QAA

Recognising achievement beyond the curriculum

Survey of sector practice - summary report

December 2013

Strategic direction

Award design

Assessment and recognition

Practical arrangements

Quality assurance and evaluation

Contents

Executive summary

Between July and August 2013 the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) carried out a survey of sector practice in relation to recognising achievement beyond the curriculum through award schemes.[1] The survey sought to capture information about award schemes currently running and planned, and about schemes which have ceased to operate or where higher education providers do not offer award schemes.

The survey received 85 responses from 69 higher education providers across the UK higher education sector. 75% of respondents currently offer an award scheme, with a further 16% aiming to offer an award in the future.

Of currently operational awards, 84% have been in existence for five years or less.

All award schemes currently running are open to undergraduate students; nearly three-quarters are open to taught postgraduate students, and just over half to postgraduate research students. Almost one-third of awards are targeted at particular groups of students, such as those in student representative roles.

The number of students both participating in award schemes and completing an award is growing. The department of the higher education provider most commonly responsible for coordinating award schemes is the careers service, and nearly two-thirds of respondents with an active scheme reported that the staff resource allocated to running it was 1.0FTE or less. The students' union (or equivalent) has a role in coordinating half of the award schemes.

Award schemes are designed in a variety of ways and incorporate or recognise a wide range of activities. The most common activities were volunteering, student representation, community engagement and engagement in student groups and societies.

92% of respondents with active schemes reported that the award included a reflective element, such as a reflective essay or statement, portfolio or log. Almost all awards include some form of assessment with a range of methods used, alone or in combination, to assess student learning through the award, including completion of application forms or production of a CV, a presentation or interview, or compilation of a portfolio. In two-thirds of awards, the reflective element was assessed, but in only 5% of cases was it the only means of assessment.

The most common way (42%) that achievement of the award is recognised is through the presentation of certificates at a special ceremony. Almost half of respondents reported that the award would be included on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR). Two-thirds of awards are overseen by a steering group and 57% are subject to quality assurance procedures, including the higher education provider's academic regulations or other internal processes, or external accreditation. Two-thirds of awards have been evaluated. The purpose of the evaluation included informing its future development, collecting feedback from students, staff and senior management, measuring whether it had achieved it aims, and finding out whether student behaviour had changed as a result of participation in the award.

---

[1] 'Award schemes' is used as a generic term in this document; individual higher education providers use a variety of terminology to refer to these schemes, including extra-curricular awards, co-curricular awards, employability awards, graduate awards or skills awards.

Recognising achievement beyond the curriculum: a toolkit for enhancing strategy and practice

QAA has worked with the sector to produce a toolkit, which higher education providers can use to ensure that the award schemes are effective in achieving their purpose. The findings of this survey have been used to develop this guidance, which is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Recognising-achievement-beyond-the-curriculum-toolkit-13.aspx.
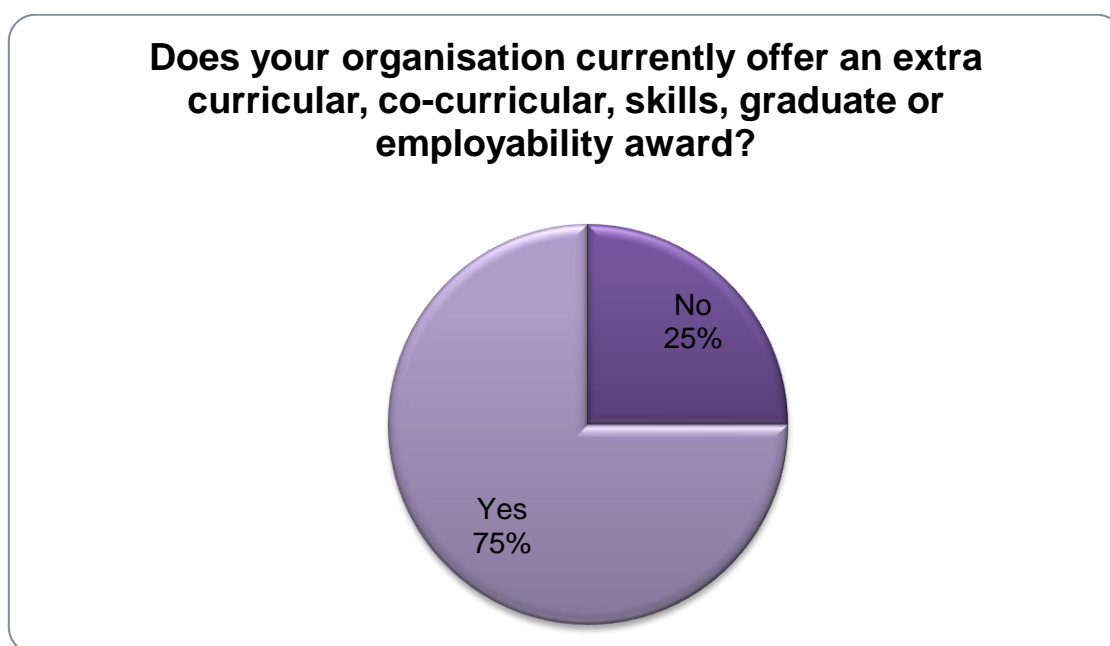
Findings

Response rate

We received 85 responses from 69 higher education providers across the UK.

For the purposes of this report we will refer to the data by response rather than by higher education provider, as in some cases more than one scheme is in operation at the same organisation. We also encouraged higher education providers to submit more than one response in order to capture the full range of views about award schemes.

Percentages are rounded up to the nearest whole number. Free text responses have been edited for clarity and to remove elements which might identify the higher education provider, and so should not be seen as verbatim quotes.

Numbers and status of award schemes

We were interested in capturing information on the current status of award schemes, whether they were operational or not. There were 85 responses to this question.

Does your organisation currently offer an extra curricular, co-curricular, skills, graduate or employability award?

No
25%

Yes
75%

Of those who answered 'no', four respondents had offered an award in the past, but no longer did so. The reasons for stopping offering an award included:
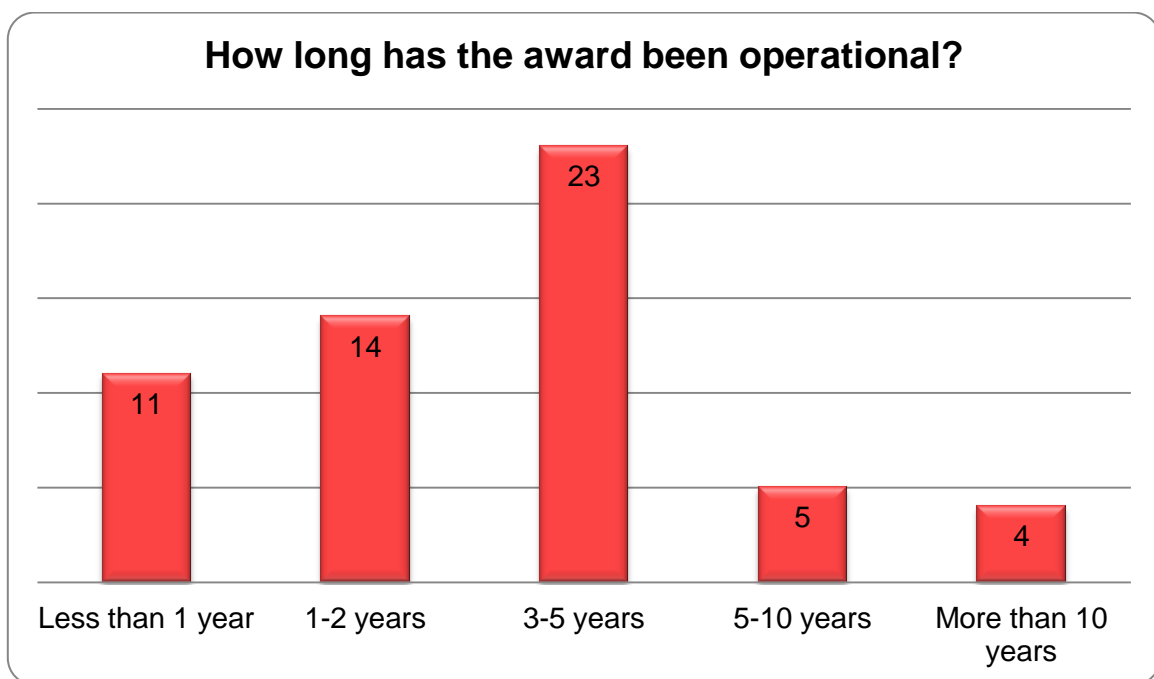
- lack of student demand
- [difficulty of] fitting it in to an already full programme
- lack of staff capacity
- lack of funding
- those students who completed the schemes already had the skills and so it was deemed unnecessary
- due to scheme being non-mandatory, students did not see the value.

17 respondents had never offered an award, but all but two respondents hoped to offer an award in future, with two-thirds aiming to make the award available within two years.

Of the respondents who do not currently offer an award and have no plans to do so, the reasons given included:

- other priorities have moved up the agenda
- no one has specific responsibility for extra-curricular awards
- students' union did not take ownership as hoped
- lack of resources despite the desire to run a scheme
- actively promote a national (Scottish) volunteering scheme that holds weight with employers that could not be matched
- waiting to see if sufficiently valued by employers
- not necessarily relevant to the type of students within the organisation who are primarily employed already.

Where an award was in place we were interested to see how long the awards had been running. The results below show a mixed response, although, of the 57 respondents who answered this question, 84% reported that the scheme had only been operational for five years or less.

How long has the award been operational?

Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years
11	14	23	5	4

56% of respondents stated they had significantly redesigned their award scheme in the last two years.

Student eligibility for award schemes

According to the answers to this survey, the chart below indicates the groups of students eligible to participate in awards.

Who is the award open to?

- Undergraduates

- Undergraduates, taught postgraduates

- Undergraduates, taught postgraduates, research postgraduates

- Undergraduates, taught postgraduates, research postgraduates, students at partner colleges

- Undergraduates, taught postgraduates, research postgraduates, students at partner colleges, students studying overseas (at a partner or overseas campus)

- Undergraduates, taught postgraduates, research postgraduates, students studying overseas (at a partner or overseas campus)

- Undergraduates, taught postgraduates, research postgraduates, students studying overseas (at a partner or overseas campus), and some visiting students

- Undergraduates, taught postgraduates, students at partner colleges, students studying overseas (at a partner or overseas campus)

- Part-time

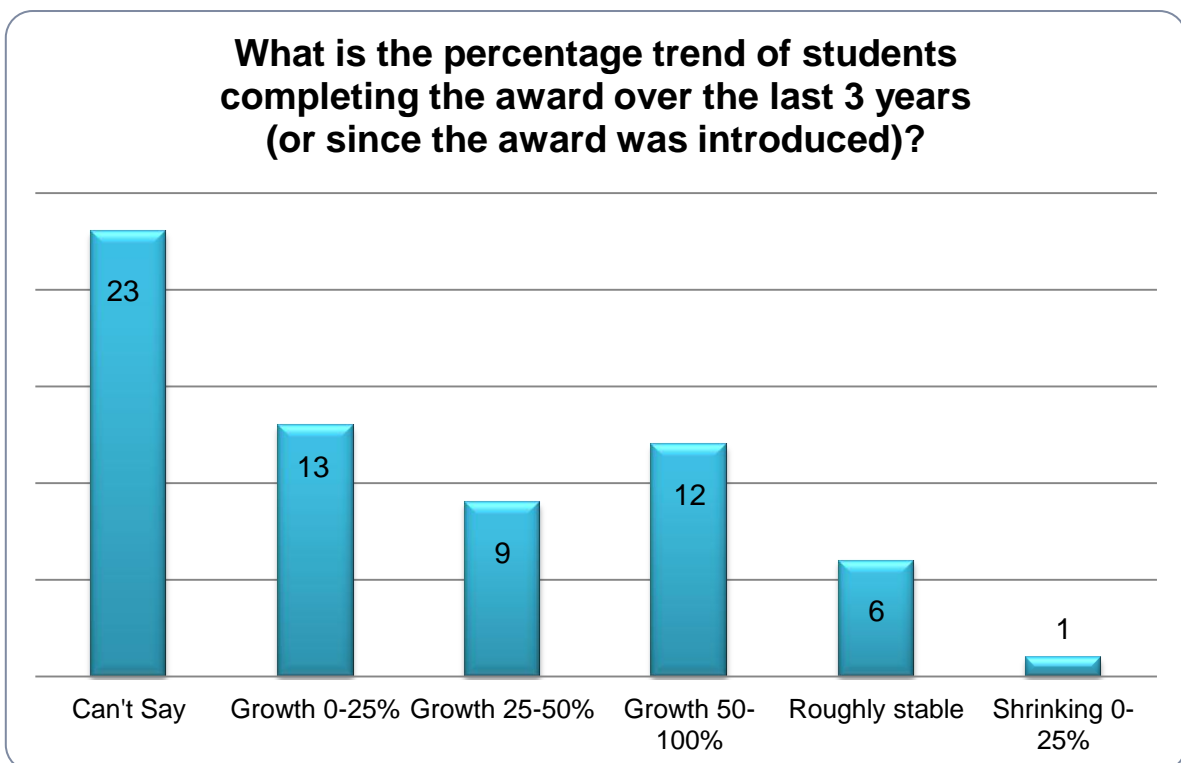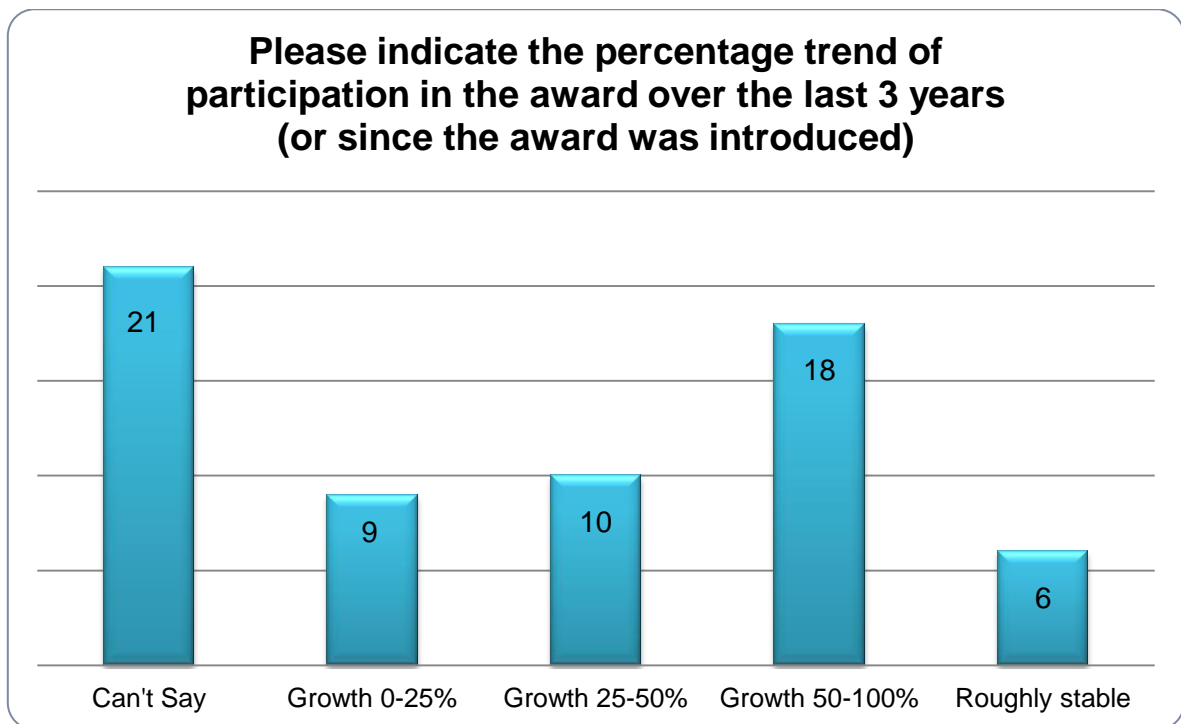26%

20%

29%

10%

7%

3%

2%

2%

1%

The survey asked respondents to indicate if they aimed their award at a particular group of students. 46 of the 68 respondents who answered this question said 'no'. Other responses are listed below, and highlight that schemes may be targeted at undergraduate students, students involved in particular activities (for example, the students' union) or students in specific subject areas:

- believed to be of main benefit to general modular scheme undergraduate students but still open to all students
- undergraduates
- undergraduate students
- undergraduates, but postgraduates can also apply
- full-time undergraduates
- largely undergraduates, but not exclusively
- primarily undergraduate students
- due to the nature of our institution the award is going to be promoted to all our students which is further education to postgraduate students
- 3rd year students, although all are welcome
- the Undergraduate Award is aimed at final-year undergraduates. The PGT Award is aimed at anyone on a taught master's programme
- the award is set up in such a way that it is generic but also targetable eg to student representatives, peer-assisted learning leaders etc
- student union officers
- in the first phase, the award is aimed at those working in unpaid roles in the students' union - executive committee, presidents of societies etc. And those in ambassadorial roles on behalf of the institution
- open to all students but initially targeted at student group leaders
- high-fliers
- in our pilot we used the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey to give us insight into courses showing low graduate employability
- in the pilot phase, at non-vocational course students. Eventually to everyone
- students on non-vocational degrees
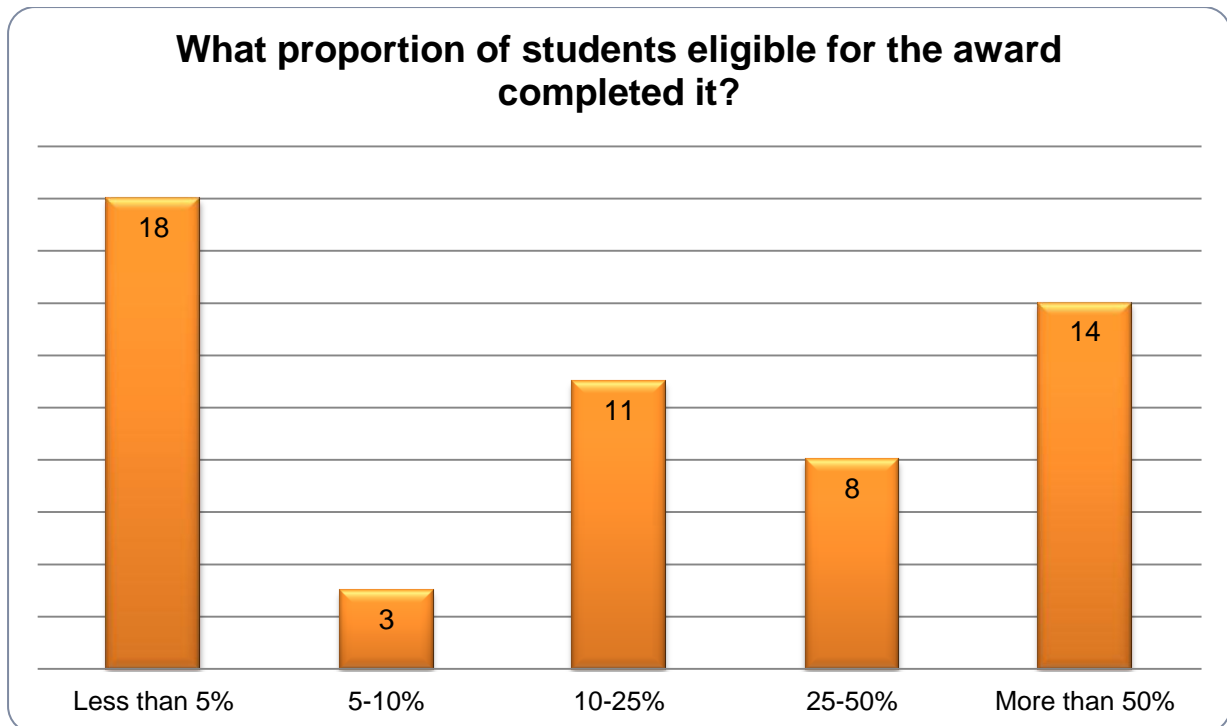- law and business
- psychology students.

Respondents were asked to report if there was a cap on numbers for their award scheme. Of 68 respondents, 49 answered no, 17 answered yes; of these, caps ranged from 30 to 100 participants.

Participation and completion trends

Answers from 64 respondents are summarised in the following graphs.

Please indicate the percentage trend of participation in the award over the last 3 years (or since the award was introduced)

Can't Say	Growth 0-25%	Growth 25-50%	Growth 50-100%	Roughly stable
21	9	10	18	6

What is the percentage trend of students completing the award over the last 3 years (or since the award was introduced)?

Can't Say	Growth 0-25%	Growth 25-50%	Growth 50-100%	Roughly stable	Shrinking 0-25%
23	13	9	12	6	1

54 respondents answered the question about rates of completion of awards. It is worth noting that some awards may still be in the pilot phase or early stages of operation, so there may be no completion rates to report as yet.

What proportion of students eligible for the award completed it?

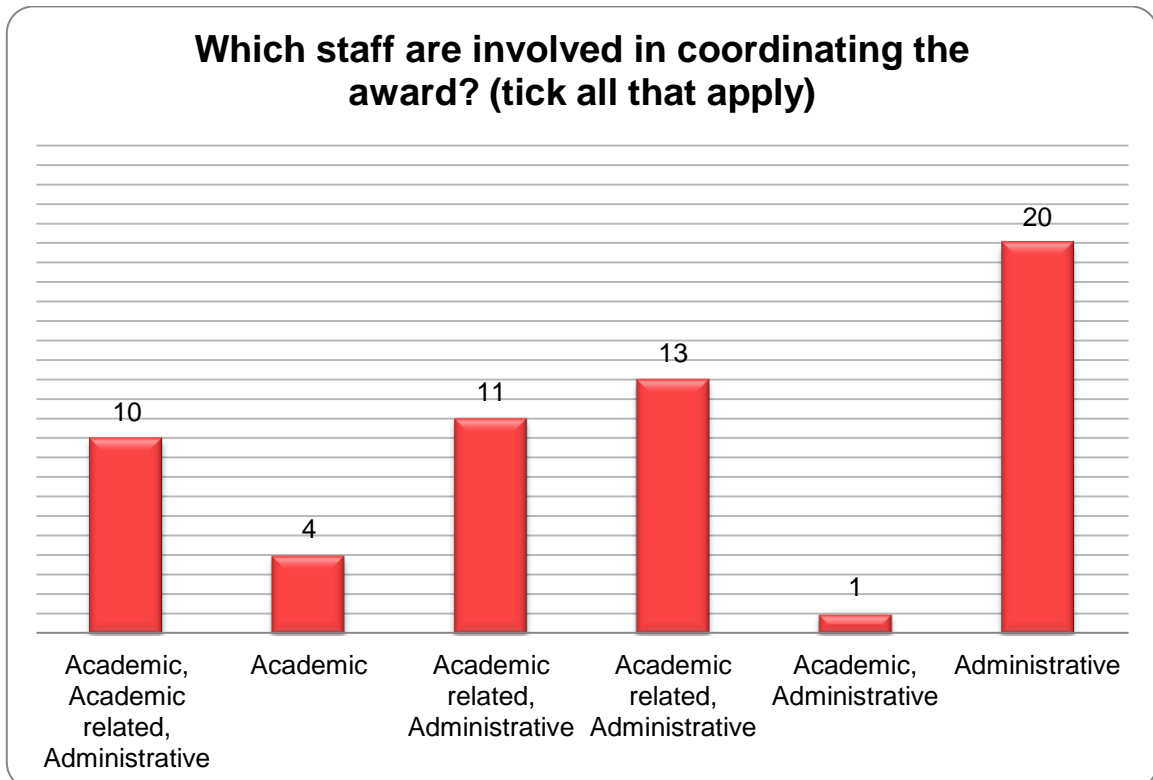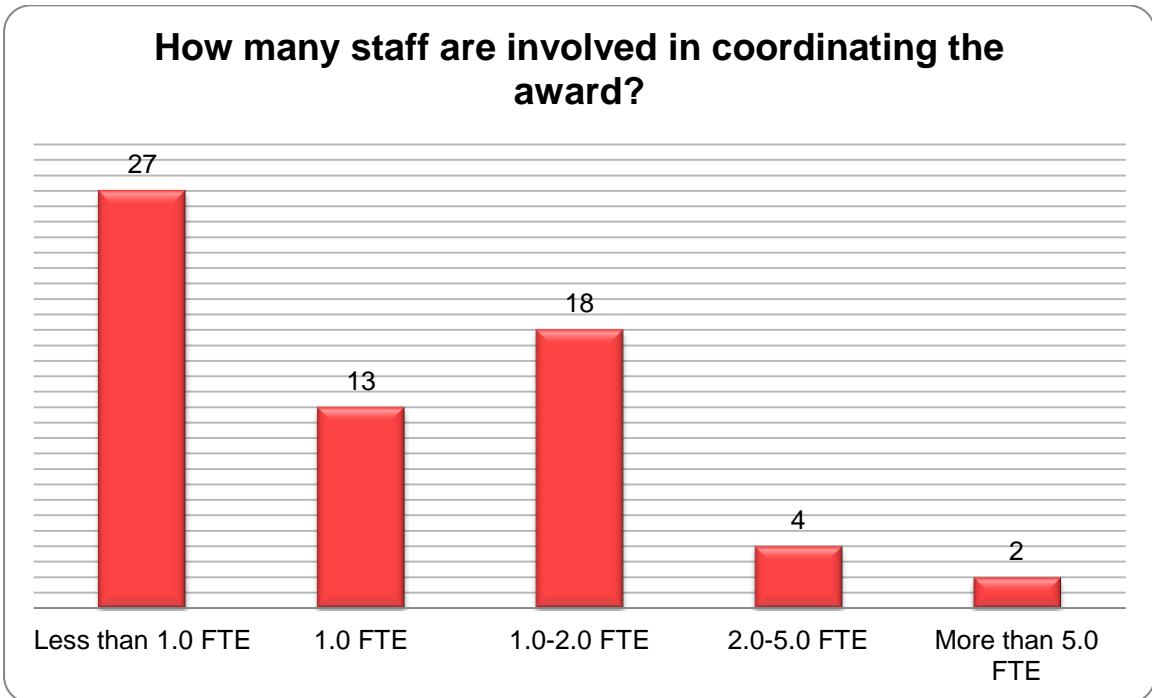| Category	Value
Less than 5%	18
5-10%	3
10-25%	11
25-50%	8
More than 50%	14

Staffing for awards and the role of the students' union

The survey asked respondents to indicate which unit within the higher education provider was responsible for coordinating the award. A variety of answers were given, including:

- careers service (61% of responses)
- students' union (11% of responses)
- learning and teaching unit (or equivalent) (8% of responses)
- academic department (3% of responses)
- other central services department (3% of responses)
- careers service and students' union (9% of responses)
- employability and graduate development unit
- employability consultancy
- employability department of the university
- centre for workplace learning
- placement and careers team
- careers and employability development team.

In a number of cases the coordinating unit works in association with one or more academic departments.

The survey also examining the number (64 respondents) and type (59 respondents) of staff involved in coordinating awards.

How many staff are involved in coordinating the award?

Less than 1.0 FTE	27
1.0 FTE	13
1.0-2.0 FTE	18
2.0-5.0 FTE	4
More than 5.0 FTE	2

Which staff are involved in coordinating the award? (tick all that apply)

Academic, Academic related, Administrative	10
Academic	4
Academic related, Administrative	11
Academic related, Administrative	13
Academic, Administrative	1
Administrative	20

The survey demonstrated that the role of the students' union in relation to awards is varied. As indicated previously, some students' unions are responsible for coordinating the organisational scheme, while others work in partnership with the higher education provider to deliver the award. Some students' unions run their own scheme alongside that offered by the provider. Students' unions may be involved in identifying activities which count towards the awards and in verifying student participation. In other cases, the role of the students' union is to promote the scheme to students. 67 respondents answered the question 'Does the students' union have involvement in coordinating the award?' with 52% answering 'no'. Of those who responded 'yes', comments on what this role was included:

- the students' union are currently involved in the design of the award and the intention is that they will be involved in the coordination and delivery of the award
- promotion and validation of activities and support with identifying appropriate activities and designating them
- encouraging students to participate; offering elements, for example volunteering, which count towards completion of the award
- providing information and validating volunteering opportunities that may count within the award
- member of the steering group, involved in contributing to the development of the initiative
- we are leading on trying to implement the award with support from the employability department of the university
- the students' union have run one certificate strand of the overall award … which is for all activity related to students' union. They have also been a core part of the development team and steering group
- joint management of the award with careers service
- working in partnership with careers and providing information for students to undertake the awards, also working with careers to agree the hours requirement for each level of award from bronze to platinum
- part of working group and responsible for validating elements of the award
- we have been administering the award on behalf of the students' union but it is envisaged that with support, they will begin to take a greater role in recruiting participants, promoting the award and, in time, in delivering some of the workshops and support
- the students' union sits on the steering and working group … and students' union roles such as course representatives and societies are included as point-bearing activities towards the award
- verifying activities, marketing to students, presence on the [award] board, supportive of clubs, societies that are potentially eligible for the [award]
- they are a partner and key stakeholder. They sit on the steering group that oversees the award and many activities run by them are included in the award
- it is a students' union based award. Any volunteering that is done within the students' union is eligible for the award, and the students' union staff approves the award
- co-delivery. Highest number of activities and training come from the students' union
- to provide some of the 110 activities that students can participate in. To represent [the students' union] on the award advisory board where assessments are ratified and nominees chosen for employer sponsored prizes
- the students' union give awards for student leadership roles that hinge on student representation and student voice in decision making at the institution
- we were a partner and helped to promote it to students and then involved in the award from start to finish including administration, training and marking submissions

- to promote co-curricular activities to students and to ensure students engaged in activities such as sports clubs and societies know that they can record and reflect on their experiences ... We record students co-curricular activity via the HEAR
- will run the awards night for students currently. With the creation of HEAR, we also upload all HEAR section 6.1 data (co-curriculum, extra-curricular activities) such as society committees, volunteer awards and members of [university] clubs
- they deliver elements of the programme; they help develop the award and sit on the strategic board; they are authorised signatories; much of the extra-curricular activities are undertaken in the students' union; they are very much a partner
- to provide opportunities for students to develop themselves personally and professionally in a fun, risk-free environment
- recording and reporting students' union activities for which students earn points towards their award; support with communications; strategic involvement, sitting on steering group; managing annual award ceremony
- the students' union ran our previous award
- students' union staff are members of the panels which view student presentations and also contributes to annual review of the award, suggesting amendments
- the students' union run one of the programmes, the students' union leadership award: this is for students who run a club or society, or are a course representative
- joint development roles, promotion and student support
- they are running it. It is initially for their volunteers but intention is to roll it out to more groups
- the students' union sits on the overall approval board and has also supported the assessment of the portfolios presented
- helping with design and scope; certifying degree of involvement in activities such as student representation; supporting programme with training activities; promoting award
- part of the development of the … award, involved in helping administer and organise, recruitment and promotion.

Award structures and activities

To gain a snapshot of the typical award structures currently in operation we asked respondents 'Which of the following descriptions most closely reflects the structure of your award?'

	Number of responses
The award requires completion of a certain number of elements, which are arranged or recognised by the organisation	4
The award recognises activity that a student completes outside their academic experience	28
The substance of the award is embedded within the curriculum. There is an additional summative task required to complete the award in addition to the academic programme requirements	2
A combination of these	30
None of the above	1
	65

We then asked respondents to indicate what types of activities are recognised within their award. The following chart is based on 68 responses.

Which of the following activities does the award include or recognise? (tick all that apply)
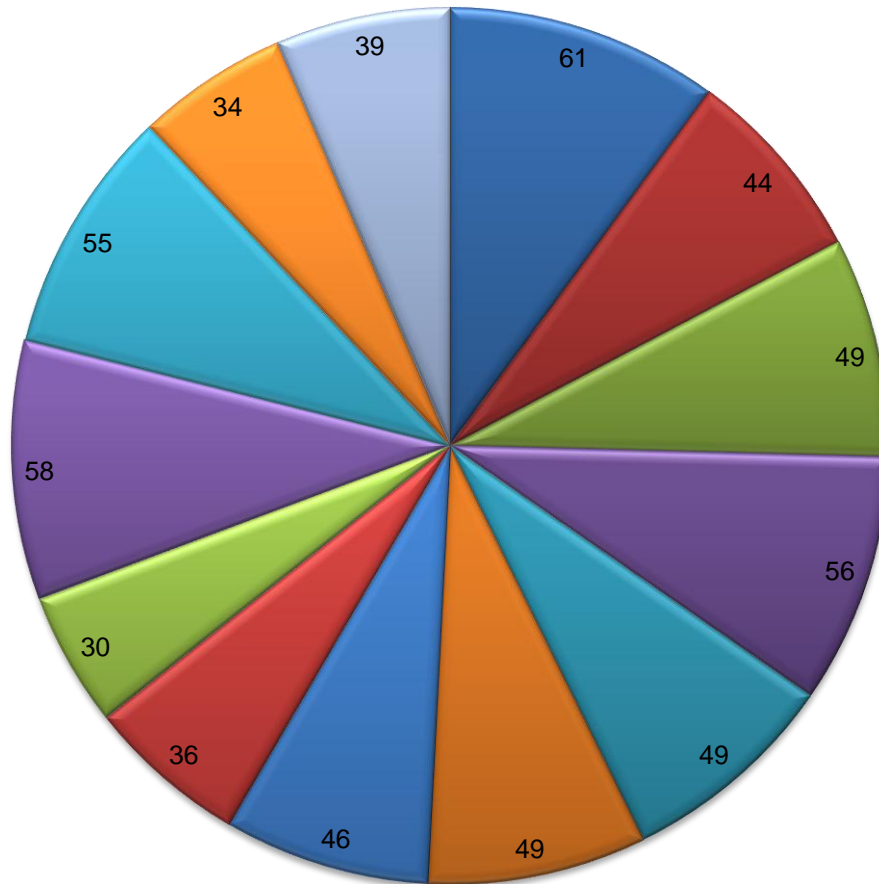
- Volunteering
- Placements/Internships
- Work experience
- Community engagement
- Enterprise
- Mentoring
- Career management activity
- Intercultural/International activity
- Languages
- Student representation
- Engagement in student groups and societies
- Music
- Sports

The survey asked if students are required to complete any reflective elements. Of 65 respondents, 92% stated that they did. The reflective elements included learning journals and development records, interviews and application forms, and reflective statements or essays. More detailed descriptions of what these reflective elements involved follow.

- Personal development, career and goals reflection, skills development.
- Students complete a skills audit before and after the voluntary activity which records their confidence in a number of skills identified as important for graduates. Students also complete and submit a reflective log detailing their activity and reflections on their learning.
- A journal on what skills have been developed and what use these will be in future employment/further study.
- A mock graduate level job application form and mock interview. The application form contains two questions designed to enable the student to reflect on and articulate their skills in a realistic context.
- A personal development record document (including strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats (SWOT) analysis, and a list of skills). This is submitted early on in the process (to receive feedback) and in a revised/more complete form at the end of the process (used as summative assessment for the award).
- A reflective essay from the student and a supervisor's report (could be internal or external depending on what the student has done).
- A reflective log which is completed on an ongoing basis and submitted three times during the academic year, at specific deadlines.
- A reflective portfolio based on their experiences, together with application form style questions which evidence the attributes and skills they have gained.
- A short reflective analysis of what they've learnt and how they intend to articulate it in their current or future experiences.
- A skills-based application form and, for the leaders award, a presentation of the project they put forward for the award. This is assessed by a panel including other leader's award participants.
- After each taught workshop they have to complete a short reflective exercise on what they have learnt and what they are going to do next as a result of the session. They are also encouraged to keep their e-portfolio up to date as they go through the programme.
- An initial skills audit and action plan; a three part reflective blog; a summative skills reflection and career plan; career preparation assignments.
- Application form and interview.
- Attendance at three workshops where concept of reflection is introduced and different methods of reflection applied.
- Completion of a reflective webfolio.
- For each of the elements students reflect on its impact and next steps. At the start of the award they do a skills audit and select two skills to focus on in particular via the award. Reflection related to these two skills in particular is required.
- How the activity has enhanced their employability.
- If they complete a placement as part of the award they are required to write a reflective log (around 500 words) explaining how the placement has developed certain knowledge/skills, impacted on their career decision-making etc.
- Interview on skills development; reflective log.
- It is our intention that students will provide a short reflective piece which articulates how their experience(s) have developed the nine capabilities detailed within our employability framework.

- It is up to 1,000 words total, compromising of four sections to do with leadership, development etc. This is done via survey monkey.
- On their learning journey and skills development.
- Our award is modular so the assessment by activity slightly differs, however is all underpinned by reflective practice. Assessment could include a reflective journal/portfolio, presentation, case study, poster, media presentation, peer group review etc.
- Our award students are required to write 150-250 words reflecting on each activity, outlining what they did, what went well/was challenging and how they overcame issues; what they learned and how they can apply that in the workplace. This is for each of 10 employer attributes such as collaborative working, organisational skills etc. They are also tasked with doing the same for a choice of five from 10 additional attributes. This totals up to 4,000 words in a set document template which must be submitted in their e-portfolio for assessment. We offer coaching in this as well as an employer sponsored prize. We also advise this writing is invaluable for use in application forms and to embed confidence when talking in interviews.
- Plan-do-review cycle with summative articulation.
- Portfolio, CV, professional online profile.
- Reflection on personal evidence to meet the skills criteria.
- Reflection session delivered by careers service, then have to complete a reflection task approx one side of A4 in length.
- Reflections at the beginning, middle and end of the award process, on aspirations, development/progress, challenges, impact.
- Reflective activities from the mandatory career seminars they are due to attend and reflective questions based on the skills they will develop throughout participation in the award.
- Reflective log and skills evidence. Students must use these documents to submit a CV, application form and to deliver an employer panel presentation.
- Reflective log books for each activity; reflective summary reports on their development through these activities; final reflective summary report looking back over the whole of their time on the award.
- Reflective log of their skills acquisition.
- Skills and other developments from student officer experience.
- Skills audit … as application form.
- Skills audit, personal reflection on volunteering and work experience activity, completing a personal statement, and an interview with one of the employability and careers development team.
- Still to be confirmed: suggested an initial action plan at the start of the award followed by a presentation at the end.
- Student has to complete four activities plus apply for the award. Each of the activities requires the student to reflect on the skills/attributes that they have gained from engagement in that particular activity e.g. via a reflective log, presentation to peers etc. Once four activities completed they have to apply for the award.
  The application requires them to a) list the skills/attributes that they have gained from all activities b) reflect on which of these attributes/skills they were able to transfer between activities c) reflect on how they think that engagement with the award has enhanced their employability.
- Students are required to attend a skills capture training session once they have completed the requisite qualifying hours from extra-curricular activities. They are required to complete a pre-session reflection exercise which they bring along with them to the session.

- Students are required to complete three assessments, each of which has a reflective component. One of these assignments includes a series of reflective questions
- Students keep records of progress, and these culminate in a recorded 'viva' with structured reflective questions which the students are asked to respond to. Support is given prior to this for students to understand the value of reflection and learn some reflective techniques.
- Students maintain a skills audit and a reflective log during the initiative. Students keep a record of their co-curricular learning and achievements within an e-portfolio.
- Students need to achieve certain number of points to gain the award. Each activity under the award carries a certain number of points. To gain each element, a reflective piece needs to be submitted with each activity. In the final submission to the panel awarding the award, students need to complete an overall reflective piece explaining what they have learned and the application of this learning.
- Students need to reflect on the learning derived from any (or a selection) of the activities. The focus is on identifying the learning and personal development that these embody.
- Students reflect on each activity they use for their award and highlight the skills they have developed during the activity. To complete the portfolio part of the award they also complete a personal statement which rounds up each section of the award, (of which there are four which include work experience, personal skills and development, contribution to the local, national or global society and effective marketing of the self). These are three questions which draw together their experiences and skills and get them to apply them to the wider world of work.
- Summary report outlining goals and what they achieved use of a reflective log to record activities and progress presentation at end.
- The award is built on the idea of students being able to reflect on what they have learnt and achieved during the course of the award programme. There is an exercise in the first award session that is related to learning and practising different styles of reflective writing. After students have completed their mandatory sessions and volunteering etc, they are then asked to complete a written reflective review. After this is submitted the final element to the award is to reflect presentation techniques at a mock interview style session, in front of a panel of employers and staff.
- The learner is required to produce a portfolio comprised of 500-word reflections on six different skills/attributes/attitudes. We use Pebblepad.
- The award has three pathways for undergraduate students: one requires students to complete a competency-based application form and one of the marking criteria is on the ability to critically reflect; another is modular and all modules have an assessed reflective element; the core module requires a 3,000 word reflective assessment; the advanced pathway has both an extended competency-based application and an employer-led interview; both are marked to criteria that requires critical reflection. The pathway for taught postgraduates requires students to complete a competency-based application also marked to a criteria that contains critical reflection as a key element.
- The students must complete a reflective e-portfolio of 1,000 words.
- There are a variety of reflective assignments that require the students to reflect and articulate skill acquisition and development and how these skills are appropriate for the world of work.
- There are two routes to achieving the award. One normally leads to a certificate or qualification e.g. languages for specialist purposes and progress/reflection/assessment is conducted by the course provider. To apply for

the other award route, students must complete an application form which asks for a 1,000 word reflective report.

- They are required to reflect and analyse how the activity has developed their employability skills.
- To attain the gold award the students are required to write a reflective piece on their experiences and the skills they learnt through the bronze and silver parts of the award. They will have to meet set criteria and the reflective piece will be assessed by academic staff from their department.
- Undergraduates are required to reflect on the value of their experiences at university in terms of increased employability. Assessment of the postgraduate award is by reflective portfolio, looking at the development of skills and the presentation of these in application and interview.
- Writing reports on activities undertaken, reflecting on skills gained and their relevance for employment.

We asked respondents to indicate whether any elements of the award were compulsory. The following matrix illustrates the answers given by 59 respondents.

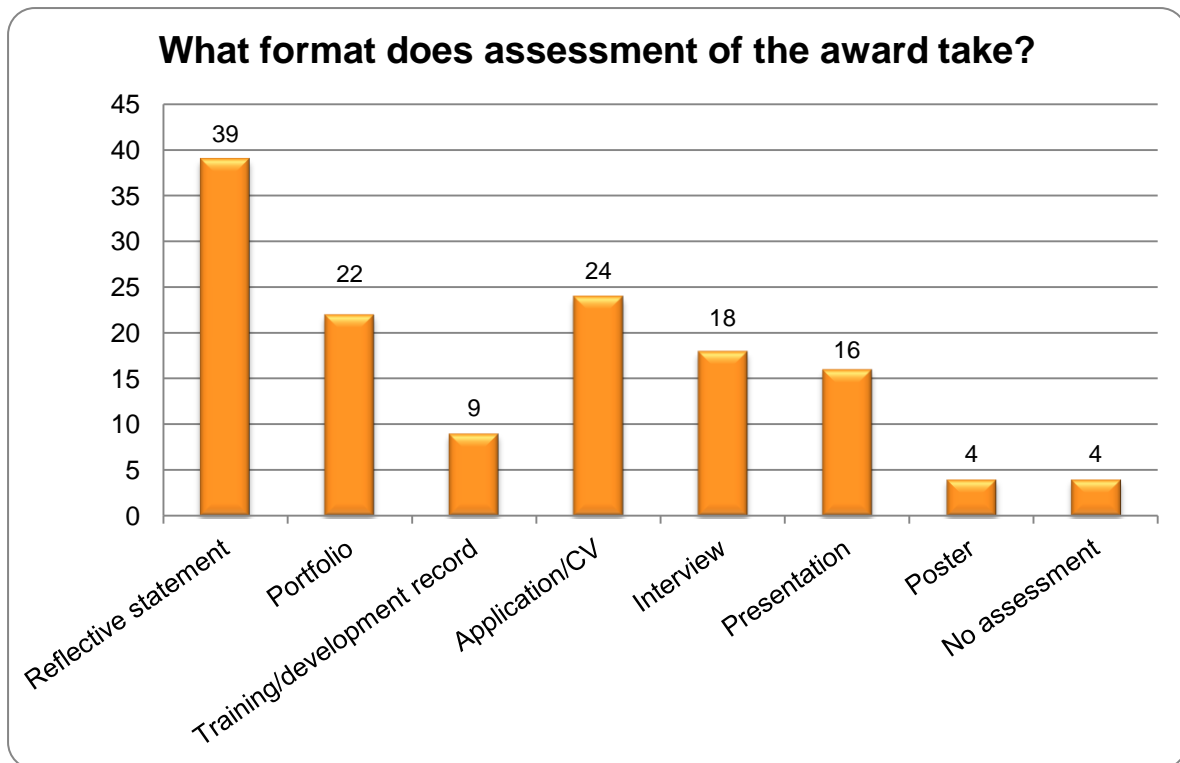| Reflective Statement	Portfolio	Training and Development Record	Application form or CV	Interview	Presentation	Poster	Other
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Not all of these are applicable to each placement for example internships require a reflective journal, portfolio, interview and a presentation. Volunteering requires reflective statement, training and development record.
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	The required elements are dependent on the module - we use one or more of the activities within different modules depending on what is appropriate to the activity being undertaken. For example our career planning module requires students to carry out an application, interview and reflective statement, but our work experience module requires students to complete a portfolio and presentation.
*	*	*	*	*	*		We have two awards. One is simpler and involves a portfolio and reflection while the other on an assessment centre approach involving application, interview, presentation etc.
*	*	*	*	*			
*	*	*	*		*		
*	*	*	*				
*	*	*		*	*		

Reflective Statement	Portfolio	Training and Development Record	Application form or CV	Interview	Presentation	Poster	Other
*	*	*		*		*	
*	*	*		*			
*	*	*					**Three responses.**
*	*		*	*	*		
*	*		*	*			
*	*			*			Students attend two mandatory workshops, skills development and an interview workshop, plus one optional employability workshop from a menu, topics include assessment centres, social media and career planning, dressing to impress employers etc.
*	*				*		
*	*						**Two responses.**
*	*						To a required standard that is assessed against set criteria.
*		*	*	*	*		Students have to reflect on their digital literacy skills and improve them. They also need to undertake a networking activity and reflect on it.
*		*	*		*		Presentation for the leader's award. All other elements for the award.
*		*			*		Attendance at a certain number of units or sessions.

Reflective Statement	Portfolio	Training and Development Record	Application form or CV	Interview	Presentation	Poster	Other
*		*			*		Extra-curricular work: voluntary work/paid work/students' union role/student representation/individual entrepreneurship, for 30+ hours in a year.
*		*					Minimum of 40 activity hours.
*		*					
*			*	*	*		Undertake three coaching sessions with careers consultant; skill audit; action plan.
*			*	*	*		Although a portfolio and training/development records aren't compulsory, they will actually build these automatically through the IT system we will be using next year.
*			*	*			All assignments have to have reflection embedded within them. The interview element is only compulsory in the advanced level of the award.
*			*				Students are required to submit short reflective essays and take part in a range of tests that look at their awareness of industry and understanding of how to enter their chosen sector as well as reflection on skills development.
*			*				**Two responses.**
*					*		Likely to be compulsory elements.
*							Self-reviews, multiple reflections.
*							Viva.

Reflective Statement	Portfolio	Training and Development Record	Application form or CV	Interview	Presentation	Poster	Other
*							Employer sign-off.
*							Our volunteers log hours on a volunteer database, and volunteers have to have logged a certain amount of hours in order to be eligible for the different awards.
*							Depending upon activity e.g. optional employability modules may require production of application/ CV, presentation, production of poster, development of portfolio etc.
*							**Four responses.**
	*		*	*	*		The postgraduate award includes attendance at compulsory skills workshops.
	*		*	*			**Two responses.**
	*						
		*	*	*	*		
		*	*				
		*					
			*	*	*		'Meet the real me'; skills audit; final session: action planning for progression.
			*	*			
			*		*		Psychometric tests (verbal and numerical); students are encouraged to complete a reflective statement and to evidence their

Reflective Statement	Portfolio	Training and Development Record	Application form or CV	Interview	Presentation	Poster	Other
							skills for each activity; it is not compulsory but most do.
			*		*		Two written assignments.
			*				
				*			
					*		
							Attendance at a workshop.
							An experience which includes compulsory training.
							The elements are designed by the course provider and may differ depending on the learning outcomes of the programme.

There were 64 responses to the question 'What format does assessment of the award take?' with respondents reporting the use of a range of assessment mechanisms, alone and in combination. Combinations included any or all of the options given in the survey: reflective statement portfolio; training/development record; application/CV; interview; presentation and poster.The following chart illustrates the number of respondents selecting each of the listed options.

What format does assessment of the award take?

Option	Number
Reflective statement	39
Portfolio	22
Training/development record	9
Application/CV	24
Interview	18
Presentation	16
Poster	4
No assessment	4

From the 64 responses, 65% of respondents included a reflective element in the assessment mechanisms used, but only 10% of respondents used a reflective element as the only means of assessment.

Other methods of assessment given included:

- viva (oral exam)
- evidence of activity and attendance at workshops
- skills audit
- psychometric tests.

Marking award achievement

61 respondents answered the question 'How is the award formally recognised?' with a variety of mechanisms used, alone and in combination.

### How is the award formally recognised?

3% 2% 2%
11%
18%
43%
8%
6%
5%
2%

■ Included on degree certificate/transcript - carries academic credit

■ Included on degree certificate/transcript - carries academic credit, included on degree certificate/transcript - does not carry academic credit and award certificates presented at a specific ceremony

■ Included on degree certificate/transcript - carries academic credit and award certificates presented at a specific ceremony

■ Included on degree certificate/transcript - does not carry academic credit

■ Included on degree certificate/transcript - does not carry academic credit and award certificates presented at a specific ceremony

■ Included on degree certificate/transcript - does not carry academic credit and list of award winners included in graduation programme (or similar)

■ Included on degree certificate/transcript - does not carry academic credit and list of award winners included in graduation programme (or similar) and award certificates presented at a specific ceremony

■ Award certificates presented at a specific ceremony

■ List of award winners included in graduation programme (or similar) and award certificates presented at a specific ceremony

■ Other

Other responses to the question about how achievement of the award is recognised included:

- students receive a certificate and are encouraged to mention their reflective process on their CV
- certificate can be printed off from student records
- sent an official letter recognising their achievement
- it will be included on the transcript from this year
- included in the HEAR as part of section 6.1
- included on the HEAR and does not carry academic credit
- will be included in HEAR when HEAR introduced
- option for students to achieve Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) level 2 accreditation for leaders award
- due to numbers certification is usually awarded throughout the term-time
- award certificate presented at separate ceremony after the main graduation ceremony
- award of certificate not at a specific ceremony
- we do award university credit for the award but it is not credit bearing towards the degree. In theory the credit could be used for an accreditation of prior learning application if students wanted to change universities (it would be up to the institution whether they acknowledge it or not), but we don't technically class it as academic credit as it's not part of the degree.

62 respondents answered the question 'If you are offering the HEAR, will the award be included on it?' 47% answered 'yes', 10% 'no' and 43% stated this was not applicable.

If you are offering the HEAR, will the award be included on it?

Yes 47%

No 10%

Not Applicable 43%
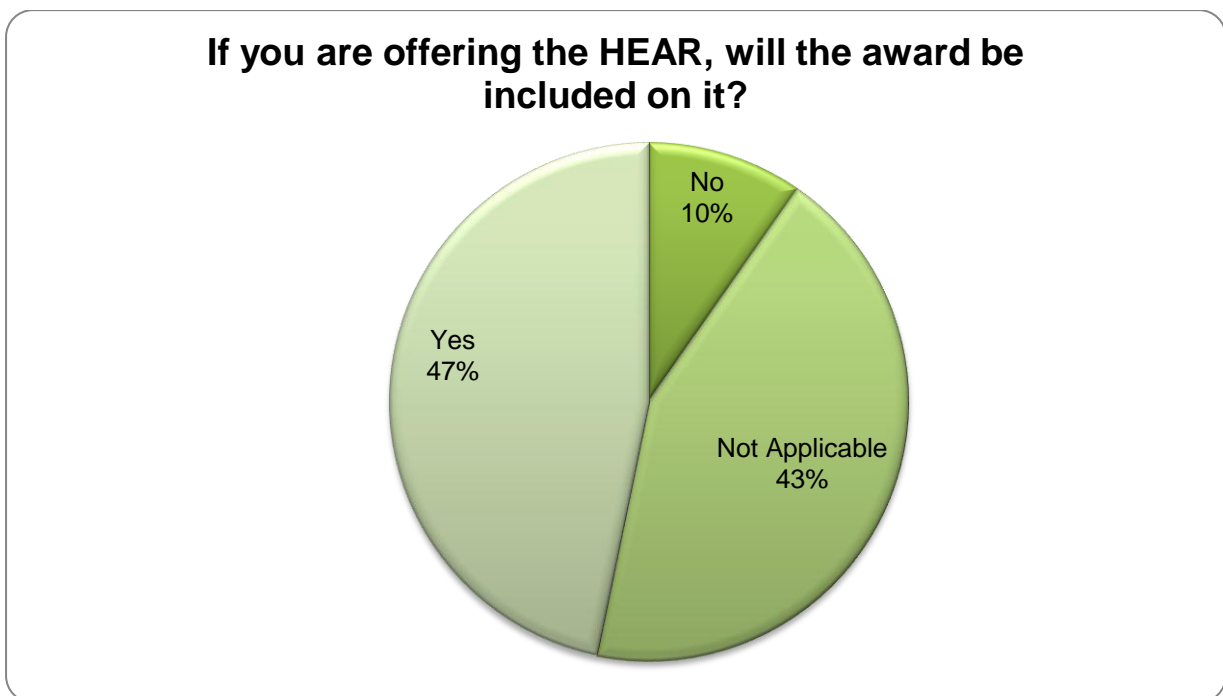
Award governance and quality assurance

65% (of 63 respondents) stated they had a steering group to oversee the activities of the award scheme. Of those with a steering group the combination of individuals represented on such a body is illustrated on the chart below.

■ Members of academic Staff, Employers, Students' Union staff or officer/students

■ Members of academic staff, Students' Union staff or officers/students, Careers representative

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff , Students' Union staff or officers/students

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Employer, Students' Union staff or officers/students

■ Members academic staff, Employers, Students' Union staff or officers/students, Careers representative, Employability advisor

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff , Students' Union staff or officers/students, Employers forum

■ Members of academic staff, Employers

■ Members of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff, Employers, Student' Union staff or officers/students optional

■ Students' Union staff or officers/students, Careers advisor, Faculty officer
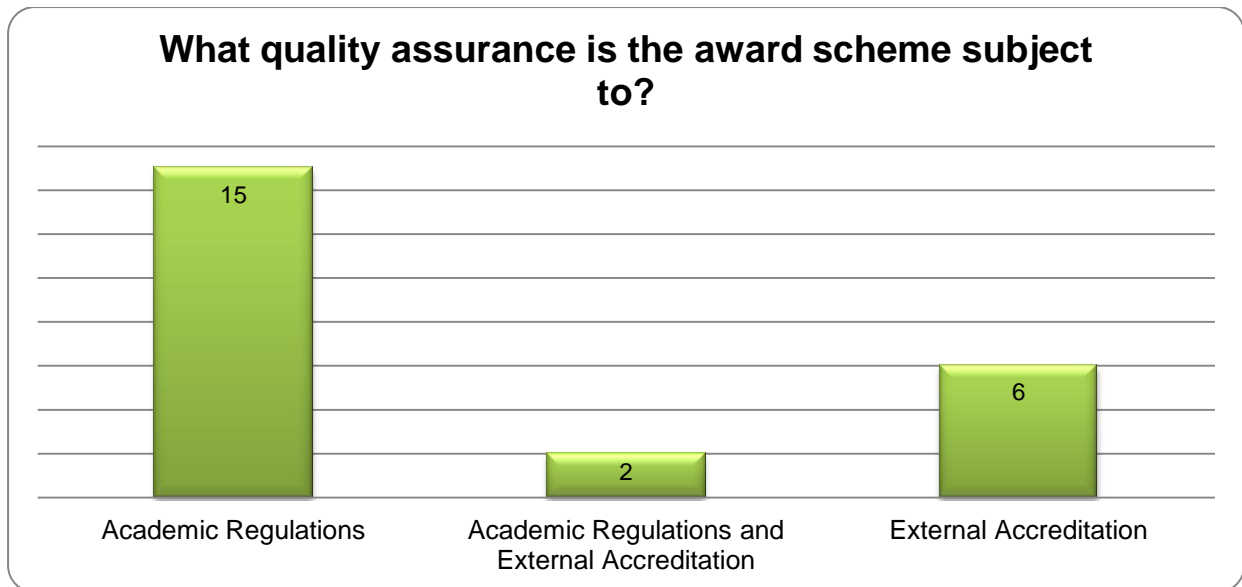
■ Member of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff, Employers, Students' Union staff or officers/students

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff, Students' Union staff or officers/students, Faculty Staff

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff, Student services, Work placement staff

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff, Students' union staff or officers/students, Careers representative

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Members of academic staff, Students' union staff or officers/students, Employability officer

■ Students' Union staff or officers/students, Careers advisor

■ Members of academic staff, Students' Union staff or officers/students, Student-peer trainers

■ Members of academic staff, Employers, Students' Union staff or officer/students, Non-academic staff

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Member of academic staff, Students' Union staff or officers/students, Professional Services staff

■ Member of organisation senior management team, Students' union staff or officers/students, Student services

Representation on Steering Groups

25
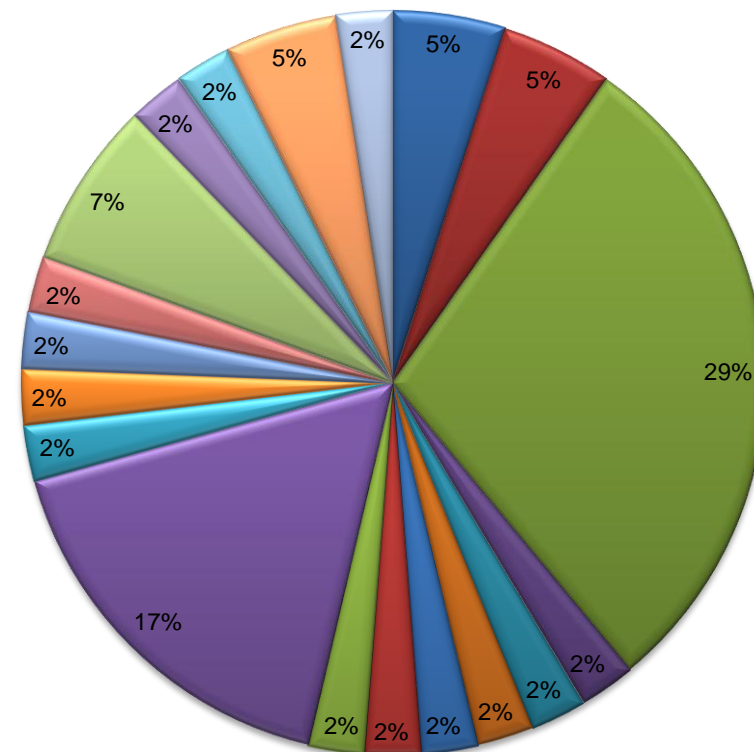
When asked 'Is the award scheme subject to any quality assurance procedures?'
57% (of 61 respondents) confirmed they did. The chart below identifies the quality assurance procedures used (where a response was given).

What quality assurance is the award scheme subject to?

Category	Value
Academic Regulations	15
Academic Regulations and External Accreditation	2
External Accreditation	6

Additional details given about quality assurance procedures included:

- internal governance, review and evaluation procedures
- internal quality assurance procedures
- internal committee oversight in the University
- internal non-academic processes
- internal evaluation
- internal quality assurance process to verify the type of activity that will be included and the level of non-academic credit awarded to activities
- internal moderation plus an external moderation visit
- samples of completed activities (log books, presentations etc.) are quality assured to ensure that they meet award criteria
- group of staff from the careers and employability service regularly review the assignments and tests as well as reviewing the in depth feedback gained from students that take part in the process
- feedback forms from all stakeholders are reviewed annually
- aligned against achievement of five employability-focused graduate attributes
- verification with employers or external organisations making use of the volunteer
- external examiners; annual monitoring
- working closely with the learning and teaching unit to ensure the award is academically viable.

Three respondents stated that their award was accredited by the ILM.

Award evaluation, next steps and challenges

From 61 responses, 67% stated that an evaluation of the award had been carried out. The purpose of such evaluations included to inform the future development of the award, to determine whether offering the award was feasible for the organisation, and to measure whether the award had achieved its aims. Evaluations also collected feedback from students, staff and senior management and looked at how student behaviour had changed as a result of participation in the award. Respondents provided further details about the purpose of award evaluations which follow.

- To help identify any changes to students' behaviour, as a direct result of engaging; this informed the development of the award, including introduction of new pathways.
- Student feedback.
- Feedback from students to assess development of the award.
- To help enhance and upscale the award, we evaluate student participants on an annual basis. We summarise findings and share these with three internal committees and make recommendations to improve the award.
- Testing initial design and concept; shaping ongoing implementation; now routine ongoing evaluation to draw on views of participants, staff involved in delivery of the award, senior management etc.
- Quality i.e. student experience, skills acquired.
- To consider the future of the award in light of HEAR and make recommendations about the structure and administration of the award.
- To gauge student satisfaction and to make any adjustments - we are constantly looking at what can be improved.
- To review purpose and processes.
- Tracking of award students through DLHE; student evaluation of the award in order to inform future developments.
- To gain feedback from students to help improve and further develop the award.
- To move from pilot this year to launch next year. Students were engaged at the start and end of the pilot phase and recommended changes will be made before official launch. Feedback on the award and its value to them in preparation for employment.
- We carry out a survey at different stages of the award (halfway through and at the end) in order to gather the thoughts of the students and also to try and monitor rates of people completing or dropping out and why this may happen. The survey is currently not compulsory; however from this year we will be making the final survey compulsory.
- To review the award to date as there were felt to be significant issues which were effecting student engagement. It was also a chance to evaluate the impact on staff workloads, as the award was delivered across several different departments (who led specific strands/certificates) as an 'add on' to staff members' main job with some support from a central role and it was not considered a sustainable model.
- Review the pilot; gain student feedback; ensure award was achievable; review if did it enable/support students to achieve their goals; look at scalability for roll out to other locations; to develop scheme in future.
- To review the quality of the award, to get student feedback and to propose changes. The award is overseen and approved by the teaching and learning committee and the evaluation reported back to this group.
- We have not carried out an official evaluation, however the award has been discussed with the steering group throughout the year, and its structure and criteria have been agreed by its members which includes the students' union, academics and other relevant staff involved in the project.

- To determine the value of gaining the award for future employment: does it make a difference?
- Student feedback is collected on different elements of the award, to help us determine future direction.
- To determine if the pilot year was a success and how to move forward with the award for the next year.
- To check student feedback on various aspects of the award that will enable us to improve and grow the award.
- Find out why students didn't submit, what worked, what didn't work and how it can be improved.
- To see what we could improve in future years.
- Review range of skills offered; move to online portfolios (Mahara).
- We evaluate every year at the end of each programme. We use this to amend the award to meet students' needs. It is also used at a strategic level (our feedback is always excellent). We have a long-term impact study planned for 2014-15 to evaluate the pilot and see how the award has impacted on their employability, it is commissioned research for an undergraduate dissertation. From this year we will be building an evaluation into DHLE.
- Numbers; qualitative feedback; follow up to past students.
- To assess the impact of the award on students taking part and identify areas for improvement.
- Follow up non-completers to find out what could have assisted them in completing.
- To monitor uptake and success rates.
- Alumni survey to find out the impact for graduate a year into their working lives; match between DLHE and the cohort to see if a correlation was present.

No evaluation findings were reported as being publicly available.

54 respondents provided details of what they saw as the next steps for their award. Common themes included:

- make it possible to include the award in the HEAR
- increase student engagement with and participation in the award, extending to a wider range of students and increasing completion
- increase employer participation in and contribution to the award
- increase completion by making it more relevant to particular subject areas and embedding content in the curriculum
- introduction of separate award for postgraduate students, or an advanced or specialist pathway (for example, enterprise, internationalisation)
- make greater use of technology in administering and delivering the award
- streamline the processes involved
- recognise a wider range of activities through the award
- increase involvement of the students' union
- giving the award wider ownership within the organisation and building partnerships with academic departments
- seeking external accreditation such as ILM.

53 respondents identified the main challenges for their awards. Nearly half the respondents listed managing resources and maintaining quality while student numbers increased as a key challenge, and around one-sixth mentioned raising awareness and the profile of the award. Other themes included:

- reducing labour intensive processes through use of technology
- staying relevant and meaningful, and running an award that fits the structure of the organisation; increasing organisational buy-in
- student engagement, retention and completion, including widening participation to a broader range of students and encouraging engagement with the reflective element of the award to foster a culture of responsibility for learning
- adding different elements to the award structure
- the effect of the wider adoption of the HEAR.

Annex: Recognising achievement beyond the curriculum survey questions

1. Name

2. Job title

3. Role in relation to an existing or planned award scheme (if relevant)

4. Organisation

5. Does your organisation currently offer an extra-curricular, co-curricular, skills, graduate or employability award?
- Yes
- No

6. Has the organisation ever offered such an award in the past?
- Yes
- No

7. Why did the organisation stop offering it?
- lack of student demand
- lack of staff capacity
- lack of funding
- other

8. Is the organisation intending to offer such an award in the future?
- Yes
- No

9. When is it intended to start?

10. Are you in a position and willing to provide information about your planned award?
- Yes
- No

11. If the organisation has never offered an award and is not intending to do so in future, what are the reasons for this?
- lack of student demand
- lack of staff capacity
- lack of funding
- other

12. How long has the award been operational?
- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

13. Has the award been significantly redesigned in the last two years?
- Yes
- No

14. Who is the award open to? (tick all that apply)
- undergraduates
- taught postgraduates
- research postgraduates
- students at partner colleges
- students studying overseas (at a partner or overseas campus)
- other

15. Do you aim the award at a particular group of students?
- Yes
- No

If yes, which group?

16. Is there a cap on the number of students who can participate in the award?
- Yes
- No

What is the cap?

17. Please indicate the percentage trend of participation in the award over the last 3 years (or since the award was introduced)
- growth 0-25%
- growth 25-50%
- growth 50-100%
- shrinking 0-25%
- shrinking 25-50%
- shrinking 50-100%
- roughly stable
- can't say

18. What is the percentage trend of students completing the award over the last 3 years (or since the award was introduced)?
- growth 0-25%
- growth 25-50%
- growth 50-100%
- shrinking 0-25%
- shrinking 25-50%
- shrinking 50-100%
- roughly stable
- can't say

19. What proportion of students eligible for the award completed it?
- less than 5%
- 5-10%
- 10-25%
- 25-50%
- more than 50%

20. Which unit within the organisation is responsible for coordinating the award?
- academic department(s)
- careers service
- learning and teaching unit (or equivalent)
- other central services department
- students' union
- other

21. How many staff are involved in coordinating the award?
- Less than 1.0 FTE
- FTE
- 1.0-2.0 FTE
- 2.0-5.0 FTE
- More than 5.0 FTE

22. Which staff are involved in coordinating the award? (tick all that apply)
- academic
- academic related
- administrative

23. Does the Students' Union have involvement in coordinating the award?
- Yes
- No

24. What is the Students' Union role?

25. Which of the following descriptions most closely reflects the structure of your award?
- the substance of the award is embedded within the curriculum. There is an additional summative task required to complete the award in addition to the academic programme requirements
- the award requires completion of a certain number of elements, which are arranged or recognised by the organisation
- the award recognises activity that a student completes outside their academic experience
- a combination of these
- none of the above

26. Which of the following activities does the award include or recognise? (tick all which apply)
- volunteering
- placements/internships
- community engagement
- work experience
- enterprise
- mentoring
- career management activity
- intercultural/international activity
- languages
- student representation
- engagement in student groups and societies
- music
- sports

27. Does the award require students to complete any reflective elements?
- Yes
- No

28. What are these reflective elements?

29. Are any of the following elements compulsory elements of the award? (tick all that apply)
- reflective statement
- portfolio
- training/development record
- application/CV
- interview
- presentation
- poster
- other

30. What format does assessment of the award take?
- reflective statement
- portfolio
- training/development record
- application/CV
- interview
- presentation
- poster
- no assessment
- other

31. How is the award formally recognised? (tick all that apply)
- included on degree certificate/transcript - carries academic credit
- included on degree certificate/transcript – does not carry academic credit
- list of award winners included in graduation programme (or similar)
- award certificates presented at a specific ceremony
- other

32. If you are offering the HEAR, will the award be included on it?
- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

33. Do you have a steering group to oversee the award?
- Yes
- No

34. Who sits on the steering group? (tick all that apply)
- Member of organisation senior management team
- Members of academic staff
- Employers
- Students' Union staff or officers/students
- other

35. Is the award scheme subject to any quality assurance procedures?
- Yes
- No

36. What are these procedures?
- Academic regulations
- External accreditation
- Other

37. Have you carried out any evaluation of the award?
- Yes
- No

38. What was the purpose of the evaluation?

39. Are the findings of the evaluation publicly available? Please provide a link if yes.

40. What do you see as the next steps for the award, both planned and aspirational?

41. What do you see as the main challenges for the award in the future?

42. Would you be happy for your award to be included on a web-based directory of award schemes? Please provide a suitable web link if so.

43. Please indicate how you would like the award to be categorised in this directory? (tick all that apply)
- reflective element
- direct involvement with employers
- recognition of activities not organised by the institution
- recognition of leadership development
- offered at more than one level (such as bronze, silver, gold)

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk