

AGCAS Skills Award Case Studies

The headings and questions below are intended as a guide for information you may wish to include in your case study, which should be 1-2 sides of A4 in length. Please feel free to omit questions or sections if they are not relevant to you, and to add additional information where you think this would be helpful.

The intended audience for your case study is AGCAS members who may be looking to set up their own Award scheme, or to develop their existing provision.

Background

The Sunderland Professional Award (SuPA) was launched in the 2012/13 academic year. This coincided with the launch of Sunderland Futures, the University of Sunderland's enhanced, institution wide, employability offer, aimed at improving graduate outcomes.

Structure

The award relaunched this year with three tiers; Bronze, Silver and Gold.

To achieve Bronze;

- Participate in at least one academic, work experience or community activity
- Participate in a Sunderland Futures event or workshop
- Complete a Skills Audit or our six graduate skills
- Attend a Skills Audit review meeting
- Write a 400 word reflective statement

To achieve Silver;

- Actively participate in five academic, work experience or community activities
- Complete two or the skills graduate skills questions
- Write a 500 reflective statement

To achieve Gold;

- Actively participate in nine academic, work experience or community activities
- Complete four or the skills graduate skills questions
- Write a 600 reflective statement

Recognition

Students who are successful in achieving the award receive a certificate and a digital badge for their online profiles. Alongside this they are invited to a celebration event hosted by the Vice Chancellor and attended by a range of employers who support the award. Their involvement in the award will also be added to their HEAR.

Size/Engagement

The award is open to all on campus students and we have between 100 and 150 registering for the award each year.

At present we don't have figures on application completion as we are in year one of a new, three tiered award. Schools with the lowest levels of engagement tend to be within the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries with the highest being from Business, Law and Tourism. We previously focussed on final year students however our new format allows us to encourage participation from stage one.

Platform/ IT system

We don't currently use any platform for the award however we are in the process of migrating the admin function to Target.

Resourcing

We have one Project Administrator who splits time between the award and our Mentoring provision, 0.5 FTE.

Evaluation and Impact

We conduct a range of evaluations depending on the level of engagement in the award. We gather feedback from students, academics and employers and hold an evaluation meeting so that we can continue to improve the offer.

Key Successes and Challenges

The three tiered approach works well. It has opened up the award to more students at an earlier stage. This is allowing students to map activity and develop their graduate skills and take a journey through the award. Student engagement is an ongoing challenge that we hope to overcome by utilising a more bespoke approach to converting registrations into applicants.

I would advise anyone who is thinking about setting up an award to keep it simple and seek buy in from academics early in the process. Also ensure you are developing skills that employers are looking for in their graduate hires.

Future Developments

We hope to see student participation rise via the three tiered approach. To aid this we are working with key programme areas to embed the award within employability modules.

Email contact

Joanna.makepeace@sunderland.ac.uk

Website

<https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/futures/students/skills/supa/>