



Trinity Employability Award AGCAS Case Study

Background

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, is committed to preparing its students for the ever-changing challenges of the 21st century workplace. The Trinity Employability Award, run in partnership with key employers, was established in 2016 to give students learning experiences that contribute to the development of the Trinity Graduate Attributes and, in turn, their employability skills.

The Trinity Employability Award runs from September to March annually and combines industry-led training in highly transferrable soft and technical skills with a university-led workshop to help students reflect on and articulate their learning to employers. The skills learned through these activities improve a student's personal and professional development and their chance of success in the next steps in their career.

The Award has been run in partnership with Intel Ireland for the past three years with undergraduate and postgraduate students from relevant Schools including some from our Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. This Award was supplemented in 2018/19 with a "First Steps" early engagement option for 1st year Engineering students.

Feedback from students involved in the Award to date includes:

- Improved insight into how industry works and what employers are looking for
- Raised awareness of the employer as a potential graduate employment destination
- 93% of participants said they believe they are more employable as a result of taking part in the Award
- 91% of participants would recommend taking part in the Award
- Improvements in interview skills

A new Professional Services Pathway Employability Award was launched in 2018/19. This is run in partnership with several professional services companies and is open to students across disciplines.



Sample Award Structure (Professional Services Pathway)

Level of Award Progression		Activities		Student Outcome
Level 1	Participate	Extracurricular hours	30	Develop your skills, knowledge of employers and overall employability. Invited to ceremony, receive certificate of participation
		Workshops	2 Professional Services Employer Workshops	
			1 Careers Workshop	

Complete and Compete				
Level of Award Progression		Activities		Student Outcome
Level 2	Complete – Eligible for Professional Services Pathway Award	Assessment	CV Review + one assessment from range of options. Assessed by Trinity Career Consultants	Attend Celebratory Event. Employability Award certificate for all who Complete and Compete. Employer prize giving.
Level 3	Compete - Professional Services Pathway Plus Award	Prize	Option to compete for one or more pathway employer prizes. Administered, assessed and awarded by employer	

Recognition

Students have the option of progressing from Level 1 to Levels 2 and/or 3 of the Award using an opt-in model reflecting their submitted assessments, time commitment, and extra-curricular activity. All students are recognised at an Awards ceremony attended by key Trinity staff and partner employers and receive a certificate awarding their level of completion.



Size/Engagement

Eligibility varies for each Award pathway, with the core demographic being 3rd year students from programmes/disciplines relevant to the partner employer. Student numbers vary depending on the intended cohort, with approx. 200 students involved annually to date.

Resourcing

The Trinity Employability Awards are supported overall by a Student Employability Officer (as part of their role) who is responsible for logistics and implementation. The relevant Careers Consultant is responsible for employer liaison and the development of learning outcomes and assessments for Awards in their specialist area.

The ongoing development and rollout of the Award to additional sectors is supported at a department level by the Director of Careers and at an institutional level by Deans of Faculty, Directors of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning and other senior staff.

Evaluation/Impact

The progress of each Award pathway is measured on an ongoing basis and at the end of each cohort using feedback surveys. As a result of this feedback the content of Award workshops and assessment methods have evolved year on year.

Some feedback we've received on the Trinity Employability Award include:

"I never thought of my degree as anything but the next step after completing my leaving cert - just something you were supposed to do. I see it now for what it really is. It is a tool that I will use, not only in broadening my knowledge in the area of engineering, but also in learning invaluable skills about team work, communication, organisation and how to problem solve, all qualities encompassed by the Trinity attributes."

Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Student

"The whole experience of this award not only taught me new skills but showed which skills I already possess that are being sought after by employers, skills that I didn't know were coveted. The most beneficial aspect of this award, I feel, was the confidence that I got out of it. Confidence that I feel is just as much of a skill as those we acquired in the workshops"

Physics Student



Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
Trinity College Dublin

Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

“We are dedicated to preparing students for the ever-changing challenges of the 21st century workforce and the Trinity Employability Award has set out to do this. Through a combination of training and experience the Award helps students to build on their skills and knowledge to make them ready for the workplace after graduation, as well as helping them to better articulate their skills and personal attributes to employers.”

Patrick Prendergast, Provost and President, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

“It is bright, creative and curious minds that will be responsible for the innovations of tomorrow and the technologies and discoveries that we have yet to imagine. We are delighted to partner with Trinity College on programmes that will enable students to take their place as Ireland’s next innovators, entrepreneurs and technologists...the Trinity Employability Award, are fantastic first steps on this journey.”

Eamonn Sinnott, Intel Ireland General Manager

An tSeirbhís Ghairmthreorach

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Key Successes and Challenges

Key factors in the success of the Award have included:

- Integrating the administration of the Award with our online platform MyCareer (TargetConnect)
- Buy-in from academic staff and promotion within Schools
- Standardising the core model of the Award across all pathways, allowing for fine-tuning and customisation while minimising design overhead

Challenges have included:

- The need to evolve the Award to meet the needs of new participating sectors
- Optimising the scalability of the Award in terms of staff resources
- Maximising student engagement in the Award and encouraging completion of all levels
- Ensuring all aspects of the Award are impactful for the student and are complementary to the academic curriculum
- Developing and balancing relationships with various employers

Future Developments

- Roll-out of the Award to additional industry sectors
- Maintaining momentum and increasing student engagement across all Schools within Trinity

Email

For more information you can contact the Trinity Careers Service:

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Website

<https://www.tcd.ie/Careers/students/employability/>