Making graduate attributes tangible through international partnership
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What Are Graduate Attributes?

Debate exists around an exact definition of however, a broad definition is: ‘the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts’ [1] and it is argued that:

“such attributes are what makes higher education distinct from other forms or ‘levels’ of learning.”

Research Method

The students were invited to complete an online semi-structured qualitative questionnaire to provide feedback on how their travel experience impacted on the specific graduate attributes, their professional practice, employability and personal development. 6 students responded (60% response rate).

The responses were read and important moments or events described identified and coded. Thematic analysis was then used [2] to examine the themes emerging across the graduate attributes.

Results

Students developed several important skills necessary for professional and personal development

- Acquired the ability to apply knowledge and develop skills in new and changing environments
- Developed a wider and advanced range of communication techniques
- Adopted an enquiring mind and the ability to interrogate in order to problem solve
- Became more culturally aware and respectful of other cultures and individuals opinions and beliefs
- Experienced professional development and a positive attitude shift towards employability and international travel
- Increased in self-confidence and self-awareness
- Acquired organisation and planning skills
- Developed attributes and practical skills required to work as part of a successful team

Graduate Attributes

- "During the entire duration of the hospital and focusing how they were designed and implemented was fantastic, they opened my eyes to the ways in which technology and knowledge about can be utilized" - Ashley (4th Year IT Student)
- "In preparation I spoke to friends who went to China to ask about the culture to ensure I was ready for the differences" - Georgia (2nd Year Mental Health Student)
- "All important decisions were made as a group as all decisions affected the group, in the end we all had to become critical thinkers in that we had to analyse each issue in order to decide on the best course of action." - Dylan (4th Year IT Student)
- "I was important that I personally gave a good expression of myself and of the university and that I played my part in the team effort and contributed to discussion and work outputs" - Georgia (2nd Year Mental Health Student)
- "The language barrier opened my awareness to find other ways communication methods such as showing pictures, showing speech, and speaking clearly. This has strengthened my communication skills and made me more aware of the way I communicate with patients." - Morgan (4th Year IT Student)
- "My experiences have given me a different view on new and changing environments including working in a presentation with members of the nursing team. I feel this trip has enhanced my confidence on a personal and academic level." - Morgan (4th Year IT Student)
- "I experienced positive experiences to my way, in particular things I would have previously been out of my comfort zone, including working in a presentation with members of the nursing team. This has given me the confidence to apply for graduate positions." - Megan (3rd Year Mental Health Student)
- "The lack of Orchard House but the opportunity to be part of a multidisciplinary team gave great insight into another profession as well as enhanced my team working - Dylan (4th IT Student)
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- "Our experiences have given me another way of life, to learn about traditions and cultures that are so profoundly big and rich meaning behind them. I was also able to learn more about others, how we react to situations, whether tolerance was to certain practices and barriers amongst the change as on individual in every step." - Ashley (4th Year IT Student)