

AGCAS Skills Award Case Studies:

UEA AWARD

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

Background

- When was your Award established?

Our first pilot skills award ran in 2015. Our three level Award was created in 2016.

- What were the drivers for its launch?
 - to improve the opportunity for students to develop and articulate important attributes that will be of use to them in securing graduate opportunities, in the workplace and in their broader experiences in society.
 - to contribute to increasing the proportion of graduates in graduate level activity six months after leaving UEA.

Structure

- What do students have to do to gain your Award, and when? (for example – complete two online learning units in terms 1 and 2, submit a reflective piece for assessment in term 3)

Three Award levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Students submit throughout the year. There are three deadlines: February, May and September where students then get their certificates during that print run. The Award is always open for submissions.

The requirements of the Award are as below:

Bronze:

10 hours of academic activities;
30 hours of work-related activities over 2 different experiences;
2 career management activities;
10 hours of campus and personal activities;
A CV which is reviewed by careers advisers.

Silver (including Bronze requirements):

20 hours of academic activities;
50 hours of work-related activities over 2 different experiences;
5 career management activities;
20 hours of campus and personal activities and 20 additional hours in any category.
A written CV and video CV which is reviewed by employers which align with their career aspirations.

Gold (including Bronze and Silver requirements):

30 hours of academic activities;
75 hours of work-related activities over 3 different experiences;
7 career management activities;
30 hours of campus and personal activities and 45 additional hours in any category.

A panel interview comprising employers, career advisers and senior academic staff where they have five minutes to present without notes and then are asked questions and receive constructive feedback. They also provide a written CV for review. Their Silver video CV feedback will have enabled them to think about their approach to the panel and revise their CV if needed.

Recognition

- How are students who successfully complete your Award recognised? (for example – on their HEAR, at an awards ceremony, through professional body affiliation)

Separate certificates for Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. Students finishing for the February deadline receive their certificates at the Award ceremony, presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Some Schools of study send out letters from their Head of School to congratulate students. In addition, some Schools celebrate students' successes on their social media (with the students' permission). Issued with badges for LinkedIn profiles by the Award Team.

Size/Engagement

- Which students are eligible to take your Award? (if any restrictions on this – for example stages or subjects of study)
Open to all undergrad and postgrad taught students. We are having a pilot study with postgrad research students.
- How many students start your Award each year?
In 2017 there were 565 new starters, who joined continuing students from 2015-16 to make 1030 students in total.
- How many students complete your Award each year?
190 discrete students received an Award certificate in 2017.
- How does this compare to overall student numbers at your institution?
Student population: 15434 in 2016. Registrants = 7% of cohort.
- Demographic information relating to the above – for example breakdown by stage or subject of study (if information available)
 - Second years are dominant on our Award, followed by 3rd and then 1st years. We have nearly 80 PGT students.

Resourcing

- Who works on your Award, including their roles (administrative, delivery, etc.)?
 - Awards Officer, 1 FTE. Responsible for managing all operational aspects of the UEA Award, including ongoing administration, promotion and development. Involves setting and achieving strategic development of the Award. Coordinating and delivering marketing and recruitment campaigns and initiatives to increase student registration, submission and completion rates. Establishing and developing relationships with graduate employers with view to seeking their involvement in and endorsement of Award activities. Line management of UEA Award Team including Administrative Assistant(s) and student Award Ambassadors, student interns and student Award Champions.

- Awards Assistant, 1 FTE. Responsible for supporting the successful establishment and ongoing development and delivery of the UEA Award. Involves supporting the Awards Officer by dealing with student enquiries, efficiently processing student activity submissions and liaising with other stakeholders internally and externally to ensure the smooth running of the UEA Award.
- 6 Award Ambassadors doing *ad hoc* hours providing outreach, admin support, student support and promotion.

Evaluation and Impact

- How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your Award? (for example – online survey at the end of the year)

Two surveys once a year – one with students who have made progress on the Award and one with those who haven't. The production of qualitative testimonials through video interviews.

- Do you/have you done anything to evaluate the longer-term impact of your Award (for example by contacting students at a later stage of study, looking at DLHE outcomes, etc.)

We've completed video testimonials/ case studies with Award alumni. There are plans to look at DLHE outcomes this year and also the nature of the UEA Award cohort through registration data.

- Do you/have you involved others in evaluation of your Award and its impact (for example employers, academic staff)

The pilot Award was evaluated by employers in terms of looking at its desired attributes and its target hours and activities. Other staff with reporting/ data responsibilities will be involved in assessing DLHE outcomes and cohort information from registration data. Our Award steering group containing academics and employers monitors the evaluation of the Award and its impact.

Key Successes and Challenges

- What has worked well for your Award? (for example moving to online delivery; involving academic staff in promotion and delivery of the Award)
 - Multi-channel approach to promotion using the outlet of internal partners to raise awareness of the Award (Peer Assisted Learning Scheme, UEA student guides and ambassadors, study abroad, SU etc).
 - Video testimonials across all faculties on the Award website.
 - Gamification of the Award through badges to encourage progress and give a sense of achievement.
 - Motivational marketing approaches.
 - Tracking progress through live reporting (Tableau platform) to enable communication and incentivisation.
 - Award Ambassadors providing outreach support and promotion in Schools.
 - Award ceremony has been well received by students, academics and employers.

- Micro incentives to encourage progress (chocolate, drinks vouchers).
 - Facebook group to support students and provide opportunities.
 - Growing sense of an online and offline Award community through the interrelationship between face-to-face and online interactions.
 - The ability to leverage other Careers Service initiatives and raise awareness for them through the Award.
 - Iterative design changes to the Award through student feedback (surveys, focus groups).
 - Forms automatically creating e-mails to use for validation.
- What have been the main challenges in developing/delivering your Award? (for example – administration/keeping track of students; gaining buy-in from academic colleagues)
 - Scaling up (submission and e-mail numbers).
 - Gaining traction in particular Schools of study.
 - Communicating to students (when many don't read university e-mails regularly).
 - Developing reporting on progress.
 - Peak submission times.
 - System limitations on how forms look and how they operate.
 - Award ceremony organisation.
 - What advice would you give to others setting up an Award?
 - Use an IT system to support your Award e.g. CareerHub, Abintegro. Using Excel documents to track your students won't allow you to scale or easily communicate.
 - Automate as much as possible.
 - Develop a strong brand for your Award early on.
 - Have staff purely responsible for the Award.
 - Piggy back on other established university schemes to recruit your students.
 - Have a strong vision and ethos for your Award.

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)
 - Online training (this year).
 - Developing more Award Champions (Award volunteers) to enable better outreach into Schools.
 - Further sector coverage of employers offering feedback at Silver and Gold levels of the Award.
 - Connecting the Award to UEA's roll out of their placement plan as a framework.
 - Further increasing numbers to yield even bigger numbers receiving certificates and going through the Award process to further improve DLHE outcomes.

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