IMPERIAL AWARD
STUDENT GUIDANCE
Imperial students don’t wait until graduation to start making an impact

I am continually struck by the exceptional ability and motivation of Imperial students. We expect you to develop deep, fundamental knowledge of your chosen discipline and become professionals and the leaders of tomorrow.

We know that Imperial students don’t wait until graduation to start making an impact. The Imperial Award has been designed to support students to reflect upon their personal development and transformation while studying at Imperial.

The Award provides an opportunity for you to build a portfolio of activities and experiences, enabling you to record and reflect upon the attributes developed throughout your time at Imperial.

Imperial College Union and the College are delighted to be working together to recognise your development through the Imperial Award.

Simone Buitendijk
Vice-Provost (Education)
The benefits

- The Imperial Award supports your personal development. Your department, the Union and the College each deliver different aspects of the Award;
- It carries official weight. Success in one or more streams of the Award earns you extra lines on your College graduation transcript;
- Registering for the Imperial Award gives you our Award-specific online tools and guidance, including our portfolio builder;
- Building your portfolio and mapping your attributes will help you upgrade your CV immediately, even before attempting the Award;
- Working towards the Imperial Award will help you to effectively communicate extra-academic competencies and attributes that are highly valued by recruiters and the broader community;
- The online tools let you map your experiences against the twelve Imperial Award attributes, so you know when you’re ready to attempt any part of the Award;
- It is not academic. Your degree performance does not influence the Award assessors (they won’t even know), so this is a new arena for gaining extra recognition from Imperial;
- Feedback makes the Award developmental of you from start to finish: from using online tools, from your tutor, during workshops and, if you submit a short reflective statement for an Imperial Award stream, from the assessor panel;
- It is rigorous but not onerous, earned not won; a one-page statement is the only thing submitted to each assessor panel;
- It provides a useful framework for chats about personal development with your Personal Tutor, mentors and peers.
What is the Imperial Award?
The Imperial Award encourages the development of specific personal attributes, valued by society and employers.

In today’s fast changing environment, personal development and soft skills are required to complement the technical skills and knowledge acquired during a degree. Structured around three main streams, or areas of competency, the Imperial Award is designed to support you in evidencing and communicating vital attributes such as creativity, communication, and awareness of self and others. By participating in even just one of the Award’s three streams you will gain the confidence to know you possess the strengths, skills and abilities that will empower you to make informed choices for your life and career and allow you to thrive as your career develops.

The Imperial Award can shape some of your Personal Tutor or mentor meetings, helping you to get more out of them. The criteria used by the assessor panel will help you to prioritise reflection over description, argument over assertion, and ensure that the assessment, though small, is rigorous and provides you with feedback.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THE IMPERIAL AWARD?
The Award recognises students who evidence the transformative impact of their engagement in activities whilst at university. It requires students to demonstrate critical reflection upon how their experiences have transformed their understanding, attitudes and behaviours in relation to key graduate attributes.

Working towards the Imperial Award you will need to:

▲ Capture and record your activities and experiences;
▲ Reflect upon the significance of each attribute;
▲ Map your experiences against the Imperial Award attributes;
▲ Write a reflective statement explaining why specific experiences caused you to develop each attribute and the impact that this has had on yourself and others;
▲ Reflect on and incorporate feedback from assessors during the process.
The Imperial Award is split into three streams, each containing four attributes. Every stream requires you to submit a separate, short reflective statement demonstrating how you meet the criteria for each attribute in that stream. You do not need to submit statements for each stream at the same time; you can plan to spread them out.

The Award webpage lists key dates. There are multiple chances to submit statements, each year.

To prepare your statement you will need to recall, discuss and reflect on your chosen activities and experiences in relation to the Imperial Award attributes.

To achieve a stream, you will need to effectively communicate why your experiences caused you to develop each of the attributes within that stream, building a convincing argument that you meet the Award criteria.

You will be formally recognised on your official College transcript for each stream attained.

Students who gain all three streams will be recognised as having achieved the full Imperial Award ▴

Further information on each of the Imperial Award streams and attributes is provided on page 14.

### IMPERIAL AWARD STREAMS AND ATTRIBUTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream one</th>
<th>Innovative approach</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent, open-minded thought</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical, intelligent problem-solving</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enterprising mind-set</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream two</th>
<th>Communication and active listening</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective teamwork</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness of group dynamics and collaboration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategic mind-set</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream three</th>
<th>Critical self-analysis/self-evaluation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-awareness and active self-management</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social conscience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recognising opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Global mind-set</td>
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</tbody>
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**IMPERIAL AWARD STREAMS AND ATTRIBUTES**

- **Stream one**
  - Independent, open-minded thought
  - Innovative approach
  - Creativity
  - Practical, intelligent problem-solving
  - Enterprising mind-set

- **Stream two**
  - Effective teamwork
  - Communication and active listening
  - Motivation
  - Awareness of group dynamics and collaboration
  - Strategic mind-set

- **Stream three**
  - Self-awareness and active self-management
  - Critical self-analysis/self-evaluation
  - Social conscience
  - Recognising opportunities
  - Global mind-set
Gaining the Imperial Award

Register online

Use the online support resources to make sure you understand what is required

Start capturing your activities and experiences in your online portfolio

Map your experiences to the Award attributes in your online portfolio (Use this like a diary or journal)

Discuss and plan your progress with your Personal Tutor or mentor

Use the Reflection and Reflective Writing guide to help you select and reflect upon your experiences

Participate in Imperial Award workshops to practice and improve your reflective writing skills

Decide that you’re ready and then write and submit your short reflective statement(s)

Receive feedback from the assessors. If you are not successful you will be told how to improve so you can try again

Each successful stream is acknowledged on your graduation transcript, but with a complete set of three streams you will be acknowledged as earning ‘The Imperial Award’

The Imperial Award requires an iterative approach, you will need to go through some steps multiple times before you are successful.
Registration and support

REGISTRATION
To register online visit: imperialcollegeunion.org/imperial-award
Once registered, you will gain access to the Imperial Award portfolio to let you begin capturing, reflecting on and mapping your experiences.
You will also be added to the Imperial Award mailing list and invited to Imperial Award workshops and events.

SUPPORT
Try to meet with your Personal Tutor or mentor to discuss your progress through the Imperial Award. They can help you reflect on your experiences and set goals. They can also offer advice reflecting on your evidence of attributes.
We recommend meeting with your Personal Tutor or mentor at least once per term so that you can track and discuss your development. Negotiate and book meetings with them in advance.
If your Personal Tutor or mentor is away or unavailable, contact the Imperial Award team who can help support you by connecting you to a mentor.

Watch our video and read our guide on Reflection and Reflective Writing, which you can access online. Support workshops are offered regularly to all students participating in the Award. For more information and to access all support resources visit imperialcollegeunion.org/imperial-award.
If you have any specific questions or concerns, please email us using imperialaward@imperial.ac.uk

ONLINE PORTFOLIO
By registering to the Imperial Award, you will gain access to your personal online portfolio (this is private and only you can see its content). This is a virtual journaling tool, specifically designed so that you can capture and then reflect on your experiences against the Award attributes. It is a virtual space where you can collect your thoughts along your developmental journey and deconstruct your activities in terms of experiences that you can map against the award’s attributes.

OVERVIEW MATRIX
Your online tools also include a matrix, generated when you map your activities against each attribute. Your matrix shows you where you have strengths and gaps in support of a particular Award stream
**The process**

**PORTFOLIO**

You can capture and record anything in your online portfolio; only you can see the details. It will prove extremely helpful when you decide to write your statements and when you are writing a CV, job application or cover letter.

Example activities:
- Academic or wellbeing representation
- Clubs, societies and projects
- Event organisation and management
- Learning and study
- Life events
- Professional and personal development
- Research experiences
- Teaching, tutoring or marking
- Volunteering
- Work (Casual, part-time or career experiences, enterprises)

This is not exhaustive; you can draw upon any experience you feel has caused personal development related to the Award attributes.

**RECORD ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES ONLINE**

You will need to align your activities and experiences to the attributes. Your online portfolio helps you to judge which experiences align best, and which gaps you wish to fill with new experiences.

**MAP AND EVIDENCE ATTRIBUTES**

- Stream one: Independent, open-minded thought
  - Innovative approach
  - Creativity
  - Practical, intelligent problem-solving
  - Enterprising mind-set
- Stream two: Effective teamwork
  - Communication and active listening
  - Motivation
  - Awareness of group dynamics and collaboration
  - Strategic mind-set
- Stream three: Self-awareness and active self-management
  - Critical self-analysis/self-evaluation
  - Social conscience
  - Recognising opportunities
  - Global mind-set

**AWARD SUBMISSION AND ASSESSOR FEEDBACK**

Before you start to write your statement, take time to think about your activities and experiences in relation to the Imperial Award attributes. Use the ‘Reflection and Reflective Writing’ guide, the ‘Reflective Writing workshop’ and our video ‘A guide to self-reflection’ to help you develop your skills.

Your written, short reflective statements for each stream must be submitted through the Imperial Award system. Each stream requires a separate statement; you cannot combine them. You will receive feedback from the assessors for each statement you submit, which you should further reflect upon.

You must fulfil the Award criteria in relation to every attribute in a stream.

To receive the full Imperial Award you need to achieve each stream.

You can work towards streams of the Imperial Award at your own pace, throughout the course of your degree.

To avoid disappointment, we recommend that you submit your first statement before your final term of study.

First year undergraduates can sign-up for the Imperial Award but cannot submit until their second year, allowing time to gain experiences and reflect on their impact.

**REFLECTION**

**WRITE AND SUBMIT A SHORT REFLECTIVE STATEMENT**

You will need to align your activities and experiences with the attributes. Your online portfolio enables you to judge which experiences align best, and which gaps you wish to fill with new experiences.

**Example activites:**
- Academic or wellbeing representation
- Clubs, societies and projects
- Event organisation and management
- Learning and study
- Life events
- Professional and personal development
- Research experiences
- Teaching, tutoring or marking
- Volunteering
- Work (Casual, part-time or career experiences, enterprises)

This is not exhaustive; you can draw upon any experience you feel has caused personal development related to the Award attributes.

**Imperial College Union support and workshops**

- Personal Tutor / mentor support

**Assessor panel**
Each statement must be no more than 4,000 characters, which is about one A4 page. You will need to submit one statement per stream. You cannot combine the streams; each stream requires a separate statement.

Do not be tempted to re-use parts of statements across streams. You can discuss, but not copy, the work of others. The Award requires your own personal reflection.

For more guidance on writing your statement read the Reflection & Reflective Writing guide.
imperialcollegeunion.org/imperial-award/reflective-writing-guidance.pdf

HOW DO I SUBMIT MY STATEMENT FOR A STREAM?
Your written, short reflective statement is submitted online at the link below. Submission deadlines can be found online at the link below.
imperialcollegeunion.org/imperial-award
Imperial Award criteria and framework

The Imperial Award framework contains the definitions of the Streams and Attributes; you can find this on the next pages. The Imperial Award Criteria explains what is required of a statement in order for a student to awarded a stream of the Award.

When the assessors read your statement they will use the Criteria to decide if each attribute has ‘Met’, ‘Partially met’ or ‘Not met’ the criteria.

The overall outcome for your statement will be equal to the lowest attribute outcome. For example, three out of four attributes could be ‘Met’ but, if the final attribute is ‘Not met’, then ‘Not met’ will be your overall outcome.

**WHAT DOES MY OVERALL STATEMENT OUTCOME MEAN?**

**MET**
This means you have been successful in communicating how you have developed all the attributes within a particular stream; you will be awarded that stream.

**PARTIALLY MET**
Partially met means that the panel may invite you to submit a little extra if they suspect that you might meet the Award criteria for each attribute if only you had been more explicit about your evidence. This is about fixing minor problems.

After this, if the assessors are satisfied that you have met the Award criteria, you will be awarded the stream and the panel will alert Registry to this add to your transcript.

If not, the panel will return your statement to you with advice on improvements to be made for a future submission.

**NOT MET**
The panel will give you feedback so that you can submit again, in the future, after working on how you communicate the evidence for each Imperial Award attribute. Discuss the feedback with your Personal Tutor or mentor and the improvements or adjustments that could be made.
**IMPERIAL AWARD CRITERIA (AS USED BY THE ASSESSORS)**

Carefully read the Imperial Award Criteria below and the definitions of Streams and Attributes in the Imperial Award Framework on the next two pages. These are used by assessors as the basis for checking whether your statement meets the Award requirements. *The overall stream outcome is equal to the lowest attribute outcome.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOT MET</th>
<th>PARTIALLY MET</th>
<th>MET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The assessor will regard the attribute as not met if:</td>
<td>The assessor will regard the attribute as partially met if:</td>
<td>The assessor will regard the attribute as met if:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▴ The attribute is not discussed</td>
<td>▴ The student has written a statement which explicitly reflected upon the attribute and ▴ The student demonstrates independent engagement in the activity but ▴ The student has not yet claimed and demonstrated transformation, impact or personal development and/or ▴ The student has not made links between the activity, impact, and the attribute</td>
<td>▴ The attribute is explicitly reflected upon and ▴ The attribute is integrated into a critically considered argument, using experiences as evidence and ▴ The argument supports a clear and persuasive claim as to how independent engagement in the activities led to the transformative impact on the student and, where appropriate, others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLAGIARISM**

All statements for the Imperial Award will be submitted through the plagiarism detection software Turnitin.

Cheating offences and plagiarism are taken very seriously and are dealt with according to the College’s Cheating Offences Policy & Procedures.

You can find out more information about plagiarism on the Library webpages: imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/library/learning-support/plagiarism-awareness

**COMPLAINTS**

If you encounter any issues concerning the Imperial Award, we encourage you to contact the Training and Development Manager by emailing them detailing the nature of the problem. They will be able to advise on the next steps: imperialaward@imperial.ac.uk
Thinking for yourself and taking open-minded approaches to situations or tasks means that you draw on, but are not confined by, what you already know from your studies and from your life experiences. The four attributes can be discussed in relation to a single activity or may have been gained/demonstrated across several activities. Situations requiring independent thinking may have involved risks with no guarantee of success, and yet these situations can be highly transformative for you and others. The emphasis in this stream is on the student’s ability to distinguish the different aspects of each attribute and relate them to their own thinking.

Imperial students have a strong tradition of group activities, however progressing beyond mere groupwork to effective teamwork requires an effort to understand teams, develop teamwork skills and apply them to enhance the team’s activities. Students will use this stream to evidence their transformation into an effective contributor to a team, reflecting upon their impact on a team’s operation and their contribution to team achievements.

Imperial students enjoy the reputation of people who can handle intense academic challenges. Many also enjoy a reputation for working to benefit society and for being achievers who can identify opportunities and have an impact, aware of the world beyond their own context. In this stream, students are required to demonstrate their emotional intelligence, to recall and reflect upon their own internal drivers and to consider their impact on others. Students will reflect upon instances and events which demonstrate attributes going to the core of their identity and their ability to manage transformation.

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## Glossary of terms

<p>| <strong>Activities</strong> | An activity is a source of personal experiences. It provides the context for your experiences. Independently engaging in an activity means that you were personally and directly involved in doing the activity. |
| <strong>Attributes</strong> | An attribute is a personal characteristic, acquired because your transformative experience(s) have changed the way you think and, subsequently, act. The Imperial Award covers 12 attributes. |
| <strong>Award Criteria</strong> | The criteria used by the assessor’s when assessing student statements, as shown in the Student Guide. |
| <strong>Descriptive writing</strong> | A style of writing only describing what you did and how you did it. In the context of the Imperial Award it weakens your claim because it lacks reflection on why an experience has caused you to develop the attributes. |
| <strong>Evaluation</strong> | You examine complex issues using your high-level cognitive skills. More focussed than a review. Leads to a solution, conclusion or recommendation. |
| <strong>Experiences</strong> | An experience is anything that has had impact upon you during your engagement in an activity. |
| <strong>Impact</strong> | The difference it makes to self, others or a situation. The difference between how things were before, and how things are now. |
| <strong>Life events</strong> | Experiences of handling challenges or opportunities in your life. Includes health, money, personal responsibilities, legal situations, etc. |
| <strong>Mapping</strong> | Mapping means correlating, findings matches/gaps between your experiences and the attributes. The online Portfolio contains a mapping tool. |
| <strong>Matrix</strong> | Automatically generated by the online portfolio, to summarise the links and gaps in your evidence for the 12 Award attributes. |
| <strong>Other activities</strong> | A catch-all category, in case we missed something. |
| <strong>Part-time work</strong> | Any type: does not have to be professional or degree-related |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal development</strong></th>
<th>Personal, as opposed to purely academic or professional, development of attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolio (diary/journal)</strong></td>
<td>Collecting your experiences into one document (folio). Add past experiences and then top-up regularly with new experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Looking back on your experiences; sifting for significant moments, transformative of the way you think and act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflective Writing</strong></td>
<td>Writing that reveals your deep, thoughtful reflection about the significance of your experiences in your personal development of the attributes. Description is limited, only providing context for the rest of the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Streams</strong></td>
<td>Attributes are split into three different streams, each with a different emphasis. See Stream descriptors to understand the differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools</strong></td>
<td>The Reflection and Reflective Writing Guide contains tools to help you interview yourself (reflect), structure your statement and write reflectively. The online portfolio and matrix overview are tools to help you to collect and sift your evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong></td>
<td>Change in you which is probably irreversible. Evidence of transformation can be experiences with such a strong impact that they change the way you think and act.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteering</strong></td>
<td>Any volunteering could give you transformative experiences. Community, educational, health, engineering, medicine, environmental, Imperial College Union roles, STEMM ambassadors, etc.</td>
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</table>