

Large-scale curriculum renewal to contextualise graduate attributes

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Graduate attributes of Australian universities

Category	2015 n = 41
Written and oral communication	95%
Critical and analytical (and sometimes creative and reflective) thinking	93%
Ethical and inclusive engagement with communities, cultures and nations	100%
Learning and working collaboratively	90%
Learning and working independently	83%
Problem-solving (including generating ideas and innovative solutions)	85%
Information literacy, often associated with technology	85%

Higher Education Standards Framework

“On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination”

Learning outcomes for a degree program must include:

“Knowledge and skills required for employment and further study... skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning”

Graduate learning outcomes



1. Discipline-specific knowledge and capabilities



2. Communication



3. Digital literacy



4. Critical thinking



5. Problem Solving



6. Self-management

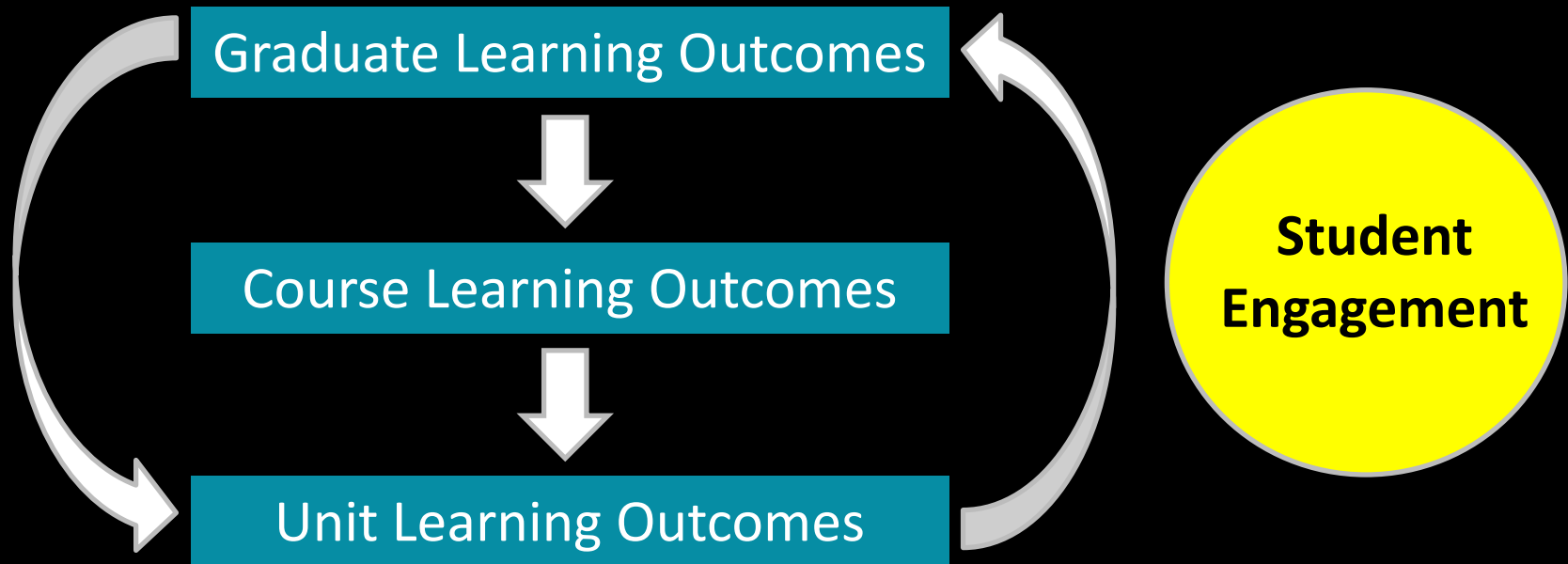


7. Teamwork

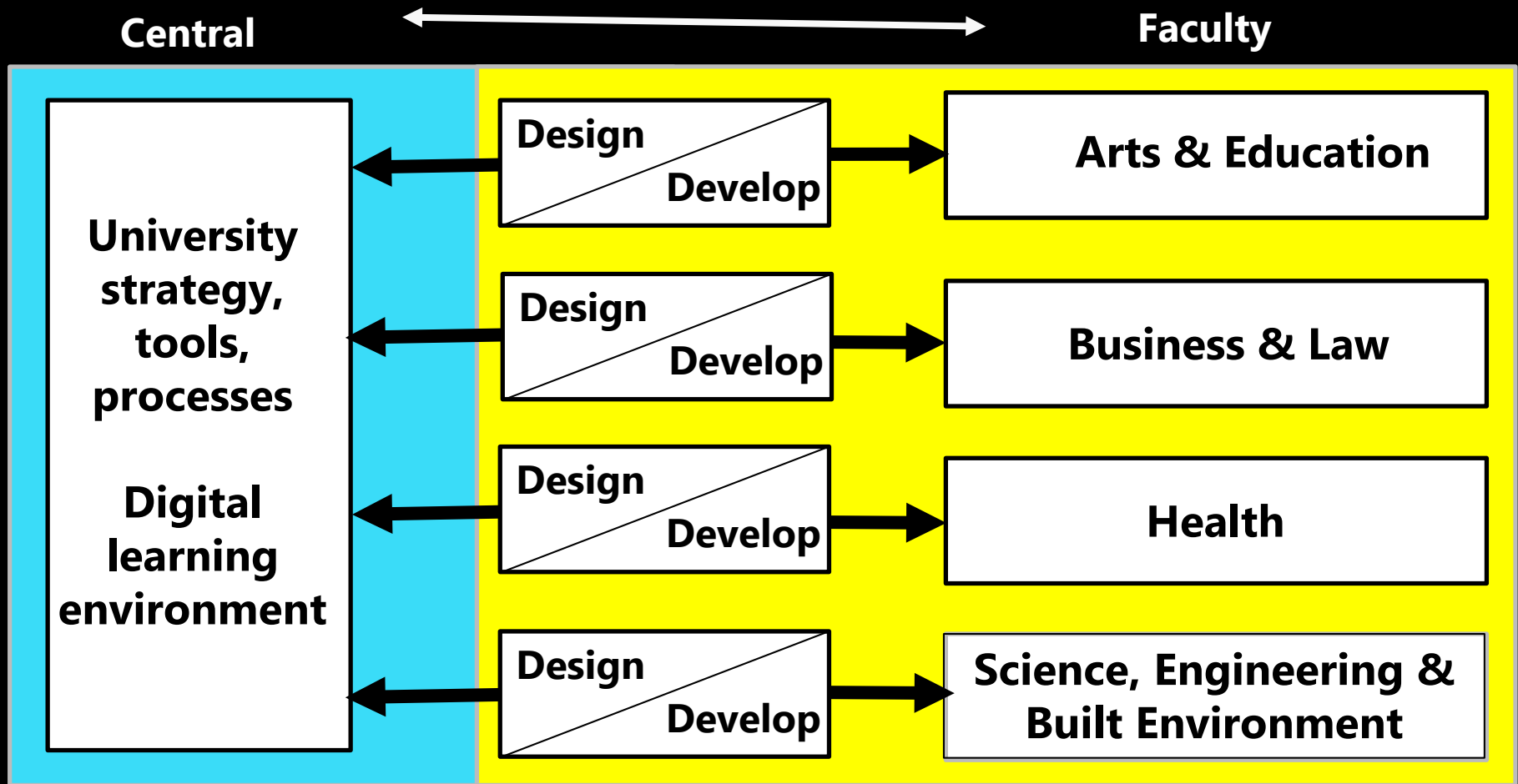


8. Global citizenship

Course enhancement



Support: hub and spoke model



Assuring graduate attributes

- Students – focus groups (n = 45)
- Staff – interviews (n = 12)
- Sector – survey (n = 230)
- Semi- structured interviews
- Equal representation from faculties
- Voluntary and confidential

Jorre de St Jorre, T., & Oliver, B. (2017). Want students to engage? Contextualise graduate learning outcomes and assess for employability. Higher Education Research & Development.



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Course leader perceptions of...

- What is rewarding and challenging about specifying and integrating course learning outcomes?
- What would assist course teams to do this more effectively and efficiently?
- Who should be involved in the development of course learning outcomes?
- How should course learning outcomes be communicated to students or industry?

The benefits observed by course leaders...

For Students	For Staff	For Institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaps and repetition• Learning resources• New technologies• Assessment design• Authenticity from reflection on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where graduates go• What students need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarity<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Own practice• Expectations• Personal & professional development• Stronger relationships• Satisfaction, pride, sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountability & quality assurance<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accreditation• Culture<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mindset• Communication• Collaboration• Sustainable change?

“We invested a lot of time and I think we have had a change in culture within the school... I think it's a direct result of what one of the key objectives was - to no longer think of the unit as just this isolated thing, it's part of a larger entity being the course, and having a much clearer understanding of how your unit relates to that course and contributes to that course. So, well, I've been in the school quite a number of years, and it was very much not unit centric up until over a few years ago”

“[The process] really brought a lot of people up to speed with their thinking about teaching in general, forget about it being a course enhancement process, but individual staff sort of had a realisation I guess, that - well, I teach a unit and it's got a learning outcome. I have to think more broadly than that. I have to think about how I teach it. I have to think about how I assess it. I have to think about - are my assessments real, contextualised, professional, authentic? Am I generating a student at the end of a unit that has some skills, some competencies, some capabilities, that contribute to their course?”

It was also challenging....

- Gaining cooperation from peers
- Communicating and cooperating effectively
 - Finding common language
- Developing staff capacity necessary
- Understanding expectations
- Finding time and resources required
- Context of, depth and response to challenges varied

...impact was variable

Course leaders and their peers were learners in the curriculum reform process

“What kind of support would be helpful? I think from the perspective of a student what you want from a lecturer is responsive, regular, relevant, constructive feedback. I think I got that from a lot of people in [the learning support team]”

Meaningful curriculum change requires investment in staff development...

Like all learners they had variable motivations – some of which can be influenced

- Clear vision – big picture
 - Impact on students
 - Feedback from employers
- Reasonable workload
- Accountability

Meaningful change requires more than processes for accountability...

Learning (and impact) was greater where there was meaningful collaboration

Within course teams	Beyond course teams
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact was influenced by leadership approach• Solo vs. consultation vs. collaboration• Peer-to-peer learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broadened perspectives and expertise• Sharing of practice and resources• Across team collaboration?

Collaboration needs to be ubiquitous!

Large-scale curriculum renewal can have an impact on university curriculum and culture... but requires genuine understanding and cooperation at all levels:

- From course teams - because learning outcomes are not meaningful unless they are supported by appropriate assessment and evidence of learning
- From university leadership – who need to provide vision, motivation and invest in support

Pride & sense of belonging

“I look at what other colleagues at other universities might have in terms of their support to actually work together and collaborate. I don't think it's as good as here and it just makes me think I'm really in the right place in this particular university because of the priority that's given to teaching and learning. That's really important to me”

Improved curriculum

“I won't say which one it was, but there was one discipline [in which] they worked out they had something like 27 **assessment pieces** across the undergrad major sequence, and it was something like **24 out of 27 were essays...** They were actually shocked themselves as a discipline team, but **they had never actually bothered to speak about it**, and each one of them had **felt that writing essays was really important** for students in their discipline, but what they didn't realize is of course that there are a whole range of skills that should be taught and assessed and because they hadn't really discussed it, they were all doing the same thing, and that meant [that] by extension, they weren't doing the other things that they probably should have to complement what they were doing through essay writing. So that's just one example...”