# The Westminster Employability Award

## Background

The Westminster Employability Award was launched in October 2018, following a 6-month trial with 2nd year UG students

The Award was launched to support the student employability journey at the University of Westminster and offer a structured approach for students to take ownership of their career development

## Structure

The Award follows the DOTS careers model (self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision-making and transition) and consists of a selection of pre-mapped core and optional activities. Students are required to complete all core activities and a number of optional activities which give them points. Core activities include skills audit, 1-2-1 appointment, attend 5 events, CV and cover letter exercise and reflection at every stage. Optional activities include placement, part-time work, mentoring, work shadowing, SU and a variety of online exercises. Students collect points through optional activities to qualify for the Bronze, Silver or Gold Employability Award. To achieve this, they need 50 points for Bronze, 100 points for Silver or 150 points for Gold.

The Award is open to all students. Students have until 1st May of their graduating year to complete the Award and be recognised at the VC's Employability Awards Celebration.

## Recognition

Students are recognised at an awards ceremony, with a certificate and online badges (currently in progress).

## Size/Engagement

All fully enrolled University of Westminster students studying towards an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. So far, 1000 students have registered for the Award and we are hoping to achieve 15-20% completion rates every year.

## Platform/ IT system and Reporting

The Award is managed through a CareerHub workflow. And we are using CareerHub and Excel to run reports and present data.

Reports are based on the number of sign ups, number of points gained to date, number of completed Awards, overall engagement with the Award. We also look at information by Colleges and student demographics and compare engagement accordingly.

## Resourcing

The Award is managed and supported by 0.3 FTE Student Engagement and Projects Officer and 0.5 FTE Employability Projects Assistant.

**Evaluation and Impact**

In the first stage, students are asked to complete a skills audit and rate their skills. The final part of completing the Award is completing the final evaluation where students are asked to rate their skills again and how they have improved these as a result of the Award.

**Key Successes and Challenges**

We have backdated activities to September 2016, so students who have previously engaged in different schemes can be recognised. The Award offers a lot of flexibility as students can start at any point. They can choose from a menu of options which works best for them at that particular point of time. As students have (potentially) 3 years to complete the Award, they can easily manage with their studies and extra curricular activities.

Challenges have included getting buy-in from academics (still working on this). Also getting different department to send us the right data in the right format, so students can get points for activities they have done across the University.

**What advice would you give to others setting up an Award?**

Map out all activities you would like to include in the Award before setting up the process. It was crucial to understand all activities which will be part of the Award (in phase 1, phase 2 etc.) to allow me to build a functional and scalable workflow.

**Future Developments**

- Involving other teams/ department e.g. Student Ambassadors, SU Reps, Digital skills etc.
- Establishing employer connections and seek sponsorship opportunities
- Increasing the number of students engaging with the Award

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