

Developing a graduate engagement statement

This AUSSE Enhancement Guide makes suggestions about how universities can help students produce a student engagement report.



Documenting student activities

Participating in extracurricular activities plays an important role in developing high-quality graduate outcomes. 'Beyond-class' experiences make formal learning more relevant and provide valuable learning experiences of their own. Employers value graduates who have demonstrated their capacity to engage successfully in social and professional activities.

The recently implemented Australian Graduate Statement endorses the value of such experience. It encourages universities to list details of courses such as workplace learning, study abroad, independent learning, professional placements, and employability assessments. Universities can record individual achievements such as prizes, university or faculty medals, special distinctions, and university funded or outside funded scholarships based on academic merit. Only information that can be authenticated by the institution can be included.

Assessing student engagement provides a foundation for recording such achievement. It creates a culture that values students' overall development and a lens for classifying graduate success.

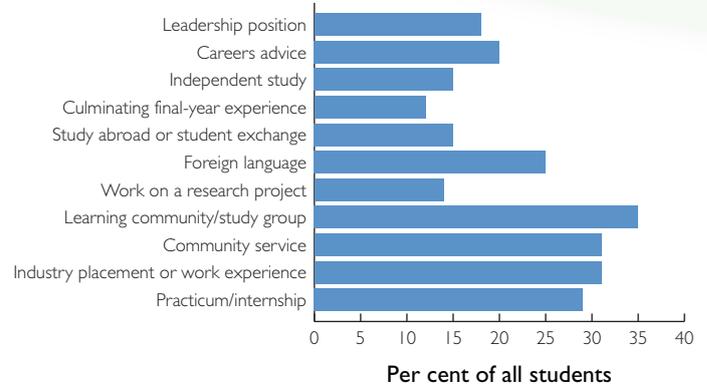
Developing the statement

Each university needs to decide which facets of students' educational experience best demonstrate graduate capability. This might be gleaned by review of course characteristics, consulting with the knowledge transfer or community engagement office, or speaking with graduates and employers. As well, the Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ) – the AUSSE's survey instrument – provides an inventory of many of the more significant beyond-class activities. Your institution's AUSSE results will provide useful insight into what your students are doing.

For instance, the taxonomy might divide student experiences into those concerning: cultural and international exchange; research; community service; leadership; professional experience; or creative or artistic expression. There may be other categories that link with your institution's location, mission or student profile.

For the graduate engagement statement to have legitimacy, there needs to be a robust process for gathering and authenticating students' achievement. Some universities will have procedures in place, though these may be concentrated within teaching departments or specific units such as exchange offices. Given the certification requirements of the Australian Graduate Statement there may be value in establishing a central process that takes carriage of this initiative on behalf of the institution. In many instances students will have already participated in relevant activities, and what is required is a means of encouraging them to report and validate their experiences.

Student participation in educational experiences at your institution



Stimulating active learning

Harnessing data on your students' broader achievements sends a message that your institution values such engagement. It can further stimulate participation in broader institutional activities, and demonstrate the capability and diversity of your learners and graduates. The process can develop authenticated reports that demonstrate your graduates' professional potential, and distinguish your graduates from others can greatly assist graduates demonstrate their professional capability.



About this guide

This AUSSE Enhancement Guide forms part of the suite of resources developed by ACER and the broader AUSSE community to enhance students' engagement in effective educational practices. Visit www.acer.edu.au/ausse for further information about the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement.