

AGCAS Skills Award Case Studies:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE EMPLOYABILITY AWARD

Background

The Gloucestershire Employability Award was launched in 2011-12 academic year. In this first year of its existence, the Award had just one level and was called 'Employable Gloucestershire Graduate Scheme'. In its current form it's been in existence since 2013-14. Now the Award is named Gloucestershire Employability Award: Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

The Employability Award was linked to HEAR originally and a way in which we felt we could offer all students the chance to receive recognition and verification in 6.1 of the HEAR. Students are given the opportunity to develop a clear idea of what they have to offer a future employer by reflecting and presenting on their strengths, skills, experiences and achievements.

Structure

The Gloucestershire Employability Award has three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

At **Bronze** level students are expected to attend three eligible events (these are workshops, which linked directly to the development of their transferrable skills or an enhancement of their understanding and knowledge of a specific professional sector); students need to verify 20 hours of extra-curricular experience; submit a reflective piece of assessment. The Bronze Award is aimed at level 4 students and only after completing the Bronze level, students can progress to the Silver Employability Award.

Silver Award – attendance of a complementary Silver Award workshop, completion of an online application form, CV submission, online learning covering job applications and interviews, 35 hours of extra-curricular work experience, verification Silver Award interview.

Gold Award – one-to-one careers meeting, online learning modules on presentations and assessment centres, 45 hours of extra-curricular work experience, a formal 15 minutes' presentation and an interview in front of a panel of staff and local employers.

Recognition

As mentioned above, the Awards are recorded on the students' HEAR, students receive certificates of completion and for those, who successfully complete the Gold Award there is a formal Awards ceremony, as part of the Big Student Union Annual Awards, Gnomies.

Size/Engagement

The awards are open to all students, regardless of their level or mode of study. However, as they are consequential, a student must complete Bronze level before being allowed to progress to the Silver and only after the completion of the Silver Award, students can progress to the Gold Award.

In 2016/17 over 1000 students registered for the Bronze level of the Award.

In 2016/17, 404 students completed the Gloucestershire Employability Awards:

- 318 Bronze
- 74 Silver
- 12 Gold (the Gold Award was introduced in 2016/17)

Around 5% of the overall student population is currently engaged with the Award.

Platform/ IT system

CareerHub

Reporting

Reporting is done via Excel.

Key statistics and KPIs reported on include:

- Number of registrations (especially for the Bronze Award)
- Completions by level of Award and on demand by demographics, by work experience, etc.
- Conversion rates

Resourcing

Employability Skills Co-ordinator (0.7 FTE) with the support of a team of Careers Consultants for the delivery of workshops, interviews and presentations, assessing CVs.

Evaluation and Impact

Case studies.

We get some feedback from students about the Bronze Award when they come for the Silver Award workshop.

An evaluation survey is planned but not in place yet.

Longer-term impact of the Award hasn't been evaluated yet.

As for involvement of others in evaluation of the Award and its impact: Not formally, however, we receive formal feedback about the award and its effect on students' engagement.

Key Successes and Challenges

Students are more engaged with the online Award process, they find it easy to follow and can do in their own time. Feedback has been positive and along the lines of 'it is easy to complete', 'quick', 'engaging'.

We have been able to link more online resources, which students use and have increased the number of attendees to our workshops and events.

The main challenges have been engaging students and academics, but as the whole employability agenda has become a priority for the University, we find that the queries now come from both students and academics.

Talk to your main stakeholders and find out what will appeal to them. Assess the time it will take to administer the Award.

Future Developments (particularly for the next three years)

Currently the main focus is on increasing student numbers.

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