

Introduction

Durban University of Technology (DUT) commits to empowering students to excel by enabling them to adapt to the ever-evolving global and local academic landscape. This is done through following doctoral graduate attributes. The university's strategic vision, ENVISION2030, emphasizes the need to embed these attributes into doctoral programs, ensuring that graduates are equipped to meet the national and international academic benchmarks. These adopted attributes meet the CHE's expectations for advanced competencies. It also enhances broader personal preparedness, enabling graduates to integrate effectively into diverse roles in industry, academia, and society. By emphasizing critical thinking, ethical awareness, interdisciplinary knowledge, and effective communication, the attributes ensure that doctoral graduates can make innovative, original, and socially responsible contributions, positioning them as changemakers in their respective fields.

Table of Attributes

Existing DUT Graduate Attribute	Existing DUT Graduate Attribute Narrative:	Proposed DUT Doctoral Graduate Attribute Narrative:	Doctoral-Level Expansion:
I. Critical and Creative Thinkers	Graduates are effective problem solvers capable of applying logical, critical, and creative thinking, functioning effectively both independently and collaboratively.	Doctoral graduates demonstrate the ability to solve problems by applying advanced methodologies and techniques to generate new knowledge while considering the inherent risks and complexities of their research context.	Doctoral graduates are independent, critical, and creative thinkers who: 1) Conduct advanced research that leads to original and innovative contributions to their field. 2) Design, evaluate, and implement advanced strategies to solve open-ended research problems, reflecting novelty and innovation. 3) Synthesize complex ideas considering diverse disciplines, advancing existing knowledge and creating new frameworks. 4) Critically engage with existing knowledge, identifying gaps, risks and proposing innovative solutions. 5) Proactively seek feedback from peers and experts, refine research based on constructive criticism.

Existing DUT Graduate Attribute	Existing DUT Graduate Attribute Narrative:	Proposed DUT Doctoral Graduate Attribute Narrative:	Doctoral-Level Expansion:
2. Knowledgeable Practitioners	Graduates have in-depth knowledge in their chosen field and the ability to apply that knowledge in practice.	Doctoral graduates are changemakers in their field that are well-versed in current literature, with the ability to critically assess, apply, and integrate theories from both their specific field and related disciplines.	Doctoral graduates demonstrate expert knowledge and are changemakers in their field who: 1) Possess specialized, in-depth knowledge of a specific research area, contributing to the advancement of the discipline. 2) Understand how their research intersects with other fields, enabling interdisciplinary collaboration and broadening the scope of their contributions. 3) Extend their knowledge through continuous research, inquiry, and critical reflection. 4) Engage in intellectual debates in their discipline, contributing original insights and advancing scholarly discussions. 5) Cultivate supervisory skills that contribute to building research capacity within their field.
3. Effective Communicators	Graduates demonstrate proficiency in communicating complex ideas and arguments effectively to diverse audiences.	Doctoral graduates exhibit sustained advanced communicative competence, producing academic work that contributes to the global body of knowledge. They can also disseminate research content in ways that are accessible and impactful to the broader community.	Doctoral graduates are advanced communicators who: 1) Articulate complex research content clearly and effectively using appropriate platforms for diverse audiences. This includes, but is not limited to, peer-reviewed research outputs and the viva voce. 2) Engage in intellectual contestation, defending their research to both expert and non-expert audiences. 3) Use digital literacy tools to communicate research findings and collaborate within academic and professional networks. 4) Develop and implement thoughtful and inclusive communication strategies that are culturally, socially and ethically sensitive in research contexts.

Existing DUT Graduate Attribute	Existing DUT Graduate Attribute Narrative:	Proposed DUT Doctoral Graduate Attribute Narrative:	Doctoral-Level Expansion:
4. Culturally, Environmentally, and Socially Aware Researchers	Graduates recognize the impact of cultural, environmental, and social issues in both local and global contexts and make ethically informed decisions.	Doctoral graduates consider the impact of their research on societal well-being and sustainability. They demonstrate an ethical awareness, showing an advanced understanding of research ethics and professional protocols.	Doctoral graduates are ethically and socially responsible researchers who: 1) Exhibit a profound understanding of the ethical implications of their research, adhering to professional and academic ethical standards. 2) Reflect on and engage with issues of social justice, equity, and sustainability in their research and professional conduct. 3) Recognize the interdisciplinary nature of global challenges, applying their research to address significant cultural, social, and environmental issues. 4) Respect diversity in all professional and research activities, ensuring inclusive and non-discriminatory practices in their work.
5. Active and Reflective Learners	Graduates take responsibility for their learning, adapting their approach to enhance professional and personal growth.	Doctoral graduates exhibit a strong capacity for self-motivation and intellectual independence, engaging in critical reflection throughout their research process. They are also equipped to contribute to innovative research initiatives and the advancement of knowledge globally.	Doctoral graduates are self-directed, lifelong learners who: 1) Reflect critically on their learning and research journey, continuously seeking to improve and expand their expertise. 2) Show autonomy in research, managing complex projects independently while also being open to collaboration and multidisciplinary approaches. 3) Embrace intellectual exploration, recognizing new possibilities and insights. 4) Stay updated with developments in their field and beyond and ensure ongoing personal and professional development.

Note that this references the following documents:

Council on Higher Education (CHE).

- National Review of Doctoral Qualifications 2020-2021: Review Panel Report – Durban University of Technology. July 2021. Available from the Durban University of Technology's Centre for Quality Promotion and Assurance (CQPA).
- Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). 2013. Available at https://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/inline-files/PUB_Higher%20Education%20Qualifications%20Sub-Framework%20%28HEQSF%29%202013.pdf
- Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) Qualification Standard for Doctoral Degrees. November 2018. Available at <https://www.che.ac.za/file/7440/download?token=cEDaU2HG>

Durban University of Technology (DUT).

- Position Paper: Conceptualising the Quality Assurance of Graduate Attributes at the Durban University of Technology. Approved by Senate on 27 August 2014.
Available at [DUT Graduate Attributes extracted from the position paper 19 August 2014.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)