

AGCAS Skills Award Case Studies:

ST ANDREWS PROFESSIONAL SKILLS CURRICULUM

Background

- The Professional Skills Curriculum (PSC) award was established in 2011 at the University of St Andrews
- The program was developed, in collaboration with the Students' Association, to help students develop 11 key employability skills that graduate employers value (Source: Target Jobs).

Structure

- Students obtain a PSC passport at any PSC event, and then between 1 September and 1 June complete various steps (see below) to gaining the award
 - Complete a pre-programme skills analysis in their passport and select 5 skills areas to work on
 - Students collect 8 or more PSC attendance stamps through either in-person workshops or online workshops via Moodle, that are related to their 5 professional skill areas
 - Students submit a 1,500 work reflective essay
 - Students collect a certificate of completion from CAPOD

Recognition

- Students who gain a PSC Award have it listed on their HEAR transcript
- Students also receive a PSC Award certificate from CAPOD
- The programme is endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management, and students can opt to purchase an ILM certificate if they wish
- An electronic badge is made available for PSC completers

Size/Engagement

- Every student is eligible to participate in the PSC
- Approximately 600 students each year attend at least one workshops and approximately 100 complete the award each year.
- There are approximately 9,500 students at the University of St Andrews, so about 6% of students participate in the PSC

Platform/ IT system

- The online workshops are hosted in Moodle
- Webpages are hosted in T4

Reporting

- KPI Reporting
 - Excel is used to record all award completers
 - Moodle is used to record all uploaded end-of-programme essays and completion of online workshops
 - Facebook and Mailchimp and PSC app statistics help us gauge interest in and engagement with the programme
- What are the key statistics or KPIs you report on?
 - Number of workshops per year
 - Number of students engaging with the program

- Number engaged with FB page → 1,371
- Number signed up to mailing list → 853
- Number who have collected a passport → 600
- Number who complete the award → 120
- Areas of Impact around the PSC
 - Self-reported increased academic success in recruitment and internships
 - Self-reported increased academic performance
 - Self-reported sense of professionalism
 - Self-reported awareness and self-reflection
 - Self-reported confidence increase about post-graduation
- Evaluation data from specific workshops
- Number of endorsements from graduate employers → 20+

Resourcing

- Who works on your Award, including their roles (administrative, delivery, etc.)
 - PSC Operating Team: 20 Student Volunteers
 - Social Media: This volunteer runs the PSC Facebook page and twitter account.
 - Mailing List: This volunteer is responsible for the PSC weekly mailing list.
 - Poster Designer (x2): These volunteers are responsible for designing 1-2 posters a week to advertise PSC events.
 - Leadership (x2): These volunteers are responsible for finding and inviting guest speakers to give talks on the importance of leadership
 - PSC Extra (X2): These volunteers are responsible for adding content to the PSC Extra section of the website. They post interviews with presenters, useful articles and TED Talks.
 - Employer Blog: This volunteer interviews PSC alumni, employers and academics on the importance of professional skills.
 - Managers Network Coordinator (X2): These volunteers are responsible for staging events which bring University managers in contact with students
 - Film-Maker and editor: These volunteers make PSC video adverts, film guest speakers, edit interview clips and work on advertising the PSC through the new Vimeo channel.
 - Online Workshop Developer: This volunteer updates the content of the online PSC Moodle workshops
 - Careers Link: This volunteer is responsible for maintaining links between the PSC and the Careers Centre
 - App Developer: This volunteer is responsible for maintaining the PSC app so people can stay updated with PSC events.
 - Societies link: This volunteer makes connections between student societies and clubs and PSC events that are particularly relevant to them.
 - PGR Student: Coordinates a series of PSC outreach workshops in the local High School
 - Head of Student Development: Coordinates the PSC programme
- What proportion of their time does this constitute? (expressed as an FTE figure if possible)
 - 1.6 FTE: Student Volunteers
 - 0.5 FTE: PGR Student
 - 0.1 FTE: Head of Student Development

Evaluation and Impact

- Evaluation of effectiveness of award:

- The program is reviewed annually by the institute of leadership and management in order to retain its endorsement
- Evaluation data for PSC workshops is reviewed
- Every students who completes the award submits an essay on the impact the PSC has had on them, which allows for rich evaluation of the effectiveness of the award
- A supplementary online survey sent out at the end of the program to those who have completed it, however there is a low response rate for this
- Further evaluation of the impact of the PSC on students is planned for summer 2018

Key Successes and Challenges

- What has worked well for your Award?
 - Structure of program
 - Multiple delivery methods: lectures, online workshops, practical skills sessions
 - Incentivised attendance via provision of passport and collection of attendance stamps
 - Varied menu of topics: 11 key skills and approx. 100 workshops per year
 - 3-part structure: training needs analysis, selection of relevant workshops, post-completion reflection
 - Support for the program
 - Creation of the student volunteer operating team
 - Shared ownership of programme across different professional services units (e.g. Student Services, HR, Careers Centre, IT Services all contribute workshops)
 - Program spans both university and local community (high school outreach program)
 - Administration of Program
 - Deliberately light touch administration: eg. no formal registration
 - Program information is all self-explanatory within the passport
 - All-student programme which creates ease of administration
- What have been the main challenges in developing/delivering your Award?
 - Effective publicity and marketing of the program
 - Ensuring the program is seen as co-curricular and also related to academic skill development
 - Encouraging/ensuring students apply the skills students have learned
 - Keeping accurate records of demographics and collecting evidence related to the impact of the program
- What advice would you give to others setting up an Award?
 - Keep the program as simple as possible in terms of the requirements, instructions and administration
 - Include students in the running of the programme: They benefit from the experience of being part of the Operating Team
 - Gathering feedback from employers about the usefulness of the program
 - Trying to correctly predict supply and demand

Future Developments

- What are the key developments planned for your Award for the next three years? (for example – developing more online learning materials; increasing student numbers)
 - Increasing participant numbers→ target = 30% of senior honours students engaged
 - Review the content of the program to establish if we have the right workshops
 - Project to establish impact of the PSC
 - Provide more bespoke PSC workshops for student societies and clubs
 - Embed some PSC workshops in the academic curriculum
 - Follow-on development for students who have completed the programme

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