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 expands the support for 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 a portfolio builder;
- Building your portfolio and mapping your attributes will help you upgrade your CV immediately, even before attempting the Award;
- Analysing your own non-technical attributes is very employer-friendly and interview-savvy;
- 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 Award is earned by reflecting upon, and writing up, the transformative impact of your activities on you. It is not about rewarding academic success or the volume of the activities you engage in, but addresses your own personal development.

Through reflection, you are encouraged and will be supported to: understand the attributes required for the award, interpret your own experiences gained from your activities outside and inside your degree, correlate them to attributes and consider filling any gaps in your development.

The Imperial Award can shape some of your Personal Tutor 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 co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. 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;
- Map and evidence your experiences against the Imperial Award attributes;
- Reflect upon the significance of each attribute;
- Write a short reflective statement critically considering how you meet the Imperial Award criteria;
- Utilise feedback from various sources throughout the process.
The Imperial Award consists of three streams, each containing four attributes. Every stream requires you to submit a separate, short reflective statement to demonstrate 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 need to recall, discuss and reflect upon your independent activities in relation to the Award criteria.

To achieve a given stream, you must persuade the Imperial Award assessors panel that you have met the criteria for all four attributes. 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

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

Discuss and plan your progress with your Personal Tutor or mentor

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

Attend workshops run by the Union to help you reflect and write reflectively

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

Receive feedback from the assessor panel(s), if you are not successful you will be told how to improve so you can try again

The Imperial Award requires an iterative approach, you will need to go through each step multiple times before you are successful.

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

PORTFOLIO

RECORD ACTIVITIES
AND EXPERIENCE

You can capture and record anything in your online portfolio; it’s entirely up to you and no one else can see it. It will help you when you decide to write your statement(s) and, later on, when writing a CV, job application or cover letter.

Example activities:
Academia
Clubs, societies and projects
Life events
Part-time work
Personal development
Running an event
Volunteering
Welfare or Academic Rep network
Anything else

This list is not exhaustive and you can draw upon anything you feel is persuasive evidence of your development of the Award attributes and your own transformation.

MAP AND EVIDENCE
ATTRIBUTES

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

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

Imperial College Union support and workshops

Personal Tutor / mentor support
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 and the A guide to self-reflection video to help you reflect.

Your written, short reflective statement is submitted through the Imperial Award system. You will need to submit one statement per stream. You cannot combine the streams in one statement; each stream requires a separate statement.

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 transform and reflect.
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 mapping and evidencing your activities and experiences.

You will be added to our Imperial Award contact list. Every term you will be invited to briefing sessions, as well as support workshops.

We will contact and brief your Personal Tutor too. If your Personal Tutor is unable to support you through the Award, we can allocate you a mentor.

**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.

Your department may give you advice on how/when to meet with your Personal Tutor. Ideally, the Imperial Award fits within the usual discussions you have with your personal tutor about your personal development. 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**
After your registration for the Imperial Award, you can access the online portfolio. This practical tool is designed to help you record your activities and experiences and then categorise them against the Award attributes.

Your portfolio is intended entirely for you, and you can utilise it however you find it works best.

**ONLINE MATRIX**
Your online tools also include a matrix, where you map your activities against each attribute. The matrix shows you where you have gaps in an Imperial Award ‘stream’ of attribute(s), and where you have the most experiences in support of a particular Award stream.
PORTFOLIO — CAPTURE AND RECORD EXPERIENCES

Activities and Experiences

My Activities

Community Connections volunteer

Computing Department Rep.

Experiences

- Student Staff Committee Meetings
- Department student forum
- Student consultation on late submissions

Add new Experience

Events Officer - RCC Dance Company

MATRIX — MATCH EXPERIENCES TO ATTRIBUTES

My Imperial Award

15 Activities created
22 Experiences recorded

Activities and Experiences

- Community Connections volunteer
- Computing Department Rep.
- Events Officer - RCC Dance Company

Imperial Award | Student guidance
Each statement must be no more than 4000 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.

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 on the overview tab. imperialcollegeluunion.org/imperial-award
Imperial Award criteria and framework

WHAT DO ASSESSORS CONSIDER WHEN THEY REVIEW MY STATEMENT?
The assessor panel will convene to review your written submission against the Award criteria.

The assessors will judge your statement to have met, partially met or not met the necessary criteria:

MET
This means that you will be awarded that stream. The panel will congratulate you and alert Registry to add the appropriate line to your transcript.

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.

THE IMPERIAL AWARD CRITERIA AND FRAMEWORK
The framework contains two elements: the definitions of Streams and Attributes (what to claim) and the Award criteria (how to claim).

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.
### IMPERIAL AWARD CRITERIA (AS USED BY THE ASSESSORS)

*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>
</tbody>
</table>
| ▲ The attribute is not discussed                                       | ▲ The student has written a statement which explicitly reflected upon the attribute  
  and                                                                  | ▲ The attribute is explicitly reflected upon                                   |
| ▲ The attribute is merely described (not discussed)                    | ▲ The student demonstrates independent engagement in the activity              | ▲ The student is integrated into a critically considered argument      |
| ▲ The attribute is only indicated by a mere example (not discussed)    | ▲ The student has not yet claimed and demonstrated transformation, impact or personal development  
  and                                                                  | ▲ The argument supports a clear and persuasive claim as to how independent engagement  
  in the activity                                                          | ▲ The student has not made links between the activity, impact, and the attribute |
| ▲ The attribute is only implicit (instead of explicit)                 | ▲ The discussion lacks reflection upon how the attribute was transformative (had personal developmental impact on the student)  
  and                                                                  | ▲ The student does not demonstrate independent engagement in the activity      |
| ▲ The student does not demonstrate independent engagement in the activity | ▲ The discussion lacks reflection upon how the attribute was transformative (had personal developmental impact on the student)  
  and                                                                  | ▲ The student does not demonstrate independent engagement in the activity      |

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

*Carefully read the Imperial Award Criteria above 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.*
Stream one
Independent, open-minded thought

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 and 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.

Stream two
Effective teamwork

Imperial students have a strong tradition of group activities, but progressing beyond mere group work to effective teamwork requires an effort to understand teams, develop relevant teamwork skills and apply them to enhance the team’s activities. Students will use this stream to reflect on their evidence of transformation into an effective contributor to a team, showing impact upon how the team operated as well as contributing to the team’s achievements.

Stream three
Self-awareness and active self-management

Imperial students enjoy the reputation of people who can handle intense academic challenges. Many also enjoy a reputation for their effort to create societal benefits: for being achievers who can identify opportunities and have 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovative approach</th>
<th>You have applied your scientific or research knowledge and/or skills to improve an existing thing or to develop/identify/establish something new.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>You have generated ideas and applied them in developing an initiative, solving a problem, instigating a course of action, or bringing value to an individual, situation, or process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical, intelligent problem-solving</td>
<td>A solution has been identified and justified with intelligent reasoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising mind-set</td>
<td>Having an enterprising mindset enables you to identify opportunity(s) and take risks in order to develop outcomes that can be diffused into society (being a social entrepreneur or business entrepreneur) or have impact within an organisation (being an intrapreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and active listening</td>
<td>Managing communication processes and the flow of information to ensure that teams work effectively and that there is a shared understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>How you or others are motivated is understood, with tactics deployed to achieve an aim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of group dynamics and collaboration</td>
<td>The way in which others behave and interact is observed and understood, using individual’s traits for the benefit of the group and working together to achieve a collective goal/aim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic mind-set</td>
<td>Having a strategic mindset contributes to effective leadership, enabling a team to achieve its goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical self-analysis/self-evaluation</td>
<td>Consideration of your strengths and your opportunities for self-improvement, presenting a case/argument to justify behaviour or personal development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social conscience</td>
<td>Awareness of how your values/ethos impacts the application of your expert skills, knowledge and experience, and how your behaviour can impact upon others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising opportunities</td>
<td>Critical moments have been seized and exploited to further develop self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global mind-set</td>
<td>Having a global mindset lets you appreciate the broader social, cultural and/or international context(s), showing self-awareness, empathy, and an ability to adapt your behaviour and/or your approach to diverse situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Activities</strong></th>
<th>Actions taken whilst at Imperial, which have a personal developmental impact on you.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attributes</strong></td>
<td>Listed in the Imperial Award Framework, split into three streams. Four attributes make up a stream of attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-curricular</strong></td>
<td>Learning/project/developmental activity, which is not inside your degree but is closely related. Examples: studying a language with Imperial's CLCC; extending a project beyond your degree into independent research/development; implementing an idea initially developed as a classroom exercise; and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria</strong></td>
<td>Assessors guide as to what to look for in your statement per attribute, and shows you what you will need to ensure is included in your submissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Departmental liaison officer</strong></td>
<td>The academic/administrative leader on Imperial Award in your department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Listing of factual detail. Lists what, when, where, who, how much but omits the significance for you/others, weakening your claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>An examination of complex issues requiring high-level cognitive skills that is more focused and detailed than a review, providing a solution, conclusion or recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td>One activity may give you many experiences: volunteering on a project to design a device to assist a disabled person might require creativity for the design, enterprising mind-set to fund the prototype, motivational/leadership skills to keep volunteers engaged, communication and active listening to respond to feedback. Experiences give you evidence of developing the attributes required for a stream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra-curricular</strong></td>
<td>Activity wholly outside of your degree, for example: choir, non-professional work, clubs/societies, life events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus group</strong></td>
<td>A group of participants brought together to arrive at a consensus (focus), providing data for evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td>The difference it makes to self, others, or a situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imperial Award team</strong></td>
<td>The staff looking after the Imperial Award scheme, drawn from academic, admin and Imperial College Union staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life events</strong></td>
<td>Life throws difficulties in our paths, forcing us to respond and transforming us in the process. e.g. a student whose parent is diagnosed with chronic disease must balance competing, compelling demands on time/energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mapping</strong></td>
<td>The action of looking for the intersections/overlaps between the attributes you are trying to demonstrate and your evidence (the experiences gained from your activities): usually done with a matrix (or table).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matrix</strong></td>
<td>A table where your list of experiences (rows) can be plotted against the columns of attributes. Diagnostic tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurement</strong></td>
<td>Finding indicators of qualitative or quantitative impact; having a way to gauge impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other activities</strong></td>
<td>A catch-all category, in case we missed something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part-time work</strong></td>
<td>Any type: does not have to be professional or degree-related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal development</strong></td>
<td>Personal as opposed to purely academic or professional development, across all attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolio</strong></td>
<td>Bringing all of your experiences together in one folio (document); an <em>aide-mémoire</em>.</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>Streams</strong></td>
<td>The 12 attributes are grouped in three streams: four attributes per stream. See Imperial Award Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong></td>
<td>Change which is probably irreversible. A process of expanding critical awareness; old self-views changing into new self-views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteering</strong></td>
<td>Social, community, educational, health, engineering, environmental: all volunteering can transform you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>