The University of Hertfordshire

Graduate Attributes
Dr Andrew Clutterbuck
Pro Vice-Chancellor

It has been a great pleasure and privilege to be associated with the development, dissemination, and celebration of the University’s Graduate Attributes. Our Graduate Attributes not only express the distinctiveness of the University of Hertfordshire experience and the University’s students, but they also articulate what it means to be a graduate of (and a member of staff at) the UK’s leading business-facing university. In this, they represent a major achievement for the University and bring with them implications and challenges for teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum design, as well as the life and culture of the University community.

This booklet amply illustrates the enthusiasm with which our Graduate Attributes have been embraced and, more importantly, the opportunities that have been seized by the University’s staff and students to achieve remarkable things. As well as celebrating the excellent work that has taken place, I have every confidence that its contents will serve as an inspiration for ongoing engagement with the Graduate Attributes.

Dr Andrew H Clutterbuck, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)
What are the Graduate Attributes?

Engaging staff with the Graduate Attributes

To assist with the introduction and embedding of the Graduate Attributes, we arranged for each School to have a development day to explore what the attributes meant to their School, students and staff. The Deans of School, key staff and student representatives came together to familiarise themselves with the Graduate Attributes, discuss the opportunities and priorities for their School and agree actions for implementation including considering how students are included in the plans.

The development days were designed to give a consistent grounding for the Graduate Attributes and to demonstrate the ability for disciplinary diversity within a shared vision. We discussed how the attributes could shape the culture and environment of the University whether inside, alongside or outside the curriculum. Schools focused on how the attributes linked to key points in the year: induction, assessment and graduation, as well as managing expectations of student activities such as group work, research and independent study.

All ten Schools participated in these development days and have plans for activities such as: looking at the ethics of public research, using an informal book group to support induction, shaping group work with the ‘respect for others’ attribute and weaving social impact of practice through the curriculum. The excellent work started in these development days continues at a programme level, supported by further central resources and activities.

Bringing the Graduate Attributes to life

In March 2012, the University launched a high profile competition open to all students to design and create a visual installation celebrating our Graduate Attributes. The competition represented a wonderful opportunity for students to create a legacy within the University to inspire the students, staff and visitors for years to come. The installations, realised by students from any discipline, helped the attributes to ‘live’ within the fabric of the University rather than purely within a document. Following submission of proposals and design briefs, the judging panel, drawn from staff and students of the University, chose ten winning instalments. The successful designs were showcased at the 2012 Vice Chancellor Awards Ceremony. With support from staff in the School of Creative Arts, the creation and installation of the pieces took place between July 2012 and March 2013.

Each installation has an immediate visual impact and contributes to the sense of who we are as a University community. It is hoped that the pieces stimulate discussion about what it is to be a graduate of the University of Hertfordshire.
The artwork presented here in this case demonstrates the different journeys and stories one may make or come across. Using my photographs of my own journeys, I have created these sea sculptures that tell their own stories. At the end of each piece is a door. The doors represent the unknown. What is beyond the door? The viewer is left to make their own endings.

Sophie Abbott-Strugnell: Doorways
3rd Floor R Block, School of Humanities, de Havilland Campus

Khaiya Lewis: Chrysalis
The Mezzanine, de Havilland Campus

James Thatcher: Drawing Machine
1st Floor Lindop Building, College Lane

Natalie Wilson: Lucy's Sky
College Lane LRC foyer

Regine Bartlett: Bayfordbury Lake, 22/12/2011-21/06/2012
The Innovation Centre Foyer, College Lane Campus
Celebrating and disseminating the Graduate Attributes

In his keynote address to the 2012 annual Learning and Teaching conference, Dr Andrew Clutterbuck, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience), invited participants to explore, share and reflect on the excellent learning and teaching initiatives which celebrated the conference theme: the University’s Graduate Attributes.

Attended by more than 220 people, the conference provided an ideal forum to widely promote the attributes and raise awareness amongst University staff. Through 30 parallel sessions of presentations, workshops and discussions, colleagues representing the different Academic Schools shared their teaching, assessment and extracurricular activities to showcase the Graduate Attributes.

Delegates’ feedback pointed to a stimulating and rewarding day, offering a valuable opportunity to share ideas and discuss teaching activities with colleagues from a range of disciplines.

For me this was the highlight of the year. A feast of ideas and collegiality. One can actually sense peoples’ brains pulsing like stars all around you in the buzz between talks.

At the end of the event, delegates took away with them a visual reminder of the conference theme. Custom-made sweets and a conference mug illustrate values enshrined in the University’s Graduate Attributes which run through each of our students and staff members alike.

The keynote lecture was inspiring, and set the tone for the whole day.

Introducing new students to the Graduate Attributes

To welcome our students to the University and to introduce them to the Graduate Attributes, all new undergraduates were offered the opportunity, via their September 2013 joining instructions, to complete an online pre-induction quiz.

The quiz was intended to stimulate their excitement at joining the University, to help them reflect on the skills they brought with them and to introduce them to the many opportunities available to further develop their skills for effective study and employability.

Feedback on their answers included guidance regarding activities that they might like to get involved in upon arrival at University. In addition, each individual received their own results in comparison to other responders on their course, to those within their Academic School and to respondents from all disciplines across the University.

The quiz was designed for the benefit of new students and is personal to them. We hope that reconsidering their initial results as they progress through their studies will help them to reflect on their personal development in line with the Graduate Attributes.
Engaging international partners with the Graduate Attributes

The University offers a range of its awards to partner institutions in more than 20 countries across the world. INTI International University and Colleges in Malaysia is the University’s largest international partner, with around 2500 students at any one time studying programmes provided by our Business School and Mass Communications in the School of Humanities.

At INTI, the mandated MQA (Malaysian Qualifications Authority) attributes seek to develop skills and values in their students which are closely aligned to our own Graduate Attributes.

- Knowledge
- Practical skills
- Social skills and responsibilities
- Values, attitudes and professionalism
- Communication, leadership and team skills
- Problem solving and scientific skills
- Information management and lifelong learning skills
- Managerial and entrepreneurial skills

The Malaysian Social skills and responsibilities attribute has been given particular emphasis with the launch of the new Social Enterprise Unit at INTI’s Subang campus. Modelled on the successful unit of the same name in the University of Hertfordshire’s Business School, it promotes philanthropy and community service among students and staff.

A spirit of competition is integral to students’ participation and charitable fundraising projects for the CSR (Cares, Supports, Returns) initiative. Their knowledge, creative thinking and ability to devise a viable business plan is put to the test in a Dragon’s Den style challenge.

Commenting on the rationale behind their CSR strategy, the Dean of the School of Business at INTI Subang highlights the close links with the University of Hertfordshire:

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One of the key values that we want to nurture in our students is empathy and the idea of a Social Enterprise Unit was generated from UH’s long running CSR initiative which has created a positive impact on the local community in the UK.

Through its partnership with INTI, the University of Hertfordshire is playing a part in Vision 2020, the Malaysian government’s strategic goal to transform the country into an advanced, developed nation by bringing economic prosperity, social well-being, world-class education and political stability to all its citizens.
Professionalism, employability and enterprise

The University promotes professional integrity and provides opportunities to develop the skills of communication, independent and team working, problem solving, creativity, digital literacy, numeracy and self-management. Our graduates will be confident, act with integrity, set themselves high standards and have skills that are essential to their future lives.

School of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics

There has to be more than calculus and algebra in the life of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics students if they are going to be able to communicate their ideas effectively to colleagues in the workplace.

The Institute of Physics admits that ‘scientists don’t always have a great reputation as communicators’ so PAM students can begin to shake off this label by following a programme of activities tailored to their needs. As well as helping to develop their writing, presentation and team-working skills, the Professional Skills module gives second year students access to the expertise of internal and external specialists. Guest contributors from the University’s Careers and Placements service and the discipline-specific professional bodies help them to consider their future career and how to plan ahead to achieve their goal.

There are also opportunities for students to share their own knowledge and skills by taking part in community outreach events and the University’s mentoring programmes.

Graduate Attributes

Professionalism, employability and enterprise

When I have applied to Graduate job schemes they seem really impressed with my role in the University’s mentoring programme.

Communication, patience and learning to establish working relationships have all been useful for me to talk about on my job applications.

Whether it is helping to run Observatory Open nights or explaining mathematical concepts to new students, personal development is an essential part of becoming a professional graduate of the School of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics.
Learning with other Health Care Professionals

School of Health and Social Work

Students on health-related programmes including nursing, midwifery, social work, paramedic science, dietetics, physiotherapy and radiography, share two modules within their degree programmes. In their first and final year studies they join together to study Interprofessional Education (IPE) modules which help them learn about the roles and responsibilities of professionals working within health and social care. Learning from, and working with, students studying other disciplines helps them to understand their own roles within their chosen profession and enables them to understand the importance of multidisciplinary groups within health and social care.

The first year module considers the patient’s journey and user experiences of health and social care exploring topics such as professional roles, professional principles, reflection, communication, consent, ethics, patient safety, safeguarding and equality and diversity, topics which are relevant to all health and social care professionals. The final year module focuses on improving quality of care for patients, service users, clients and carers and considers issues that impact on the organisation and delivery of healthcare.

IPE was eye-opening and has led to better collaboration of students as future professionals.

National Student Survey comment from a Nursing student.

Getting ready for work

Hertfordshire Business School

In its report Skills for Graduates in the 21st Century, the Association of Graduate Recruiters highlights the challenges faced by graduates who are about to take their place in the jobs market. Traditional career models are less applicable to the global and technological contexts of today’s workplace, which requires graduate entrants to be flexible, pro-active and self-reliant throughout their working life.

In response to the changing needs of employers and the demands of a global society, the University’s Business School has embedded a range of core employability skills modules into its undergraduate programmes. From the outset, first year students are introduced to the tools of the Business professional through a skills module which underpins the study of their specific discipline. A range of activities and assignments enable them to practise their presentation and communication skills, develop their problem-solving strategies and learn how to work in teams with people they may not know. Students also begin to reflect on their personal skills and to recognise areas for improvement.

In the second year, the Enhancing Employability modules provide students with a greater focus on preparation for the workplace as they apply their academic skills to business-related challenges. Presentations and master classes by guest speakers from industry and specialists within the University help to raise students’ awareness of what employers expect. Personality profiling, business simulations, recruitment and selection processes and an individual career action plan are among the tasks which bring the reality of the workplace closer.

With their firm grounding in the skills most valued by employers, aspiring financial accountants, marketing experts or tourism and event managers are equipped to succeed not only at interview, but in their life-long career path.

I really enjoyed this module because it provided me with valuable knowledge and helped me to prepare myself for my job application and each stage of the process.

Excellent module. The group work helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses.

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School of Computer Science

The University of Hertfordshire is one of only three British universities participating in RoboCup, an international initiative for the promotion of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence in challenging scenarios. As the RoboCup flagship challenge, RoboCup has set its goals to ‘develop a humanoid robot football team by the year 2050 that shall play against the acting world champion team according to FIFA rules, and win’.

This Grand Challenge is not a goal in itself but more about developing new ways of doing Robotics and AI for previously insurmountable tasks. A new generation of students become involved in the foremost techniques of current research, while developing their problem solving, creativity and team working skills.

In addition, working in a RoboCup team under competition conditions requires very high standards of professionalism when working together for a common goal. Since the formation of the University’s team in 2002, there is no doubt that the particular skills and qualities demonstrated by RoboCup students attract the attention of employers. They are highly valued not only for their commitment and professionalism but also for the contributions they have already made to the development of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence.

Graduate Attributes

Graduate Attributes

Continuing professional development

For a group of Chinese Higher Education tutors studying for a Masters in Education at Shanghai Normal University, their study period in the University’s School of Education has introduced them to new ways of learning and teaching. Representing a range of disciplines from Tourism to Accounting and Finance, the Chinese postgraduates have discovered that collaboration, discussion and enquiry are essential components of UK Higher Education. Their view of the instructor as giver of knowledge and the student as passive absorber has been brought into question by the teaching styles they encountered.

My perception of my learning was deeply influenced by the traditional Chinese crammed-duck pattern. I hope these new teaching and learning philosophies will benefit my students and make them enjoy learning.

Working in groups, the Chinese tutors were encouraged to learn from each other and share alternative points of view. Using creativity as a means to express their reflection on the learning process, they were introduced to techniques which they had not previously explored, either as learners themselves or as teachers:

We took photos, made videos, designed collages and wrote blogs. We really enjoy the learning and learn from each other.

When they return to China, these tutors will be able to put into practice with their own students the different strategies learned from their lecturers in the School of Education, an experience summarised in one of their reflective blogs as:

Education is not how much you are taught but how much you learn.
Learning and research skills

The University fosters intellectual curiosity and provides opportunities to develop effective learning and research abilities. Our graduates will be equipped to seek knowledge and to continue learning throughout their lives.

Shrinking glaciers

School of Life and Medical Sciences

Residents of the Swiss village of Saas Fee are no longer surprised by the appearance each summer of scientific equipment in their valley. It heralds the annual collaboration between Hertfordshire Geography tutors, students and Swiss academics working together on the Feegletscher Alpine glacier monitoring project.

Working under the guidance of University of Hertfordshire glacier scientists in collaboration with Swiss scientists, Geography and Environmental Management undergraduate and postgraduate students are able to gain a first taste of applied research which will be valuable in their subsequent studies and future careers.

The weeks spent in monitoring the physical effects of environmental change make the students acutely aware that their work is of direct relevance to the local community. It is thanks to their research that the residents of Saas Fee are kept informed of the behaviour of shrinking glaciers in their valley and any potential flood hazard to their village associated with this shrinkage.

Student contributions to the glacier project also have an impact on the work of the wider glaciology research community. Delegates at the annual conferences of the International Glaciological Society (British branch) have been able to learn more about the effects of rapidly changing glacial environments thanks to the research undertaken by the University of Hertfordshire’s Geography and Environmental Management team.

On a more local level, the Geography and Environmental Management students have produced a DVD to share with fellow students, Hertfordshire schools and local community groups. It demonstrates the research methods used throughout the glacier project and the environmental changes that they discovered in the process.
Solving real-world challenges

School of Engineering and Technology

With the expansion of traditional engineering disciplines into technology-based industries, engineering students need to be aware of recent developments in the field and be equipped to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world challenges.

In the School of Engineering and Technology, research-informed and industry-related teaching is an integral component of the training that engineering students receive. Working under the supervision of internationally recognised research staff, they have opportunities to develop their problem-based learning by taking part in collaborative projects with the University’s industrial partners. Activities like these provide a realistic experience of a major design project, spanning the initial client brief through to the presentation of innovative design proposals with professional solutions for the partners’ specific needs.

One Man’s War:
Diary of a Prisoner of War in World War Two

Background and Aim

Need to free the two captured P.O.W.s from the enemy’s custody. The regulations of the

School and Technology Laboratory, Mechanical Engineering students working in a team of academic staff and postgraduate research assistants have found a solution that works. For one of the final year students, his contribution to the project has won him a place as a finalist for the Next Generation award sponsored by Autocar magazine. The skills of team-working, creativity and innovation that he developed in the laboratory stand him in good stead for a Dragons Den style judging day.

His idea for a new shock energy regeneration system could be the way into a paid internship with McLaren or a major vehicle manufacturer such as Jaguar Land Rover.

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Graduate Attributes

Learning and research skills

Student research conference

The annual dissertations conference has become a regular feature of the academic year for final year History students and staff.

Although the main purpose is to give each undergraduate the opportunity to share their initial research findings with fellow students, the event provides the flavour of a professional conference. The presence of the History representative from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) also helps students to feel part of the wider community of Historians.

After listening to papers on the various methodologies of History research by staff experts and postgraduates, it is the students’ turn to capture the audience’s attention with their presentation and communication skills. Topics as diverse as domestic violence in the lives of 19th century married women and the failure of American prohibition invite different interpretations of the past and raise questions about the lessons learned.

The feedback on this conference does not take the form of the usual delegates’ questionnaire. According to votes from fellow students, prizes are awarded for the best undergraduate contribution of the day in each of three classes: a ten-minute mini-paper, a three-minute soap box or a poster presentation.

Historians in the School of Humanities have an international reputation for the quality of their research but on this day of the year, it is the students who take centre stage.
Staff as students

New and inexperienced staff within the University not only have the chance to achieve a PGCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCertHE), but assignments from the PGCertHE may also be published with our own peer reviewed online journal: Blended Learning in Practice.

‘Linking pedagogic theory to practice’ is the third module of the PGCertHE and as students on the module, members of staff have to produce a journal article which critically appraises key pedagogic theories in relation to their own teaching practice. The students have to research the learning and teaching literature as well as reflecting on, and evaluating their own practice. The assessment helps their development of research skills, academic writing and critical thinking. Having to provide feedback on a peer’s draft article, as part of the assignment, also helps them to develop their ability to be critical in a constructive manner.

The assignment is particularly challenging for some staff, (e.g. those coming into Higher Education from industry or the NHS) as they may have never written a journal article before. It is also challenging for staff who have come from a research background because for most of them, writing a pedagogical article and reflecting on their own practice is very different from the articles they have written within their disciplinary research.

There are a huge range of topics upon which articles are written including:
- Consideration of the attainment gap between White students and students from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- The use of different assessment methods to support student learning (e.g. formative assessment, low stake assessments, peer assessment).
- The use of different technologies to enhance learning (e.g. blogs, wikis, social media).
- Consideration of game theory in the process of learning.
- Curriculum design and innovation.

We encourage and support students to publish their articles and each edition of our biannual journal features selected articles from the PGCertHE programme.

I’m very pleased that I was able to publish my first paper in an academic journal. It was then really exciting to discover (via Google Scholar) that my paper was cited by another author within their Business Management paper... it made my day seeing my name in print (5 times no less).
The University encourages engagement in curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities that deepen and broaden knowledge and develop powers of analysis, application, synthesis, evaluation and criticality. Our graduates will be able to consider multiple perspectives as they apply intellectual rigour and innovative thinking to the practical and theoretical challenges they face.

Discovering Hertfordshire through the Humanities

School of Humanities

First year students arriving at the de Havilland campus may not be aware of the heritage of Hertford and its environs, but those studying the Humanities will learn that wherever there is human habitation, there is culture and history to discover.

The Engaging with the Humanities module is designed to foster a sense of community within the student cohort and an appreciation of the culture and history of Hertfordshire. It offers cross-curricular approaches to literary, historical, philosophical and biographical themes, some of which have a Hertfordshire connection. Common to all first year Humanities students, irrespective of their discipline, the module helps to refine critical thinking and enquiry skills. From walking the de Havilland Heritage trail to comparing book reviews of a contemporary local writer’s work, students explore together what it means to be a scholar in the Humanities.

Studying things that are outside of my course is an interesting change.

At the end of the year, students are asked to review the goals they set themselves in the first class and to share their reflections on the intellectual progress they have made since September. Using the Graduate Attributes as a benchmark, they revise and update them in preparation for their subsequent journey through the Humanities.

The assignments opened my eyes to a critical way of thinking which helped my linguistic development and my academic discourse.
School of Creative Arts

Each year, the ‘Navigation’ collage project challenges first year BA Photography students to use visual enquiry techniques to record and reflect on their local environment. Teams are sent out into Hatfield to investigate a number of themes: the town’s former aviation industry as seen from the perspective of a spy; transport from the viewpoint of an octogenarian; old or Victorian Hatfield; the town’s numerous roundabouts and the town centre as seen through the eyes of a visitor from another world.

As the collage is created, students record their findings in imaginative and experimental ways, sharing ideas and concepts within the group. The visual elements generate different reflections and ideas as students interpret them and understand them in their own ways, sometimes discovering unexpected associations and meanings.

Navigation was about collecting pictures of Hatfield, I was inspired by the blind photographer Pete Eckert. I went around Hatfield making images of how it feels and sounds.

Following guidance from a professional art critic, students learn to apply a range of approaches to critiquing contemporary art, not only to their own work but also to the work of fellow students.

The final product is a large-scale installation of everyone’s contributions, made from thousands of photographs, drawings, maps and various fragments of printed and found material. Although collectively generated, this documentary frieze is at the same time an anthology of personalised elements as students ‘navigate’ their own way through a previously unexplored territory.
Students on the University’s Joint Honours Programme make a conscious choice to broaden their knowledge by studying subjects from disparate disciplines. Studying such contrasting areas as Sports Studies and Philosophy, Law and Human Biology or Maths and Journalism and Media Cultures brings students into contact with a variety of learning and teaching styles. As a result, they are able to consider their studies from different critical angles and become flexible and independent learners.

To make sure you get the most out of a cross-disciplinary course, you need to be motivated, organised and passionate about what you do.

The cross-disciplinary skills acquired by one first-class graduate in Law and French have been the passport to a scholarship on the prestigious Erasmus Mundus Masters programme in Civil Law, funded by the European Commission and offering the opportunity to study in universities in France, Germany and Brazil.

Having originally chosen Hertfordshire because of its programme in Law with French and with the ultimate ambition to become a judge, this successful Joint Honours graduate will be equipped to work in legal professions or international organisations throughout the world.

Peer-supported learning

By applying my knowledge of programming through teaching first year students in their practical sessions, I continually develop my technical and soft skills. These are some of the skills that I need to be successful in the industry.

School of Computer Science

This image captures the reflections made by student proctors working in their spare time with students in the earlier stages of study. It shows how the co-curricular activities offered in the School of Computer Science are helping to develop their graduate attributes.

In their role as proctors, they are often asked to respond to individual questions from first year students during practical sessions and also at the technical help desk. These activities can further develop their problem-solving skills and deepen their understanding of topics previously studied. Having to research new topics before they can help other students has proved to be an effective way of testing everything they have themselves learned about their subject. It is also an opportunity to explore other areas more deeply.

One final year student trying to solve the compilation errors of beginner programmers has become more aware of what to look for when analysing and debugging code. By developing what he calls “my own code debugging routine” he is able to teach less experienced students quick and effective ways of analysing code and fixing errors whilst boosting his own knowledge and critical thinking skills prior to entering the world of work.
There are more than 2,000 International students at the University of Hertfordshire, representing more than 85 countries. Attracted by the variety of courses and campus facilities on offer, students from overseas appreciate the University's multicultural diversity and the opportunity to meet, live and study with people from all over the world.

To help International students develop their English skills and adapt to new ways of studying, a range of specialised English language courses are offered. Before starting a Masters in Management, one student wanted to improve his general English language skills and learn about studying effectively in a British university. Having previously studied in China, he has discovered a very different approach to the one he had been used to in his home country. Through interacting with fellow students in his English for Academic Studies class, he has learned that sharing different viewpoints in a discussion is an expected part of the learning process.

Talking to other students has opened my mind to possibilities which I would not previously have considered. I have developed global thinking which I did not have in China.

For a fellow student in the same class, the emphasis on team-working and social interaction has given him an appreciation of working with people from different backgrounds. After completing a Masters in Law, he will take back new perspectives on his career as a specialist in computer crime with the police in Kurdistan.

The classes have helped me to respect people with different backgrounds. I have learned how people learn in different ways and have a greater understanding of different cultures which will help me in my future work.
Diversity in practice

As future Allied Health professionals, all students studying BSc Physiotherapy are very aware from the outset that empathy and respect for others will be integral to their degree course and particularly, to their clinical practice placements. During their placements, students are entrusted with patients who either due to illness, accident or ageing need help to manage their specific problem and ultimately, to achieve a better quality of life. Alongside confidentiality, compassion and high-level listening skills, students will need to be aware of social and cultural factors which may have an impact on their clients’ subsequent treatment.

The six core dimensions of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework provide the focus for each of the seven placements which Physiotherapy students must complete as part of their degree. The core dimension, Equality and Diversity, is embedded throughout the curriculum but it is a particular focus for one of the three practice placements for final year students. When they return, students have gained a greater understanding of the Equality Act and its impact on the management of patients. In particular, they are better equipped to recognise, respect and value diversity within the healthcare environment in preparation for their careers as physiotherapists.

The University of Hertfordshire students to be well prepared for each placement. They present themselves professionally and are well aware of their student roles and responsibilities. Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust

Living and learning abroad

The year abroad was the best year at UH and has changed my life. This was such a great experience and learning curve for me from start to finish. If you get the opportunity, put any fears behind you and just do it!

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I have friends from all across the globe now. It was the first time in my life that I was completely immersed in cultures different from my own.

With just one UK student studying abroad for every fifteen international students coming the other way, those who have taken the plunge discover that employers look more closely at their job applications. For one student in Humanities, being asked at interview what she had gained from her year in Australia made her stand out from other candidates.

Employers know that these students will possess many of the qualities they are looking for: confidence, self-reliance, open-mindedness and excellent communication skills. An International Tourism Management student on sandwich placement at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando has recently won a commendation from his line manager for his outstanding people skills.

I have enhanced my customer service skills immensely and hope to keep developing and acquiring new skills to take back with me to apply to future job opportunities and my studies.

For many students, making new contacts and lasting friendships is the most important aspect of their year abroad. For others, it is discovering a new culture and learning to adapt to a different way of life. Whatever the experiences and challenges they face, most students describe it as the best year of their life.

Respect for others

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Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust
Hertfordshire Business School

Students studying Tourism and Event Management in the Business School are required to witness at first hand the diverse issues which surround the global tourism industry in its various cultural contexts. Being able to analyse the behaviours of tourists and the effects of tourism on host communities is an integral part of the academic curriculum. Theories acquired in the classroom are then put into practice during the International Field Trip module in the second year, when students engage directly with the impacts of tourism from a different cultural perspective. The authentic context allows students to observe and compare different stances towards the social, economic and environmental challenges that tourism development presents. Working alongside representatives and experts from the regional tourism bodies, they gain valuable insights into visitor management and the positive and negative impacts of tourism strategies on the local people.

The participation of the University’s Tourism students during a visit to Lanzarote’s Escuela de Turismo has received particular mention by the island’s Minister of Education and Culture:

It’s very good news that a prestige university such as Hertfordshire chose the tourism destination of Lanzarote. This is a good example of our relationship with universities and our social environment.

Postgraduate study for Academics

School of Education

Masters programmes in the School of Education give the University’s tutors the opportunity to develop their reflective skills within their individual work context. Like the students who are taught by them, they are expected to expand their knowledge and build upon the experience and expertise which they bring to their studies.

Through their postgraduate studies and the challenge to their own thinking, tutors become very aware of the ways in which their own studies impact on the experience of their students. An integral aspect of the Masters programmes is being willing to share critical reflections with fellow students and to listen to the points of view of others. Students may also be expected to observe each other’s classroom teaching, a situation where mutual respect and empathy are paramount. Tutors are therefore very aware of the need to be sensitive to others, not only as students themselves but particularly in their relationships with the students they teach.

By exploring the complexities of the professional teaching role, tutors gain deeper insights into the relationship between teachers and learners and take their reflections back to the classroom context.

Sharing my own learning experiences with my students helps them to realise that I can relate to them very closely and it bridges the staff-student gap significantly. We are all unique and therefore a resource to each other’s learning.
Many students choose to put their problem solving, leadership and communication skills to the test by getting involved in volunteering. Through the Hertfordshire Students' Union students can take part in local community initiatives or raise money for well-known charities and causes.

Painting a mural for a local primary school, digging a pond or sorting unwanted sports kit for children in the UK and overseas are some of the hundreds of activities which have won praise from the project organisers.

The student volunteers were fantastic and a real credit to the University. Students are themselves very clear about the rewards of volunteering, not only for the fun and team work involved but for how it develops them as individuals. For international students in particular, volunteering is an opportunity to get to know other students and to improve their English language skills while doing something to help other people.

The annual Student Recognition Evening is an occasion to celebrate and reward the energy, enthusiasm and concern for others shown by the students who take part in community and charitable work. Winners of the Volunteer of the Year award are selected for their outstanding contribution to volunteering. The most recent winner was praised for making a difference to the lives of children in African countries through her fund-raising for a school playground in Uganda and collecting disused school books for a Library Programme in Tanzania.

It was a wonderful opportunity to consider all the exceptional talent that we have at the University. It also illuminated the Graduate Attributes which our students display in a most effective way. Professor Quintin McKellar, Vice-Chancellor.
Streetlaw: Law in the community

Pensioners, sixth form students and HIV support workers are some of the recipients from the local community who have benefited from the help of students in the School of Law.

The Streetlaw project recruits groups of student volunteers from all levels of study who, under the supervision of their Law lecturer research a given area of law and present it to a school, college or community organisation.

Topics are chosen by the audience and so are varied and not necessarily familiar to all the students. Streetlaw students may find themselves give a presentation on self-defence and offensive weapons, explaining the workings of the European Court of Human Rights or giving guidance about bogus callers and cyber-bullying.

Apart from the impact that these students are having on the academic progress of others, they gain a great deal from the initiatives themselves. They have become more effective learners, more self-confident and better prepared for their future career.

The benefits of the project are multiple. Apart from the immediate value to the recipients, the students gain new knowledge from their independent research on the topic, in addition to vital transferable skills and closer links with the community. They have to collaborate with students they may never have met before and learn from the various strengths within the team. They need to create and deliver a presentation suitable for a particular target audience and be prepared to respond to unpredictable questions from that audience. By explaining legal theories, principles and contexts to others, students gain a valuable insight into what lawyers do in practice when they are presented with a legal dilemma by a client.

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**Ethical product design**

**School of Creative Arts**

Students on the Creative Product Design Programme deal with the evolution and realisation of products (or services and systems) for future users. If they are to be effective product designers they must consider all future stakeholders, whether an individual user, a community or the environment. They are introduced to a range of research and evaluation techniques which help them to explore and make sense of these concerns.

Students begin by sharing their understanding of the concepts of social responsibility and well-being to produce word circles, a visual bank of associations which these terms evoke for them. This is taken a stage further when they are required to analyse and record the steps involved in a simple process, such as making a sandwich. For each action within the scenario, they map whether this is a pleasurable or unpleasant activity. The associated design response, for example well-being or pleasure, is taken as one of the criteria by which the design is assessed.

The Product Designers who graduate from the School of Creative Arts also have an understanding of the ethical responsibility associated with design. The bicycle designed by one final year student for use in Bangladesh demonstrates students’ ability to research and articulate solutions to real, rather than perceived issues. As it transports the arsenic-contaminated water, the bicycle powers a specially designed unit to purify the water during the journey from well to village.

Product Design challenges social responsibility by identifying everyday issues and addressing them in their wider context as well as their physical form.
Acknowledgments

For the introductory sections
Dr Andrew Clutterbuck
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)

Dr Jon Altree
Dr Helen Barefoot
Sarah Flynn
Learning and Teaching Institute

Joel Shahar
Department of Marketing and Enterprise,
Hertfordshire Business School

Rosemary Allen
School of Education

Professionalism, employability and enterprise
Prof Sean Ryan
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Jenny Lorimer
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School of Health and Social Work.

Liz Whyard
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School of Computer Science

Sally Graham
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School of Education

Intellectual breadth, depth and adaptability
Dr Brendan Larvor
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School of Humansites

Dr Rebecca Thomas
Researching and recording Hatfield life
School of Creative Arts

Judy St John
Studying Joint Honours: a balancing act
School of Humanities

Dr Mariana Lilley
Peer-supported learning
School of Computer Science

Learning and research skills
Dr Phil Porter
Shrinking glaciers
Department of Human and Environmental Sciences,
School of Life and Medical Sciences

Dr Farbod Khoshnoud
Solving real-world challenges
School of Engineering and Technology

Dr Anne Murphy
Student Research Conference
School of Humanities

Dr Helen Barefoot
Staff as students
Learning & Teaching Institute

Respect for others
Liz Wray
Our International students
School of Humanities

Alethea Bradley, Nicole Duplain
Living and Learning abroad
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Hertfordshire Business School
School of Humanities

Diana Davis
Diversity in practice
Department of Allied Health Professions and Midwifery,
School of Health and Social Work

Alethea Bradley, Sarah Snell
Foreign tourists in Lanzarote
Department of Marketing and Enterprise,
Hertfordshire Business School

Gamu Matarira, Helen Stamps
Postgraduate study for Academics Staff studying in the
School of Education

Social responsibility
Carly Benton, Michael Gillett
Volunteering
Hertfordshire Students’ Union

Dr Jim Collett,
Helen Monribot,
Jill Andreanoff
Sharing academic skills
School of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics
School of Humanities
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