

## AGCAS Skills Award Case Studies

### THE BATH AWARD

#### Background

- The Bath Award was first established in the 2008-9 academic year.
- The Award was launched as a pilot within the Students' Union at the University of Bath as an accreditation scheme to recognise the achievements and accredit the skills of those students engaged in all types of extra-curricular activities.
- The initial aim of The Bath Award was to enable students to articulate and critically reflect on their skills development in preparation for employment.
- A major review of The Bath Award took place in the 2017-18 academic year (the Award's 10<sup>th</sup> Year) which led to a number of revisions and improvements to the scheme and process.
- In 2018-19, The Bath Award aims to 'enhance student employability, increase self-awareness of skills and enable students to articulate these effectively to future employers'.

#### Structure

To achieve The Bath Award, students need to have completed the following:

- Minimum of 100 hours engaged in a variety of extra-curricular activities
- Minimum of four skills development sessions
- An Assessment Form containing evidence of the following:
  - Demonstration of the required criteria in **six** of the following skills (4 Core, 2 Options):  
*CORE: Teamwork, Written Communication, Verbal Communication, Problem-solving*  
*OPTIONS: Leadership, Commercial Awareness, Digital Practice, Sport, Enterprise, Cultural Awareness*
  - Consideration of and reflection on future career plans
  - CV, Cover Letter and job description
- Students can submit for The Bath Award either in Semester 1 (December) or Semester 2 (March) in any year of their study. Taught Postgraduate students registered at the University for one academic year only are eligible for an extension until August to allow more time for these students to develop their skills and build up to the 100 hour requirement.
- Any student who has not reached the required standard in order to achieve the full Bath Award may achieve one of the following certificates: Entry Level (2 core skills achieved) or Intermediate (4 skills achieved).

#### Recognition

- Students who successfully complete and pass The Bath Award will receive The Bath Award Unit on their **degree transcript** and be invited to receive a certificate at a special Presentation Ceremony at the end of the academic year.
- The Ceremony celebrates the achievement of those students who have achieved the Award and is attended by the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Bath Award students past and present, Bath Award assessors, Students' Union and University staff.

#### Size/Engagement

- The Bath Award is open to both undergraduates and postgraduates and enrolment is free.

- We have a database of students who have 'registered interest' in The Bath Award which is carried over from year to year as a rolling programme. The database currently contains 1000+ students.
- Approximately 110 students complete The Bath Award each year.
- In 2018-19, the University of Bath had a population of 18,000 students.
- The University includes the Faculties of Science, Engineering & Design, Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Management. The Bath Award is very close, if not higher, than the University demographics in a number of areas. In particular, the Award attracts a high level of international and BME students

### **Platform/ IT system**

- The Bath Award has always been delivered via Moodle, the University's chosen Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The Award can be accessed and submitted entirely online which ensures distance learning and placement students can submit for the Award whilst away from the University.

### **Resourcing**

- The Bath Award Manager is 0.6FTE and the Bath Award Administrator is 0.4FTE term-time only. Bath Award staff rely on a register of Bath Award Assessors made up of academic and non-academic staff from across the institution (the register currently totals 55) who are volunteers recruited and trained to carry out detailed and rigorous assessment. The Bath Award is a cross-University collaboration and is managed by the Students' Union on behalf of the University, run most closely with the Careers Service.

### **Evaluation and Impact**

- An annual review of The Bath Award takes place each summer whereby any challenges or issues are evaluated in order to increase efficiency and streamline the process by removing unnecessary work or any perceived barriers for students.
- A major review in 2017-18 involved a number of student focus groups – feedback from these groups fed directly in to the changes that were implemented for the 2018-19 academic year.
- Previous Bath Award recipients are invited to become involved with the Award in a number of ways such as by providing case studies, video clips, speaking at information events or providing reflections on where the Award has taken them in their studies and further career. Many of these students articulate how the Award has helped with their personal development, self-awareness, confidence and overall employability.

### **Key Successes and Challenges**

- The recent major review highlighted many areas for improvement and the new, simpler application process has significantly reduced the admin and student queries for Bath Award staff and assessors.
- The main challenges of The Bath Award have been marketing and promotion. Many students are unaware of The Bath Award or don't hear about it until it is too late. As the Award is run jointly between the SU and the University, neither channel fully commit to marketing the Award.
- The recent review highlighted some actions that should offset these challenges, such as working more closely with placements teams who work directly with students who will have already met many of the Bath Award requirements.
- Other ongoing challenges which are frequently reviewed are assessor consistency, the time it takes to moderate marking and the balance between the quantity and quality of submissions.

- **Advice to others:** Keep things clear and simple – many students will be overwhelmed by any ‘extra work’ on top of their busy academic schedules. Work collaboratively across your institution, as a joint effort will be more effective and also very comforting when things get tough!

### **Future Developments**

- We are always under pressure to increase numbers of students completing The Bath Award. Therefore further work is being done to simplify the application process and make things clearer and more logical for students. This will be done a number of ways such as piloting the running of the scheme on the CareerHub platform and launching a University-wide Skills Hub to give students a ‘one-stop-shop’ for accessing skills-related events to develop and recognise their own transferable skills.

**Email contact:** [sc397@bath.ac.uk](mailto:sc397@bath.ac.uk) or [thebathaward@bath.ac.uk](mailto:thebathaward@bath.ac.uk)

**Name of main contact:** Samantha Chaffey, Bath Award Manager

**Website:** [thesubath.com/bathaward](https://thesubath.com/bathaward)