	2	1	3	6
leadership skill	2	0	2	4
lifelong learning	0	0	2	2
research and organization	4	1	4	9
self-motivation	3	2	5	10
teamwork	2	0	7	9

# COMMUNICATION

Members valued oral presentation opportunities

- Performance feedback: improvement and alternative options
- Team bonds: negotiation and diplomacy
- Development of higher learning abilities: reasoning, reflection critical thinking, justifying choices

[GA: organization and leadership in communication]

# CRITICAL THINKING

Challenged perceptions and critical scrutiny

Provided justifications for choices

*“participants will be forced to provide justifications ... inspire new ideas”*

Reasoned argument within an experiential social dimension.

[GA: well-informed decision (NZ), critical reflection (Aust)  
justify decisions innovatively (Msia)]

# SELF-MOTIVATION

- maintain momentum
- keep track of progress by showing interest
  - “it was inspiring to see the progress of other members”*
- shared struggles
- work independently

[GA: Motivated capacity for self-directed learning]



# RESEARCH ORGANIZATION AND TEAMWORK

- Unaware of the extent of organizational skills

*“I believe all of us in the peer group started our work messier than expected”*

- sharing of best practices of research skills
- crucial organization skills

[GA : Develop advanced strategies to lead the planning, management and implementation of a project]

# DISCUSSION

knowledge is contestable

Push to be an independent researcher

In line with real life demands/attributes

*[To ensure graduates start their careers with expertise that will allow them to advance effectively]*

# DISCUSSION

Positive partner-like relationship

PSG brought out the

*'human-ness'*

Get to know us outside the formal  
supervision spectra

Formal

*and*

informal

interactions are crucial  
to foster the

**ATTRIBUTES.**

# TAKE HOME MESSAGE (STRACKE & KUMAR, 2014)

PhD develops content specific knowledge

Graduate attributes  
*have to be*  
acquired beyond  
actual research context.

PSGs

*provide*

complementary learner centered  
opportunity

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