

# Learner Intern Project 22-23

## Creation of resources to raise learners' awareness of their graduate attributes

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# Background

# Queen Mary Graduate Attributes



‘the **distinctive Queen Mary Graduate Attributes** are embedded in all our programmes, so that our students develop the knowledge, skills, adaptability and resilience to succeed in an ever-changing global job market and become active global citizens.’

*Strategy 2030*

# Why were Graduate Attributes updated?



To ensure graduate attributes are up to date and adequately equip students for employment and beyond



To incorporate student views and include students in co-creating attributes



To align graduate attributes to Queen Mary Values, Strategy 2030 & Sustainability Strategy



To enhance development of attributes and support students to better articulate them



To contribute to improved Graduate Outcomes Survey results, student satisfaction & career outcomes

# Updated Queen Mary Graduate Attributes

'Graduate Attributes are the knowledge, skills and behaviours that Queen Mary students develop as a result of their learning and experiences at university.'



# Updated Queen Mary Graduate Attributes

- 13 new attributes
- Aligned with Queen Mary Values
- Incorporating top employability skills
- Co-created with students
- Reflecting disciplinary/interdisciplinary requirements



# Co-creation with students



**Participation as  
workflow  
members**



**Focus groups**



**Workshops with  
academic teams**



**Learner intern  
projects**



**Recognition of co-  
creation**



- ‘the views of staff and the aspirations of students should be regularly consulted to ensure that there is a synergy between expectations of graduates from the university as well as its educators and learners.’ (Wong et al, 2021)
- Process of of ‘extracting’ employability from the curriculum (Daubney, 2021), combined with commitment to co-creation of the curriculum (Bovill and Woolmer, 2019)

Value	Queen Mary Graduate Attributes
Inclusive	I1 <b>Communicate</b> effectively in a range of formats for different purposes with a diverse range of people
	I2 Respect, listen to, and value others and their opinions
Proud	P1 Recognise and <b>value your individual worth</b> and identify the contributions you can make
	P2 Identify clear personal, study and career goals, <b>taking responsibility</b> for your own growth and development
	P3 Apply a <b>flexible</b> and <b>resilient</b> approach to your life
Ambitious	A1 Engage critically and reflectively with knowledge
	A2 Demonstrate an <b>innovative</b> and <b>creative</b> approach to <b>problem solving</b>
	A3 Apply your disciplinary expertise to <b>broader contexts and society</b>
	A4 Be digitally fluent
Collegial	C1 Participate effectively and inclusively in different roles as part of a <b>team</b> , including as a leader
	C2 <b>Collaborate</b> with a diverse range of colleagues
Ethical	E1 Act honestly, fairly and ethically, including in academic conduct
	E2 Promote socially responsible behaviour for a global sustainable future



# Project aims

# Creation of resources to raise learners' awareness of their graduate attributes

- Developing, organising, and conducting surveys and focus groups around GAs with learners
- Developing resources around GAs (interns to determine format) e.g. short videos, podcasts, social media, drawing on and informed by outputs of survey/focus group
- Evaluating (or planning to evaluate) engagement with the resources and with attributes
- Reflecting on their experience as a learner intern.

# How does the project fit into wider work on graduate attributes: communicating attributes to students

## Graduate Attributes for students

Graduate Attributes are the knowledge, skills and behaviours that Queen Mary students develop as a result of their learning and experiences at university. Where will your Graduate Attributes take you?

The Queen Mary Graduate Attributes are aligned our institutional values and also with key employability skills that graduates need for today's workplace. Your programme of study will incorporate these attributes either as they are written below, or the attributes may be adapted for your specific disciplinary context.

The attributes have been co-created with students and Queen Mary Students' Union representatives, and closely informed by consultations carried out with students from across Queen Mary.



**I think gathering student feedback and incorporating this into the design of graduate attributes makes our process and overall result authentic. It really stands out.**

— Radhika Thiagarajan, QMSU Vice President Communities

- LIP co-creating resources to support students to identify and reflect on their graduate attributes
- Launch of updated graduate attributes to students from September 2023
- Development of visual identity
- Complements embedding of attributes within programmes of study and use of attributes portfolio tool

# Methods

# Methods



Ethical approval

Student consultation

- Online survey
- Focus group

Desk research and data analysis

- Practice at other institutions
- Resources and support already available
- Analysis of consultation data

Development of resources

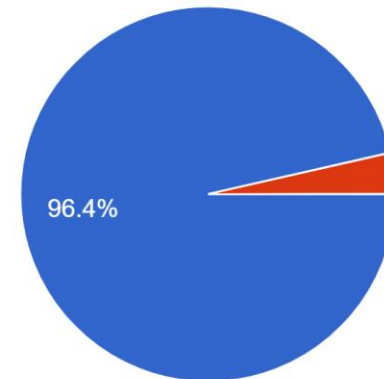
- Informed by consultation and desk research
- Creative methods to inform design



# Survey

- Open to all current Queen Mary students and alumni
- Advertised via internal communications to current students, Careers newsletters and Alumni communications
- Prize draw incentive
- 28 respondents
- Spread across faculties
- Anonymous

Are you a  
28 responses



- current Queen Mary student?
- Queen Mary alumni?

# Focus group



- All survey respondents invited to take part in follow up focus group
- Incentive offered to all participants
- 7 participants from a range of disciplines
- Mixed mode: in person and online
- Semi structured: open questions and mapping activity

# Results

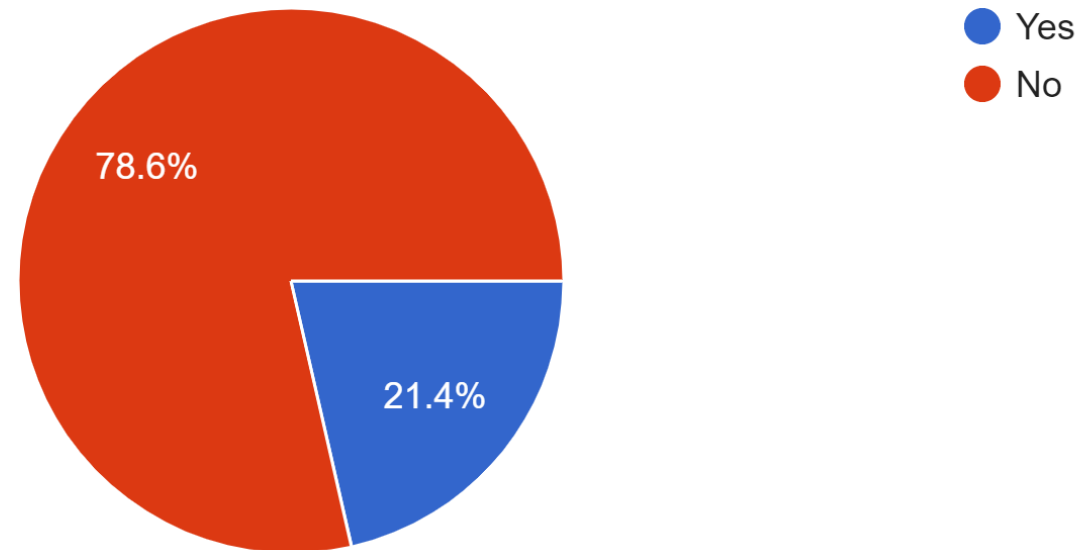


# Survey responses

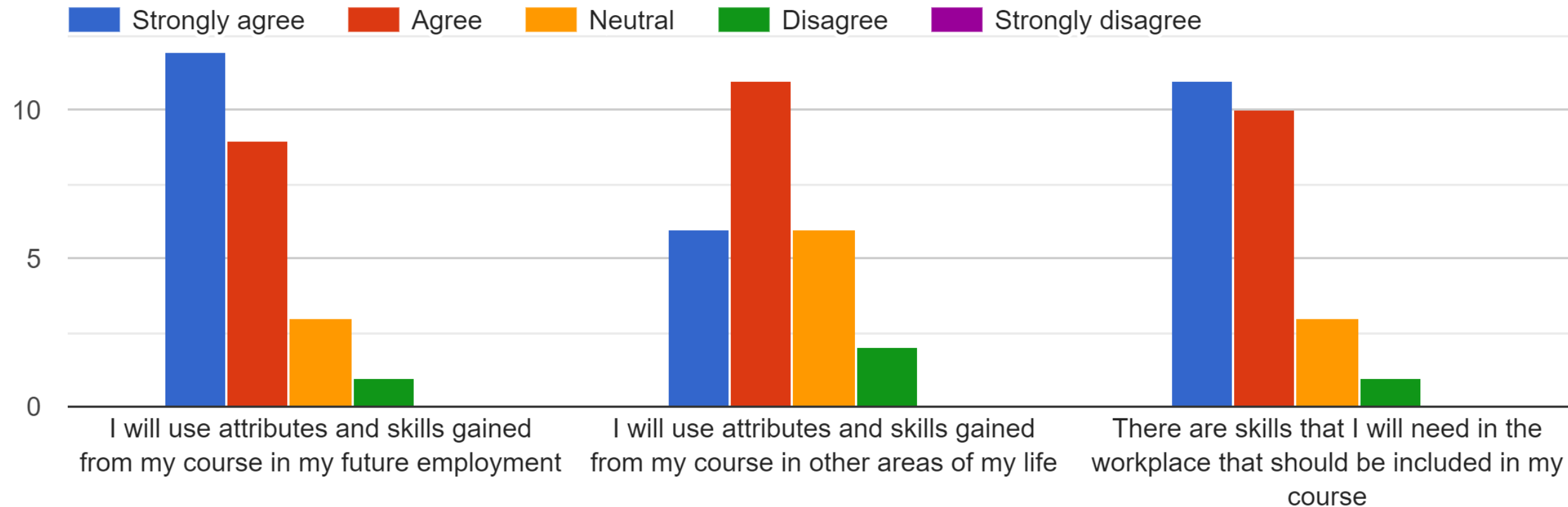


Are you, or were you aware of graduate attributes during your time at Queen Mary?

28 responses



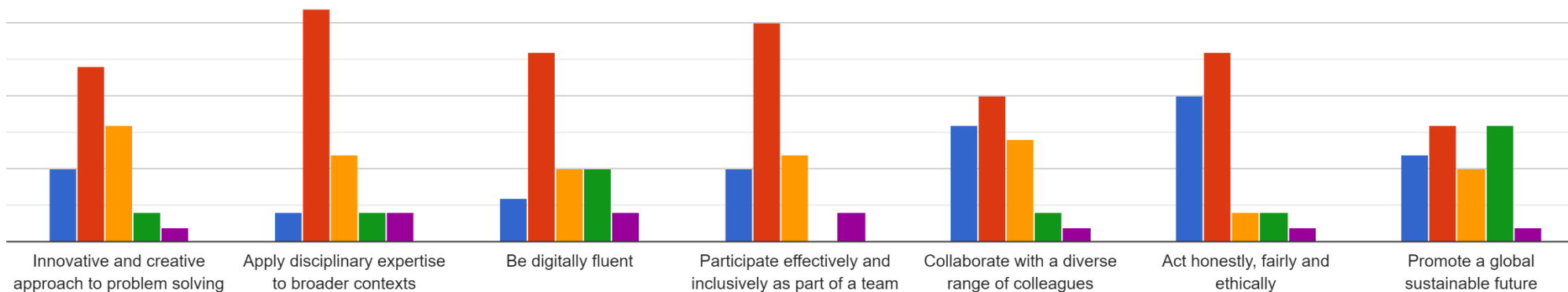
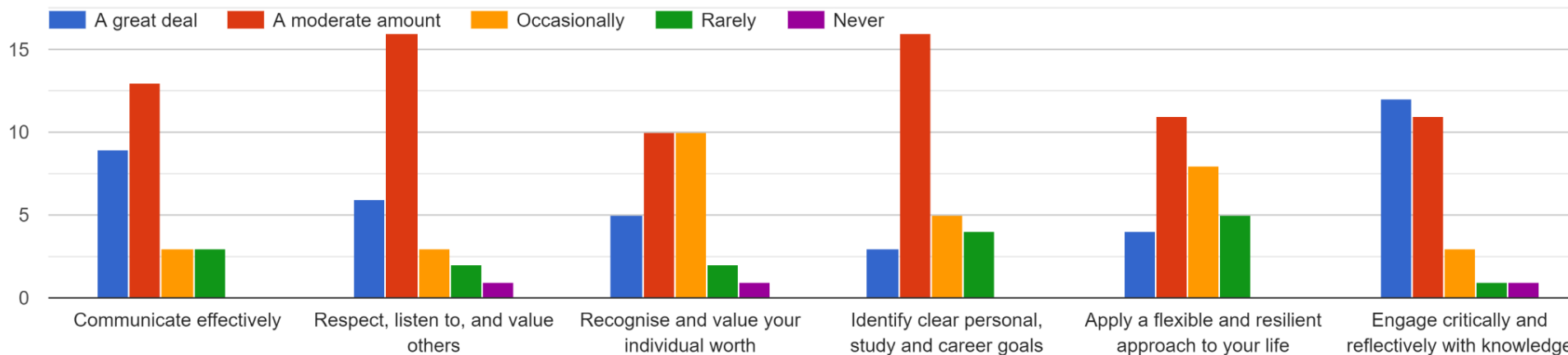
If you are a current student, to what extent do you agree with the following:



Responses to Graduate Attributes Student Survey, conducted as part of QM Learner Inform Project 22-23

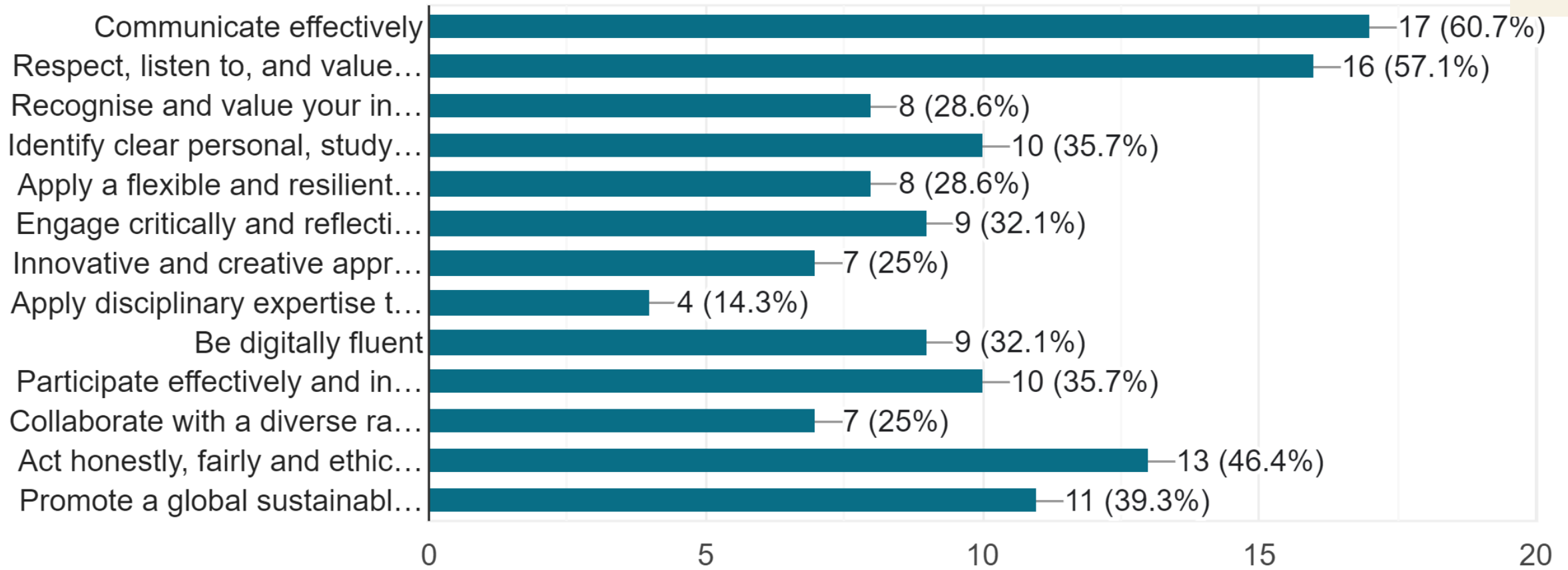


## To what extent have you developed the following attributes in your course?



# Which are the most important attributes for you?

28 responses



# Why do you think Graduate Attributes are important?



Helps you transition from university and into the working world.

To have a mind that thinks critically about life in general.

They empower you to seek work that you want and believe that you can achieve it. Once you're in the work place, these attributes become capabilities that can help you form workplace connections and excel in your job.

Self development and confidence

# How can the university help better support current students to develop these attributes and skills?



- Integrate it into the module content
- having assignments be similar to deadlines at work
- Make [students] aware of which attributes certain activities are designed to foster.

# What would be the best way to raise awareness of graduate attributes among students?



- Providing information via email (e.g., in newsletters)
- Highlight the ones they may gain at the beginning and end of each module.
- perhaps during welcome week sessions it could be mentioned so students can have it in mind during the year
- Tutor meetings
- Posters

# Focus group: Reflection on attributes via creative enquiry



12019, <https://pixabay.com/photos/ecuador-cuy-animals-caged-cages-95565/>



Joko Narimo, <https://pixabay.com/photos/sport-climbing-slippery-pole-1941210/>

- It's like a bunch of animals [...] And they're different colours [...] living harmoniously and in the same place. And this is kind of reflecting the 'respect' Graduate Attribute. And also, I feel like it shows like working and living and communicating with people of different backgrounds, different identities, which is very important in my degree.
- We can see a group of individuals working together in what looks like a very difficult situation. I can see the guy in the middle seems to be almost supporting and building a team around him. So maybe the image kind of representing the importance of being able to act as a leader as well when the need arises and to support team around you to achieve



# Focus group: mapping attributes



Mapping your graduate attributes! Where in your course or extra-curricular activities have you developed these attributes?

Queen Mary Graduate Attributes	Top employability skills	How could you demonstrate this?	How have you developed this? Please give a specific example from your course or extra-curricular experiences
Communicate effectively in a range of formats for different purposes with a diverse range of people.	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give a presentation / demonstration</li> <li>Write a report / blog / paper</li> <li>Take part in class discussions</li> </ul>	<p>During semester we were required to do presentations during seminars on that week's topic (15 minute presentations) beforehand.</p> <p>- Due to the nature of my course, a lot of discussion during seminars is required i.e. discussing specifically controversial topics.</p>
Respect, listen to, and value others and their opinions	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take part in group work activities and discussions</li> <li>Give and receive peer feedback</li> </ul>	<p>- Group activities during seminars - filling out information sheets and discussing issues that were often controversial (respectfully but openly).</p>

- ‘I didn’t see them as attributes until now [...] I just thought that's part of the module and it's something we have to do. But now I actually think that's something that's really important for after you graduate in the workplace.’
- ‘Just by bringing that awareness, I feel like you can recognise it more once you realise the skills and attributes you are learning from the actual project or doing.’

# Analysis

# Awareness and opportunity to develop graduate attributes



- Lack of student awareness of graduate attributes
- Strong understanding of importance of embedding attributes within curriculum and desire for this
- Sustainability, valuing yourself and collaboration identified as attributes students had less opportunity to develop



# Student views of attributes

- Communication and respect most frequently identified as the most important attributes
- Apply disciplinary expertise, collaboration and problem solving least frequently identified as most important attributes
- Students want to be made more aware of graduate attributes, both at a university level and within courses

# Challenges in developing specific attributes



## Sustainability

- It's hard for my degree. There's a lot of wastage [...] as medical students, we don't have that much exposure to sustainable medicine. And it will be nice having more because there's a lot of wastage and there's a lot of plastic disposing.
- I agree with the sustainability coming from science as well. You use so much, so much waste in the assemblage like that. Only, now in this semester we started slowly like thinking about what it means in a pharmaceutical kind of environment.

## Value yourself

- When it comes to personal development and identifying your own strengths and weaknesses, you have to sort of personally do yourself. There isn't really any guidance on that [...] So lectures, seminars [don't] really prompt you to have a self-reflection it just, it really comes from within yourself.



# Enhancing understanding

## Applying disciplinary expertise

- I think it's such an important thing, especially for engineering that you're always thinking about how we're going to apply this to like society in itself. Is it practical? And so [...] I think it's very difficult to practise having that mindset of like what's the bigger picture.
- We don't have a lot of reflective activities and I think that's what makes it sometimes a bit harder to see how what we're learning can apply to the broader contexts because we're not able to reflect on what it means on a bigger scale on in society in general.

# Resources and outputs

# Resources and outputs

- Project report recommendations
- Conference paper & dissemination
- Web resources for students:
  - New website structure – student focused
  - Directory of resources
  - Alumni videos and case studies
  - Student guidance and examples of demonstrating attributes
- Input to wider plans for promoting graduate attributes to students from Sep 23





# Communicate

Communicate effectively in a range of formats for different purposes with a diverse range of people



This Graduate Attribute is about being able to communicate in an effective way with a wide range of different audiences. Communication is a key employability skill.

## How can you develop and demonstrate this attribute at Queen Mary?

- Give a presentation or demonstration, live or online
- Write a report / blog / paper
- Take part in class discussions
- Engage in role play activities
- Take part in laboratory group work
- Plan a conference or event
- Work with voluntary groups



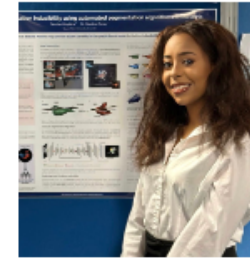
## How might this attribute be assessed?

- Assessed coursework, exams (written or oral), presentations, posters, reports
- Peer review / feedback
- Feedback from work experience / volunteering
- Cover letters / application forms / interviews

## What kinds of interview questions could I be asked that relate to this attribute?

- Give me an example of when you used good communication skills to help you achieve an objective.
- Give me an example of when you have had to change your communication style for different audiences.
- How would you persuade people around to your way of thinking?

## Case studies from our graduates



My name is Semhar Misghine, and I recently graduated from Queen Mary University of London in Biomedical Engineering. I am currently starting a PhD programme at Queen Mary University of London that will explore the progression of atrial fibrillation using computational modelling. As I embark on my post-graduate journey, I appreciate the significance of effective communication in various formats and employing creative problem-solving approaches as vital graduate attributes. These attributes have facilitated a smooth transition to my PhD

programme and allowed me to thrive in multidisciplinary research groups. Effective communication has helped me successfully express complex concepts and collaborate, while a creative problem-solving approach has been valuable in determining novel solutions to problems.



**Effective communication has helped me successfully express complex concepts and collaborate... My advice to current students is to actively engage with multidisciplinary groups and participate in collaborative tasks.**

Throughout my undergraduate programme, I had the opportunity to work on various group tasks, participate in problem-solving challenges, and interact with peers from various fields. These opportunities refined my communication skills and increased my adaptability to various audiences, resulting in a broader viewpoint. The university's emphasis on real-world challenges provided multiple opportunities to employ my expertise and encouraged the development of innovative solutions. My advice to current students is to actively engage with multidisciplinary groups and participate in collaborative tasks. It is important to take advantage of internships and research initiatives that allow you to apply your abilities to real-world scenarios. These experiences will strengthen your skills and serve as practical examples for future employment or academic programmes.

## Where can I find out more and access support?

[Academic Professional Communication courses from the Queen Mary Languages Centre](#)

[Academic Skills Support from Queen Mary Library Services](#)

Aca



# Recommendations and reflections

# Reflections: learner interns





# Raising awareness

- Queen Mary Academy to work with Marketing and Comms / QMSU to continue to raise awareness of graduate attributes among students through:
  - Welcome Week activities
  - Central student communications e.g. student update emails
  - Posters / screens on campus
  - Central workshops / sessions to raise awareness of attributes
- Queen Mary Academy to ensure Advisor training is up to date on the new attributes and that it supports colleagues to advise, guide and signpost tutees where needed
- Queen Mary Academy to work with Marketing and Comms / QMSU to support students to better understand the importance of specific attributes



# Embedding in the curriculum

- Queen Mary Educators to identify and signpost graduate attributes within the curriculum, e.g. in module handbooks, QMplus, in lectures/seminars, in assessment guidance
- Queen Mary Educators to enhance opportunities within the curriculum for students to develop attributes (sustainability, valuing yourself)
- Where authentic assessment is being used, Queen Mary Educators should make this and the rationale behind it clear to students





# Supporting student reflection on attributes

- Queen Mary Academy to continue to lead the development and launch of a tool to support students to reflect on attributes
- Queen Mary Academy, Marketing and Comms and QMSU to promote new website and resources to students
- Queen Mary Academy to continue to gather alumni case studies and add input from employers to web resources.

# Final reflections and next steps



Co-creation with students key in development of updated Graduate Attributes and is vital in development of support and resources for students



Much work to do on raising awareness of Graduate Attributes among both students and staff



QMA should work with staff to signpost and communicate attributes, but to also provide students opportunity to reflect on them

# References

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