

## AGCAS Skills Award TG Case Studies:

### THE IMPERIAL AWARD

#### Background

During the 2015/16 academic year, a pilot for the Imperial Award was launched in response to the Education and Student Strategy, which recommended the College do more to recognise student achievement beyond academic success. Student engagement throughout the pilot suggested a demand for such an award. Building upon the success of the pilot, in 2016/17 the Programme has been offered to students from eight Departments. The College roll-out is planned for January 2018.

The Imperial Award is not about rewarding academic success or the volume or magnitude of extra-curricular activities, but an achievement of personal development and transformation. It recognises students who evidence the transformative impact of their engagement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

#### Structure

The Programme requires students to demonstrate critical reflection upon how their activities have transformed their understanding, attitudes and skills in relation to key graduate attributes. Working towards the Imperial Award requires them to:

- Capture and record their activities and experiences;
- Map and evidence their experiences against the Imperial Award attributes;
- Reflect upon the significance of each attribute;
- Write a short reflective statement critically considering how you meet the Imperial Award criteria;
- Utilise feedback from various sources throughout the process

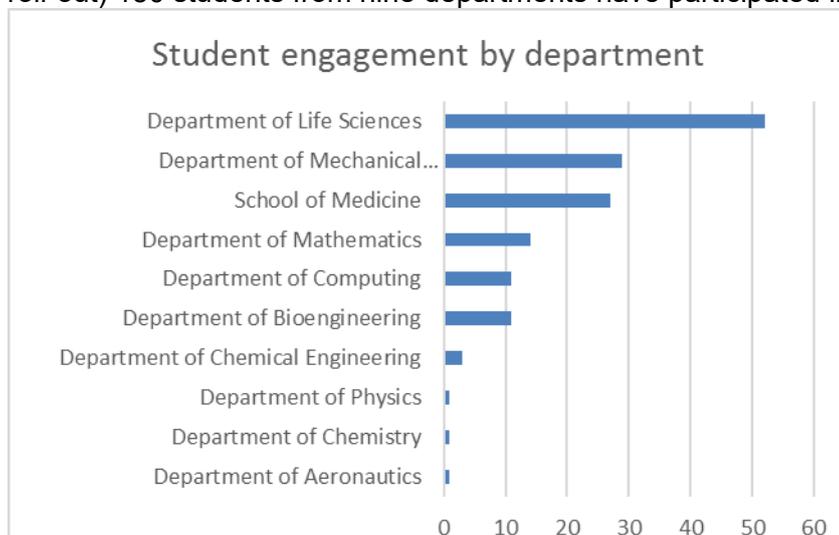
The Imperial Award consists of three streams, each containing four attributes. Each stream requires students to submit a separate, short reflective statement that demonstrates how they meet the criteria for each attribute in that stream. There are multiple chances to submit statements, each year. From January 2018 there will be two submission deadlines per term. Students do not need to submit statements for each stream at the same time. Students can aspire to complete one or more streams which are assessed, but only achieve the full Award when having successfully completed all streams.

#### Recognition

On the successful completion of a stream a student will receive a line on their transcript. On completion of all three streams an extra line for the complete Imperial Award is added to the transcript.

#### Size/Engagement

From January 2018 all students will be eligible to take part in the programme. In 2016/17 (first phase of the roll-out) 150 students from nine departments have participated in the Programme – please see below.



## Resourcing

The coordination of the College roll-out of the Award comes from a College staff member (0.2FTE). Support for students participating in the Award is managed by a member of the Student Development Team at Imperial College Union (0.5FTE). Academic support, departmental engagement and assessor coordination and training is provided from the College's Educational Development Unit (0.7FTE). The online development of the system for recording and assessing has been developed by the Imperial College Union Systems team.

## Evaluation and Impact

An online survey is sent out to students every six months. Additionally, all student who participate in workshops are asked to complete an evaluation form at the end of each session. Regular reports on student engagement in the programme are produced every 1-2 months. They include data around numbers of students using online portfolio tools to log their activities and experiences, and mapping them against the Imperial Award attributes.

To evaluate the longer-term impact of the award, in the next few months we will be liaising with members of the Educational Development Unit (EDU) at Imperial College for the purposes of evaluating the Imperial Award scheme. Students may be invited to participate in this qualitative and quantitative research during the year to help us improve and evaluate the scheme.

## Key Successes and Challenges

### Successes

- Good engagement from students involved with regular feedback obtained.
- Comprehensive review of the framework and assessment criteria, based on the outcomes of the pilot and student feedback
- Review and testing of assessment process/procedure, including recruitment and training of the assessors, using online system for submissions.
- Opportunity to test and review messaging and guidance materials resulting in producing quality written resources for students ('Student Guidance' document and 'Guide on Reflection and Reflective Writing').
- Development, and ongoing review of student workshops ('Introduction to the Award' and 'Reflection and Reflective writing')

### Challenges

- Difficulty in effectively getting across the concept of personal reflection
- Little engagement with Personal Tutors
- Limited awareness of the programme across College
- Low success rate of students completing the Award
- Logistics around assessor recruitment, training and the management of the assessment process

## Future Developments

### The College roll-out

- Finalising the production of support resources for students and personal tutors, including two videos (a promotional video and a training video)
- Promotion of the programme, aiming at increasing student engagement and awareness of the programme across College
- Finalising the systems support for student registration and assessment.

### Development of the programme

- Opening the programme to all students
- Recruitment and training of assessors and mentors
- Development of peer support groups for students
- Evaluation of the longer-term impact of the Imperial Award programme

**Email:** Paulina Sekrecka, Training and Development Manager, Imperial College Union:

[p.sekrecka@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:p.sekrecka@imperial.ac.uk)

**Website:** TBC