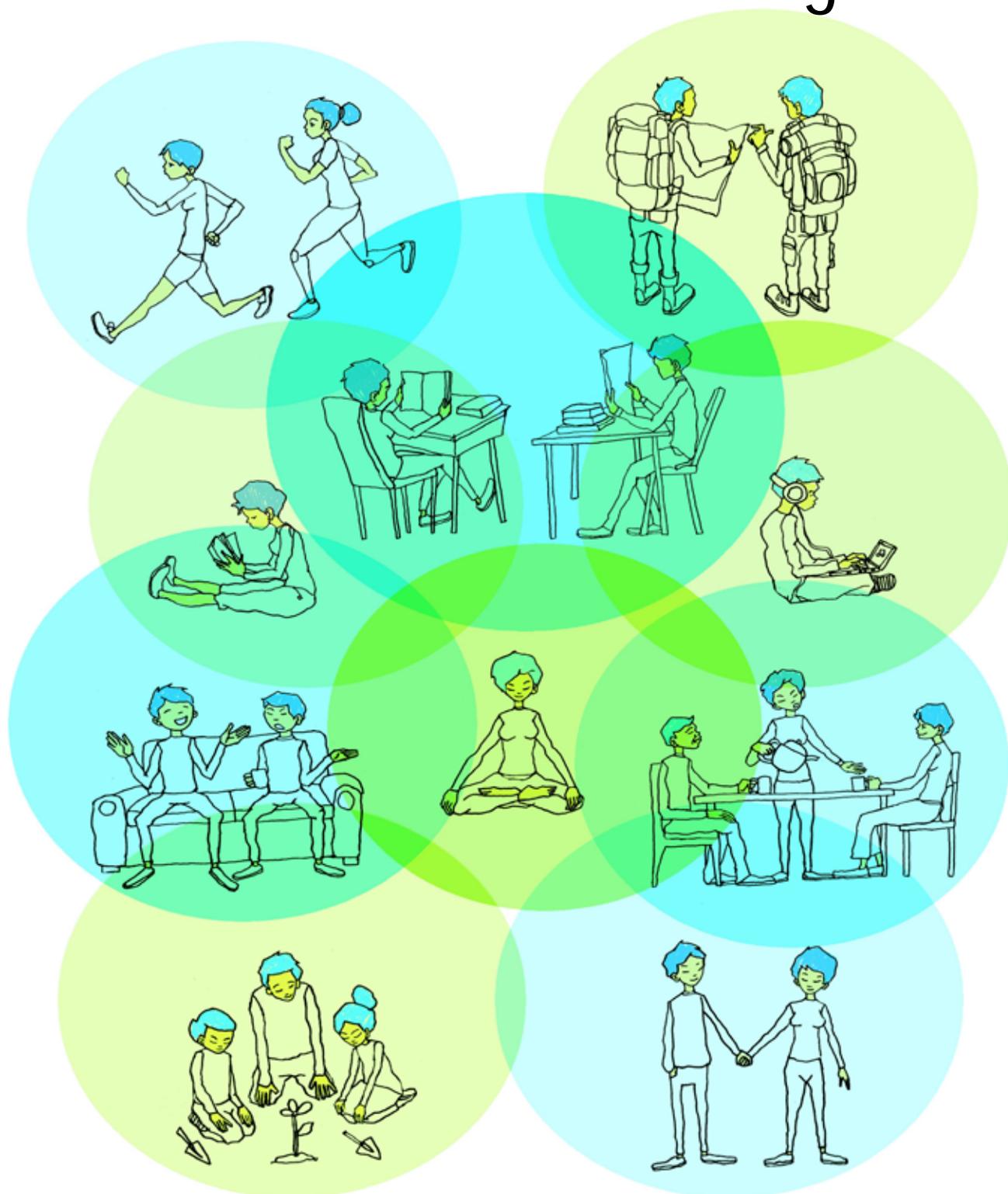


# Lifewide Learning & Education in Universities and Colleges



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# CHAPTER B1

## The Nottingham Advantage Award

*Sarah J Speight*

### SUMMARY

Since 2008, the Nottingham Advantage Award has offered students across the University of Nottingham's UK, China and Malaysia campuses the opportunity to receive credit for activities that can enhance their overall learning experience and employability. The Award's aim is to ensure that students have the opportunity to develop attributes, capabilities and skills through extra and co-curricular activities that complement their academic studies. Launched with 7 modules in 2008, over 150 modules were available to students in 2013/14. This reflects the growing interest in the employability agenda shown by academic schools and professional service departments across the University. Both student registrations and school/service requests for support in delivering new modules, continue to grow.

The Award's assessment strategy has a strong focus on self-reflection and reflective practice designed to build students' self-awareness, criticality and agency. Module leaders routinely ask students to use reflective logs, learning diaries, blogs, SWOT analysis, and skills audits to assess their learning from a programme of modules that is now organised into nine categories: *Buddying, mentoring and peer support; Career skills and employability; Community and volunteering; Cultural awareness, language learning and study abroad; Employer-led; Enterprise, events and project management; Sustainability; Sports; Internships, placements and work experience.*

The Award has to fit and contribute to the university's Teaching and Learning strategy. For example, in providing a delivery mechanism for the university's priority areas of internationalisation and sustainability alongside employability. In addition, the Award provides a space for innovation at the edge of the formal curriculum. For example, in 2013 we offered the first NOOC (Nottingham Open Online Course), available to Award students for either 10 or 20 of the 30 credits required to complete the Award. The distinctive characteristics of a NOOC is that it is taught entirely online, must be open to students across our three campuses (UK, China, Malaysia), and use specific online learning pedagogies to support collaborative learning.

The Award's development is research-informed. In recent years studies include: stakeholder (staff, student, employer) understanding of employability and its relationship to academic curricula, the impact of peer mentoring, visual learning, models of online facilitation, and the



role of the Award in the design and implementation of assessment strategies for experiential learning.

## BIOGRAPHY



Sarah Speight is Associate Professor of Higher Education at the University of Nottingham, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and National Teaching Fellow. In 2010 she was appointed as the first Academic Director of the Nottingham Advantage Award, a two-year appointment that was renewed in 2012. Currently also the university's Academic Director of Online Learning, Sarah has a keen interest in curriculum development and assessment and has worked with the Award team to make the programme innovative and 'cutting edge' within its institutional context.

## INTRODUCTION

The early 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen the rapid development and delivery of 'Employability and Skills' co-curricular awards across the UK higher education sector (AGCAS 2011, Betts and Jackson 2011). Located within individualised institutional contexts, these awards operate within a range of models making it difficult to evaluate their effectiveness and quality. In 2013, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), surveyed UK universities to gain the first detailed picture of skills award coverage: historically, at the present time, and planned (QAA 2013a, see also Barnes and Burchell this volume). Based upon this survey, the QAA has published a toolkit to support and guide higher education providers in designing, refining and evaluating their awards (QAA 2013b). One reason for the QAA's interest is the role of awards in recognising 'achievement beyond the curriculum' for the purposes of the HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Record). The University of Nottingham was one of the respondents to the QAA's survey and this chapter provides the opportunity to describe the development of its 'Nottingham Advantage Award' in more detail.

## BACKGROUND

In 2008, The University of Nottingham launched the 'Nottingham Advantage Award' (hereafter 'the Award'). It was designed as the centrepiece of a 'new framework for student skills, employability and personal and academic development' (Dudderidge 2008:18). In 2008, the Award offered 7 modules on Nottingham's UK campus. In 2013/4 it offers more than 150 modules to students studying in the UK, on our campuses in China and Malaysia, and now includes a small provision of online modules available also to our distance learners. In 2008 the Award was only available to undergraduates. From 2012 it has been offered to postgraduate students too, and one module is also now open to staff for their own personal development. Consideration is being given to opening some modules to alumni. Growth has



been spectacular both in terms of modules, and in terms of student and staff engagement. There are over 4,000 enrolments annually and every academic school and many professional service departments have some involvement in the delivery of modules.

The Award comprises 30 credits of undergraduate level study and is framed by its own 'programme specification'<sup>1</sup>. This has been reviewed and updated annually since 2008 (see Appendix 1 for 2013-14 edition). In particular, the breadth and depth of the Award has resulted in its modules being grouped into nine categories:

*Buddying, mentoring and peer support; Career skills and employability; Community and volunteering; Cultural awareness, language learning and study abroad; Employer-led; Enterprise, events and project management; Sustainability; Sports; Internships, placements and work experience.*

Reflective practice is integral to the Award's assessment strategy. Reflective logs, learning diaries, blogs, SWOT analysis, skills audits are all routinely used to assess student learning. The Award's Steering Group (comprising academic members [one of whom is external to Nottingham] and administrative and student representative advisors) moderates a sample of student work twice each academic year. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that members of the Steering Group are content with the threshold standards being applied in each module for determining that students have passed and can be awarded credit.

In January 2010, a formal review was carried out of the Award at the request of the university's Management Board. The review confirmed the position of the Award at the centre of Nottingham's employability strategy. It recommended the appointment of an Academic Director, significant curriculum development work, expansion of provision to the University's China and Malaysia campuses, and the setting of ambitious targets for increased student and staff participation (10-15% of undergraduate enrolments in the UK, China and Malaysia and the involvement of every academic school by 2015). The review established the principle that while central funding should be used for direct staffing, marketing and operational expenditure, the local costs associated with the delivery and assessment of modules should be absorbed by academic schools and professional service units. In this way, support for the Award has become part of the routine 'citizenship' within the university with managers locally determining how staff time is allocated to it.

The Award is a success if measured by participation alone. The review target of academic school involvement was met by 2012 and 10% of the global student population will have enrolled on modules in 2013-14. Yet its growth has surfaced a series of questions about its reach, impact, and relationship with the academic curriculum. What does the university community understand by the term 'employability' and whose responsibility is it to deliver the 'employability curriculum'? Award data shows that student take-up is significantly higher in some faculties than in others. Some schools provide a bespoke and compulsory module (e.g. discipline-specific 'Career Skills' modules), while others leave students to find their own way to the Award. It is clear that the Award has outgrown its original skills-focused learning outcomes and now offers a much broader experience (community engagement,



entrepreneurship, internationalisation, sustainability, global citizenship). The Award has shifted from its original human capital discourse, in which 'advantage' was the dominant theme (the Award as an aid to securing graduate-level employment), to a human development discourse in which its curriculum aims to provide 'ethically inclusive and humanly rich goals for development' (Walker 2012:388). From time to time, there is discussion of changing the Award's name from 'Advantage' to 'Achievement'.

In his introduction to this volume, Jackson explores lifewide learning and learning ecologies, considering how these concepts provide theoretical underpinning for award schemes. The academic home of Nottingham's award is within its School of Education, and specifically within adult education. From inception, the Award's curriculum has been built around experiential learning not only *through* life but simultaneously *across* different spaces, as supported by its focus upon personal literacy, critical and reflective practice and student agency. The Nottingham Advantage Award positions itself as *co*-curricular rather than *extra*-curricular and as part of an 'ambient' curriculum that supports students to develop their own learning ecology (Jackson, this volume).

Since 2007, a series of qualitative studies have been undertaken to inform the Award's design and development. These studies have investigated issues of curriculum, learning and assessment design, concept understanding, lines of responsibility, and award-degree relationships.

## AWARD DEVELOPMENT IN A RESEARCH-INTENSIVE UNIVERSITY

Prior to launch in 2008, a series of pilots were run in 2007-8 in an action research approach to the development of the initial curriculum. The iterative design of the early 'Inside Employment' strand (Baker and Henson, 2010) demonstrated the value of a cross-disciplinary programme informed by both careers expertise and higher education pedagogy. From the start, the Award has revolved around an active learning approach - learning by doing and problem-based learning. Students have consistently reported favourably on the transferable skills they import to their academic work from the Award (and *vice versa*).

From the 2010 review (which included interviews with staff, students and employers) emerged a steer that the curriculum be developed under three broad categories:

- Preparation for professional life and lifelong learning (with an emphasis upon reflective practice)
- Service for the public good
- Personal development - the attitudes and skills to manage own growth.

This was seen as providing a principled and process-driven pathway through the curriculum for students and providers in order to achieve a coherent Award. This steer subsequently informed the range of key transferable skills that were identified as adding value to academic qualifications:

- Oral and written communication



- Interpersonal skills
- Team work
- Learner autonomy/Self-management
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Reflective practice
- Professionalism
- Information technology
- Numeracy
- Sustainability literacy/Corporate social responsibility
- Cultural sensitivity/transnational learning (student experience)
- Community engagement/volunteering
- Commercial awareness including 3rd sector
- Exposure to a particular workplace
- Entrepreneurship

## THE 'EMPLOYABILITY CURRICULUM'

In 2011, a centrally-funded research project called the 'Employability Curriculum' investigated the understanding, application, and definition of 'employability' in four teaching and learning units across the university's UK campus (Speight et al, 2013). In 2012, a parallel study was carried out in China at our Ningbo campus (Speight et al, 2012). With little existing research into stakeholder engagement with higher education policy on employability, the project sought to discover how four different stakeholders affiliated to four different Schools/Faculties perceived various employability issues. In total, 74 stakeholders were interviewed drawn from administrative staff, academic tutors, students and employers.

The objectives of the project included: to describe and examine the perceived place of employability within the curriculum; current employer engagement with Schools; student/staff perspectives on the Nottingham Advantage Award; the role of personal and academic tutors in student self and professional development, and perceptions on current and future needs as well as challenges associated with student career support and employability.

Using a multi-phase research design, we identified statements generating 'high impact' agreement or disagreement, low impact (neutrality), high or low controversy (themes and issues that polarised opinion) and most interest (a combination of impact and controversy). For example, the most controversial statements included '*employability is a different and separate issue from subject curriculum, teaching and learning*'.

The students most agreed with the Award being introduced to them at the beginning of their course; they thought that employers valued most a set of generic skills and that individual



academic schools needed tailor-made approaches to employability. They strongly agreed with the statement that employability means to develop potential in all sorts of areas so that individuals acquire a special quality of mind and personality. The students seemed open to new and fluid ideas on employability, although they still defined it instrumentally by focussing upon the *curriculum vitae*.

The employers 'highly agreed' that what students did within their curriculum was linked to employability and that the development of students as reflective and critical practitioners was important. Academic tutors tended to take a more neutral stance on the relationship between employability and the subject curriculum and tended to be uneasy at the suggestion that employability was partly their responsibility.

This research was crucial in developing the Award's strategy going forward as it signalled to the team the points of tension in staff engagement with employability. Subsequently there has been a greater articulation of employability with the teaching and learning agenda via an emphasis upon modes of curriculum delivery and assessment. It is now more explicit to all stakeholders how these modes enhance graduate employability without in any way compromising academic content. The questions behind the University's teaching and learning agenda have shifted to, 'what do we want our student to *be or develop into* rather than *acquire or obtain?*'

From the interviews in China came a steer that the Award needed some differentiation in its development to ensure that it was fit for purpose in its Chinese setting (Speight et al, 2012). An identified challenge was to support graduates in being employable in both local and global contexts. The university's senior management have responded to this by investing in Award staffing to ensure appropriate leadership.

## PEER MENTORING

While the 'Employability Curriculum' project explored strategic questions of engagement, responsibility and relationship around the Award, the Peer Mentoring project in 2011 picked up on an emerging strand of work across the university to investigate student and staff needs.

Internationalisation of the student experience is a priority for Nottingham. It is seen as part of our 'brand', with the opportunity for students to move between our UK, China and Malaysia campuses providing an incentive in attracting high calibre applicants. In support of mobility, several academic schools independently began offering two-layered mentoring schemes. For 'incoming' students or mentees, these focused upon transition to university life and cross-cultural interaction between international and home students. For student mentors, these schemes sought to support the development of employability skills related to mentoring and cross-cultural communication (Rounsaville 2012).



For the Award, it was important to engage with the burgeoning mentoring schemes for three reasons:

- Mentoring is a valuable tool in the delivery of the Award's learning outcomes and transferable skills, especially around reflective practice.
- Mentoring supports the internationalisation agenda.
- To meet needs efficiently, we felt the Award should provide an online repository of generic materials that could be customised by individual schools.

We started by carrying out a needs assessment on the UK campus (36 interviews with staff and students) to determine the types of mentoring and cross-cultural resources needed for training student mentors; and to assist schools in turning their peer mentoring schemes into Award modules. Staff from schools in all faculties reported interest in mentoring not solely for international or mobility students, but for first year students too as part of transitional support.

For the majority of schools, peer mentoring was a voluntary activity most often provided informally by students through student and academic societies. Those schools working on formal schemes recognised the potential of peer mentoring, particularly for mentors, to develop and strengthen communication, leadership and interpersonal skills. The Award was seen as a support mechanism (scheme resourcing and administration) but also as an incentivisation (credits for mentors). While developing employability was seen as important, some schools cited student retention and acclimatisation as equally important. From students came requests for support in setting boundaries, developing SMART goals, and having access to online videos which would help in learning about topics like body language and gestures (Rounsaville 2012).

Following the needs assessment two online resources were developed and made available via the university's open courseware site: UNOW<sup>II</sup>. While one provides generic information and the second focuses upon cross-cultural mentoring, both begin with activities prompting students to reflect on previous related experience and how this might impact and inform their work as peer mentors. Topics explore communication processes and techniques (including non-verbal, active listening, giving feedback), relationship building and boundaries, and reflecting on the competencies gained and/or further developed through mentoring. The cross-cultural resources look at defining culture, developing awareness and sensitivity, and reflection on what it means to be a global citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In academic year 2013-14 there are fifteen peer mentoring modules running on the UK campus and an objective to increase provision so that all students have the opportunity to participate in mentoring activity by either mentoring or being mentored.

## THE NOTTINGHAM OPEN ONLINE COURSE (NOOC)

The resource model for the Award does mean that expansion of provision relies upon the 'citizenship' of the staff community and upon individual heads of schools and services to allocate staff time without additional budget. While this can be seen as an inhibitor to



development, the increased centrality of teaching and learning at Nottingham over recent years, and in particular the strategic significance of online learning and learning technology, have provided new opportunities for innovative growth.

In 2011, the Award team collaborated with the university's Learning Technologists to develop a suite of open educational resources as part of the JISC-funded PARiS project (Promoting Academic Resources in Society)<sup>iii</sup>. The Peer Mentoring initiative was able to 'piggy-back' onto PARiS by accessing funding for developing online resources. However, the most significant output was the Nottingham Open Online Course or NOOC which took some of the other resources produced - a series of ebooks on the theme of sustainability, and repurposed them as the core texts for the first cross-campus entirely online course to be offered through the university's virtual learning environment (Moodle). The defining characteristics of the NOOC were its availability to all students and staff with a university username, its stated aim of encouraging cross-campus engagement in a strategic priority area, and its use of 'disruptive' pedagogies associated with 'MOOCs' (Massive Open Online Courses).

The course design was modelled on Salmon's 5-phases of e-learning (Salmon, 2002): access and motivation; online socialisation; information exchange, knowledge construction and development. These phases were reflected in the activities, assessments and learning outcomes plotted for each of the 10 weeks of the first NOOC, 'Perspectives on Sustainability'. For example, our pre-course welcome week, and weeks 1 and 2, encouraged people to introduce themselves, to explain why they were joining in, to blog about their current understanding of sustainability and to contribute to the construction of a visual history. In the middle weeks of the course students carried out waste audits, engaged in discussions, evaluations and SWOT analysis. In the final weeks they prepared poster presentations in which they were asked *'to present useful knowledge effectively and help to make the reader/viewer think about sustainability and perhaps change something about the way they live'*. The learning outcomes were cumulative; by the end of week 1 students were expected to have *'Constructed a personal definition of sustainability'*; by the end of Week 10, to have *'Increased your ability to suggest solutions to and discuss sustainability problems by applying the learning acquired from this module to other contexts'*.

The course ran twice in calendar year 2013, attracting 1,500 enrolments from our UK, China and Malaysia campuses. About 20% of the 1,500 met the requirements for earning Award credit, with a larger number being given a 'Completion Certificate' signed by the Vice Chancellor to acknowledge their learning.

The potential and impact of the NOOC format for learning (and teaching), and for the efficient expansion of Award provision in the UK, China and Malaysia, is being researched via a qualitative study of student cognitive engagement and of student and staff interaction. The nature of the online learning and the development of conceptualisations of sustainability are the overriding themes. The value of the NOOC in supporting the development of graduate employability has not yet been specifically explored, although the preliminary evidence indicates cross-cultural learning is occurring.



The university's Teaching and Learning Board is now considering offering 'Perspectives on Sustainability' as a first year undergraduate elective in academic year 2014-15. This would mark an interesting development for the Award if one of its modules were to relocate from the co-curriculum to the academic curriculum.

## CONCLUSIONS

Awards similar to Nottingham's have developed in specific institutional contexts. Jeffries and Mann (2012:5), note the surveys conducted by the 1994 Group (Norton and Thomas 2009) and AGCAS (2011) that have identified the 'top challenges' for young awards: staff engagement, resourcing, scalability, and student engagement. The story of Nottingham's Award is one of movement from the periphery towards the centre, and the identification of the Award with innovation and translational pedagogies. Ironically, innovation sometimes comes when the Award is used as a 'low-risk' environment in which to pilot new ways of teaching and learning (as in the NOOC).

Governance structures for the Award signal this centrality. The Academic Director sits on the university's Teaching and Learning Board and reports to the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning (who in turn reports to the University Executive Board chaired by the Vice Chancellor). Students receive their Awards and employer-sponsored prizes from senior leaders and employers at an annual 'Celebration Event'. In addition, Award recipients are listed in graduation proceedings and Award modules appear on degree transcripts. Many academic schools publish the names of their Award alumni on noticeboards and both the Award team and individual module convenors have been recognised via internal 'Lord Dearing Awards' for excellence in the support of student learning.

One of the challenges for Awards is how to maintain quality and distinctiveness with scale. Nottingham's students appear to want the Award to remain niche, in order to provide that 'Advantage' to those who choose to take it (Baker and Henson, 2010:66). This runs counter to the ambitions of the Award to provide learning for all either through its own curriculum, or through its support for the greater embedding of 'learning for employability and personal development' into the mainstream curriculum.

Reflective practice is at the heart of the Award both in terms of its pedagogy and its own strategic development which is underpinned by research. In modelling professional and workplace practice, students are encouraged to analyse experiences and competencies and to use critical reflection in understanding themselves and in formulating their action plans. Award students develop critical awareness of their own cultural perspectives; recognition of the value of a diverse and interconnected society; an ability to communicate cross culturally; a broad international perspective; an ability to empathise with and respect other cultural perspectives.

The Award has become an important vehicle for the delivery of the university's vision of 'Excellence in Education' (University Plan 2010-2015: 12). It provides opportunities for students to engage with internationalisation and global issues, and it supports transition into



the global labour market. It is a good example of a programme that is indeed now 'firmly embedded' within the student experience:

The emergent phenomenon of co and extra-curricular student development awards shows that we are witnessing a system-wide adaptation that is fundamentally about making learning more relevant to the lives of learners and to recognise there is more to learning and education than studying a subject...the more firmly embedded these award schemes can be within the student experience, the greater the chance students have of preparing themselves for the real world beyond the classroom (Betts and Jackson 2011:320).

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Nottingham Award teams on all campuses for their support of the research studies and developments summarised in this chapter; in particular Award Managers Vicky Mann and Lucie Whitfield, and Cyrielle Ruinat, Nottingham Advantage Award Coordinator.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about the Nottingham Advantage Award can be accessed here: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers/students/advantageaward/index.aspx>

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## End Notes

<sup>i</sup> QAA <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Guidelines-for-preparing-programme-specifications.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> These resources are now available as Open Educational Resources under a creative commons licence and can be freely accessed via UNOW (University of Nottingham Open Courseware):  
<http://unow.nottingham.ac.uk/resources/>

Nottingham Advantage Award Peer Mentoring:  
<http://unow.nottingham.ac.uk/resources/resource.aspx?hid=4e319298-6d32-ce36-766f-05da70ddce06>

Nottingham Advantage Award International Peer Mentoring:  
<http://unow.nottingham.ac.uk/resources/resource.aspx?hid=3260342c-6044-d46c-5e07-02ed9d2aa1fd>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/open/parisproject/paris.aspx>

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## Appendix 1

### The University of Nottingham

#### Nottingham Advantage Award Specification (Session 2013-14)

The aim of this award is to ensure that students of the University of Nottingham have the opportunity to develop attributes, capabilities and skills through a range of activities that will enhance their overall learning experience and employability. The award and its component modules provide learning *in addition* to academic programmes, usually through extra and co-curricular activities.

The award is focused upon the provision of opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding and a range of key/transferable skills that have been identified as adding value to academic qualifications:

- Oral and Written Communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Team Work
- Learner Autonomy/Self Management
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Reflective Practice
- Professionalism
- Information Technology
- Numeracy
- Sustainability Literacy / Corporate Social Responsibility
- Cultural Sensitivity/ transnational learning (student experience)
- Community Engagement/volunteering
- Commercial awareness including 3rd sector
- Exposure to a particular workplace
- Entrepreneurship

Experience and expertise in these areas is acquired through the successful completion of modules offered through various University Schools and Units. The modules available through the Award are organised within the following categories:

- Employability and career skills
- Employer-led
- Enterprise, events and project management
- Internships, Placements & Work experience
- Peer support, mentoring and buddying
- Sports
- Study abroad, cultural awareness and language learning
- Sustainability
- Volunteering and Community



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Successful completion of modules towards the Advantage Award will enable students to demonstrate their achievement of a range of the following learning outcomes:

### **Oral and Written Communication**

- Demonstration of good written, verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Effective communication by writing and by oral presentation
- Accurate, clear, concise and confident communication to a variety of audiences in written, verbal and visual forms

### **Interpersonal Skills**

- Ability to make judgements in sometimes complex situations (including referral to other sources of support)
- Understanding of ethical behaviours and practices
- Respect for and understanding of confidentiality and boundaries in both group and individual settings
- Ability to navigate a wide range of different relationships (e.g. issues of culture, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, disability)

### **Team Work**

- Demonstration of good interpersonal skills and team-working ability
- Productive team-working
- The development of leadership skills

### **Self Management**

- Independent working demonstrating initiative, self-organisation and time management
- Management of deadlines and time appropriately over an extended period
- Taking of responsibility for their own learning, reflecting upon and assessing their own progress, strengths and weaknesses
- Developing the ability to function creatively in specified, particular environments.

### **Problem Solving**

- Utilising problem solving skills
- Developing initiative and creativity in problem solving
- Analysing and solving complex problems accurately

### **Critical Thinking**

- Evaluating evidence critically in relation to competing ideas
- Developing the ability to adopt a critical approach in investigation



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- Gathering, processing and critically evaluating material from a variety of sources: written, oral or audio-visual.

### **Reflective Practice**

- Ability to assess learning of oneself and others
- Articulation of learning from a specified activity
- Demonstration of learning from experience

### **Professionalism**

- Demonstrating respect for colleagues and others at all times and in all situations (e.g. good timekeeping, feedback)
- Showing awareness of ethical issues and taking appropriate action (for example, in securing consent, undergoing DBS checks)
- Being aware of personal responsibilities as member of the University community

### **Information Technology**

- Demonstrating competence in a range of IT skills as a means of communication, presentation and learning.
- Making effective use of general IT tools for acquiring and processing information
- Demonstrating an ability to effectively employ basic IT skills, including simple but accurate word-processing, use of e-mail, and information retrieval from electronic sources through the Internet

### **Numeracy**

- Managing and manipulating numerical data
- Using, presenting, and evaluating information provided in numerical and statistical form
- Effectively and appropriately interpreting and using numerical statistical information.

### **Sustainability Literacy / Corporate Social Responsibility**

- Understanding the ethics and values of sustainability in a range of different contexts (environmental, economic, social, local and global)
- Recognition of how sustainability issues affect lives and how own and others actions and decisions can impact upon communities
- Ability to make informed choices that take sustainability into account
- Contribution to problem solving and sustainable decision-making.

### **Cultural Sensitivity/ transnational learning (student experience)**

- Recognition of cultural differences and equality and diversity issues
- Sensitivity towards and respect for cultural difference
- Recognition of the attributes of global citizenship



- 
- Recognition and use of own learning in study abroad contexts

### **Community Engagement/volunteering**

- Recognition of the role of volunteering within civil society
- Individual understanding and awareness of citizenship, in a local and global context
- Understanding of the nature and function of social business, ethics and enterprise
- Understanding and awareness of the role of voluntary, civic and charitable bodies and the meaning of public engagement

### **Commercial and business awareness (public, private, third sectors)**

- Knowledge and awareness of organisation, industry, sector and market
- Knowledge and awareness of factors, both locally and globally, that impact upon an organisation, industry, sector and market, (political, social, technological, economical, legal environmental)

### **Exposure to a particular workplace**

- Organisational and occupational knowledge
- Making work experience meaningful in CV and applications
- Able to set goals, create action plans and evaluate and reflect on work experience
- Able to identify skills and attributes acquired or developed including general, people, specialist and occupational
- Occupational awareness
- Assimilation of employer feedback to improve performance

### **Entrepreneurship**

- Occupational awareness
- Identification of attributes that will support engagement with entrepreneurial opportunities
- Ability to evaluate the feasibility of business ideas and plans

### **Assessment criteria:**

Advantage Award modules will comply with the [University Regulations for Undergraduate Courses](#).

Assessment for each module will be outlined in the module specification document.

All modules will be assessed on the basis of written assignments/oral presentations/practical work. Assessments are marked as Pass or Fail based upon the evidence that students have achieved the module learning outcomes to a minimum standard as follows:



Key/Transferable Skills in the area of:	Pass	Fail
Oral and Written Communication	Good grammar, spelling, structure, presentation, planning	Poor or inadequate written evidence; failure to make presentation
Interpersonal skills	Recognition of behaviours and ethical issues that impact relationships with others	Failure to recognise the range of factors that affect relationships
Team Work	Evidence of full participation in team projects/presentations and completion of expected contribution	No evidence of contribution to team work
Self Management	Completion of tasks to deadline	Failure to complete
Problem Solving	Effective handling of opportunities and problems arising during the module	Inability to effectively manage problems arising during the module
Critical Thinking	Recognition of alternative methods; evidence of research; discussion of material	Failure to grasp main issues, irrelevant comments
Reflective Practice	Detailed articulation of learning that shows understanding of new learning and how it has and can be applied in future contexts	Lack of awareness of new learning, inadequate detail about development and future applicability
Professionalism	Attention given to ethical issues, respect shown for colleagues	Lack of care and attention given to colleagues
Information Technology	Appropriate and effective	Inadequate use of IT resources for research/presentation
Numeracy	Accurate keeping of financial and other records	Inaccurate keeping of financial and other records
Sustainability Literacy / CSR	Completion of module tasks with evidence of enhanced sustainability literacy and/or understanding of CSR	Incomplete module tasks without any understanding of sustainability or CSR
Cultural Sensitivity/transnational learning (student experience)	Evidence of recognition of cultural difference and adaptability of behaviours to meet the needs of cultures other than ones own	Inadequate recognition and respect for difference; little evidence of learning from different cultural contexts
Community Engagement/volunteering	Recognise individual role as a citizens, the role of volunteering in civil society, and the nature of social business, ethics and enterprise.	Lack of awareness of what constitutes civil society and lack of evidence of learning from different community contexts.
Commercial and business awareness (public, private, third sectors)	Evidence of recognition of the range of external and internal factors that impact upon sectors and organisations.	Lack of awareness of the factors that impact upon sectors and organisations.
Exposure to a particular workplace	Detailed understanding of the specific work environment with evidence of adaptability to employer needs and assimilation of feedback.	Inadequate understanding of the work environment with little evidence of adaptability.
Entrepreneurship	Demonstrate awareness of the value of entrepreneurial attributes and an enhanced understanding of entrepreneurship across a range of sectors.	Inadequate sector awareness or understanding of entrepreneurial attributes.

## Award

The Advantage Award programme will not be classified under University Regulations for Undergraduate Courses. Students who successfully achieve the Award will receive a Pass only.

Modules will be considered at the Undergraduate Examination Board of the School of Education having been moderated by an Internal Moderation Panel comprising members of the NAA Steering Group and Module Approval Group (this Panel will include a majority of members who are not directly involved in the delivery of NAA modules). Students will gain the Nottingham Award by completing 30 credits worth of modules only.

