



**Board of Trustees  
One-Page Summary – Imperial Plus Year One Review**

<b>AGENDA ITEM NO.</b>	9
<b>TITLE</b>	Imperial Plus – Year One Review
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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	Launched in October 2013, July 2014 marked the end of the pilot year for Imperial Plus. Developed as the Unions mechanism to recognise volunteer's contributions to the delivery of our services and activities, the programme encouraged our volunteers to reflect on the skills they gain through involvement in our activities and enabled them to acquire new skills through a formal accreditation and qualification, all of which boosts their employability. With close to 16,000 volunteer hours recorded, 194 volunteers gained either the Imperial Plus Volunteer Certificate or Volunteer Accreditation, with 22 enrolled on the Volunteer Qualification.
<b>PURPOSE</b>	This paper provides an overview of Imperial Plus in its pilot year, from its development through to delivery and an evaluation of the first year. Staff and 2013-14 Sabbatical Officers have been pleased with the progress Imperial Plus has made and the level of volunteer engagement in the programme. The year has not gone without challenges which are discussed with our strategy to overcome them in 2014-15, alongside plans to increase the number of volunteers being acknowledged through Imperial Plus in the next academic year.
<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	The reach Imperial Plus has is being expanded in 2014-15 to allow those students volunteering with college programmes the opportunity to work toward the Volunteer Accreditation; this year they were restricted to the Volunteer Certificate. This may have budget implications in terms of candidate registration with our awarding body, although staff are able to deliver additional workshops in place of student trainers to keep the workshop delivery to budget. Engaging those volunteers in College led programmes has the potential to lead to reputational risk, although we envisage this is unlikely: it will be the same team delivering the programme next year (Union staff and student trainers) who both received exemplary feedback from participants in relation to support and customer service, with 88% of this year's participants stating Imperial Plus met their expectations. The Union sees this expansion a key step towards gaining College recognition for Imperial Plus (SE2).
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	£15,283 provision made within Student Development Budget to deliver the programme in 2014-15
<b>LEGAL REVIEW REQUIRED?</b>	No
<b>DECISION/ACTION REQUIRED</b>	For information

## **Imperial Plus – Year One Review**

### **1.0 Summary**

1.1 At the end of its pilot year, 15,682 hours of volunteering have been recorded through Imperial Plus.

1.2 144 volunteers have gained the Imperial Plus Volunteer Certificate, 50 the Imperial Plus Volunteer Accreditation and 22 are working towards the Imperial Plus Volunteer Qualification [an Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 5 Award in the Management of Volunteer], due to be completed by November 2014.

1.3 86% of those working toward the Volunteer Certificate and 91% the Volunteer Accreditation stated that Imperial Plus met their expectations

### **2.0 Background**

2.1 74% of students in the winter 2011-12 Union Survey agreed or strongly agreed that their volunteer role improved their employability. However, only 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Imperial College Union has helped them translate their role into skills that employers will value. Less than half of survey respondents (45%) agreed or strongly agreed that the Union valued the work they did as volunteers.

2.2 Imperial Plus has four aims, which are to:

- Help volunteers clearly identify the skills they gain through involvement in our activities
- Encourage volunteers to recognise the value of these skills and how they enhance their employability
- Be relevant and accessible to all our volunteers
- Enable the Union to formally acknowledge the contribution volunteers make towards delivering our services

2.3 Imperial Plus was developed over an eight month period, through desk based research and consultation. The Student Development Manager reported to a working group on the programmes progress on a fortnightly basis and workshops were piloted in June and September 2013.

2.4 Imperial Plus consists of the Imperial Plus Volunteer Certificate, a 'no additional effort' option for volunteers to be acknowledged for 25, 50 or 75 hours volunteering where they reflect on the tasks they carry out and skills they use whilst volunteering; the Imperial Plus Volunteer Accreditation where a minimum 100 hours must recorded and four skills based workshops attended, producing a reflective assignment reflecting how the learning outcomes of the workshops have been applied within their volunteer role; and finally the Imperial Plus Volunteer Qualification, an ILM Level 5 Award in the Management of Volunteers consisting of four one-day training sessions and two reflective assignments.

2.5 The Volunteer Certificate was open to those volunteering with or via Imperial College Union plus those volunteering with a College programme, providing agreement has been sought with the programme lead. Due to the budget implications, the Volunteer Accreditation and Qualification were restricted to those volunteering with or via the Union only.

2.5 The Volunteer Accreditation achieved customised accreditation status by awarding body ASDAN in September 2013. ASDAN is a pioneering curriculum development organisation and awarding body offering programmes and qualifications that explicitly grow skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life, criteria they recognised Imperial Plus as fulfilling. Blue Edge Training was appointed as the training provider to deliver the Volunteer Qualification in April 2014.

2.4 The launch of Imperial Plus coincided with the start of the 2013-14 academic year.

### 3.0 Year One Delivery Review

3.1 Year one objectives in relation to Imperial Plus were to:

Objective	Status
Launch Volunteer Certificate and Volunteer Accreditation by November 2013 (SE2)	Complete
Develop and deliver Marketing and Communications plan and materials by November 2013 (SE2)	Complete
Undertake termly reviews in December 2013 and March 2014 (SE2)	Complete
Agree year two plan by June 2014 (SE2)	Complete
Ensure 200 student complete Volunteer Certificate by July 2014 (SE2)	144 students gained Certificate
Ensure 100 students complete the Volunteer Accreditation by July 2014 (SE2)	50 students gained Accreditation
Develop Imperial Plus Volunteer Qualification by February 2014 (SE4)	Complete
Start first cohort of Imperial Plus Volunteer Qualification by June 2014 (SE4)	Complete
Review IT provision and launch version 2.0 of Imperial Plus by June 2014 (SE4)	Near completion

3.2 Imperial Plus was advertised in UG and PG Welcome Guides, in Felix, through our social networks and was heavily promoted at Fresher's Fair. Furthermore, it was introduced at a number of open briefing sessions throughout October, at Management Group meetings, the Academic Rep training, Rectors Ambassadors training days and an EEE Student Ambassador Information session.

3.3 A majority of Imperial Plus activity took place in the summer term, where there was a huge increase in the number of hours logged (the equivalent of hours in term 1 and term 2 combined). In addition, 80% of all assignments were submitted between May and July.

#### Volunteer Certificate

3.4 In total, 385 volunteers registered for the Volunteer Certificate. At the end of the academic year, 144 volunteers had achieved the Volunteer Certificate with 241 'in progress' (of these, 206 had not logged any hours and were therefore 'inactive'). 8739 hours were logged by those working toward the Volunteer Certificate.

3.5 Through their initial and final self-assessments, volunteers reported an average increase in confidence and competence in the six Imperial Plus key skills of 10% during their volunteer experiences in the 2013-14 academic year.

## **Volunteer Accreditation**

3.6 In total, 96 volunteers registered for the Volunteer Accreditation. By July 31, 50 volunteers had achieved the Volunteer Accreditation, with the remaining 46 'in progress' (of these 46, 31 had not logged any hours or attended any workshops and were therefore 'inactive'). 6943 hours were logged by those working toward the Volunteer Accreditation.

3.7 Through their initial and final self-assessments, volunteers' competence and confidence increased by an average of 13% in the Imperial Plus six key skill areas whilst working toward the Volunteer Accreditation in the 2013-14 academic year.

3.8 Six students were recruited to deliver the Volunteer Accreditation *Introduction to...skill based workshops*, participating in a one day 'train the trainer' workshop in September. Between them, 32 workshops were delivered with 249 training places filled. 253 assignments were assessed and moderated (including resubmissions where volunteers had not met assessment criteria).

3.9 Workshop content was revised in the New Year based on participant and trainer feedback and again in August 2014. Overall each workshop scored highly in relation to the how useful the content was to the volunteer in their role, with workshops scoring an average of 8.11/10.

3.10 Initially workshop registration was slow although numbers picked up in the spring and summer terms in line with an increase in registrations. From March, staff began delivering assignment drop in session to support volunteers to complete their reflective assignments and demonstrate the assessment criteria.

## **Volunteer Qualification**

3.11 22 volunteers applied for, and were accepted on to, the Volunteer Qualification having completed a short application form where they had to outline the key responsibilities of their volunteer roles in 2014-15, identifying how the learning outcomes of two modules would assist them in carrying their role.

3.12 The modules and learning outcomes of the ILM Level 5 Award in the Management of Volunteers are:

### **Module 1: Promote volunteering to potential and actual volunteers**

1. Know how to promote volunteering to potential volunteers
2. Be able to help potential volunteers to understand the importance of volunteering in meeting the organisations vision, mission and goals
3. Be able to involve volunteers in the organisation
4. Be able to support volunteers change and conclude their role and contribution

### **Module 2: Manage the Motivation of Volunteers**

1. Understand how to communicate what is required from volunteers
2. Understand the importance of effective communication when managing volunteers
3. Be able to support volunteers in recognising and responding to risk

4. Be able to maintain the motivation of volunteers

### **Module 3: Develop Working Relationships with Colleagues and Stakeholders**

1. Know how to identify stakeholders and their relevance to an organisation
2. Understand how to establish working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders
3. Be able to create an environment of trust and mutual respect with colleagues and stakeholders

### **Module 4: Provide leadership and direction for own area of responsibility**

1. Be able to lead in own area of responsibility
2. Be able to provide direction and set objectives in own area of responsibility
3. Be able to communicate the direction for own area of responsibility and collect feedback to inform improvement
4. Be able to assess own leadership performance

3.13 To achieve the qualification, volunteers must attend all four modules and produce two assignments. 19/22 volunteers submitted their first assignment by the due date, with two others requesting one week extensions. One volunteer is unsure if she is able to complete the assignments, and staff are in discussions with her about alternative options.

#### **4.0 Participant evaluation**

4.1 All those who completed the Volunteer Certificate or Accreditation were sent a link to an online evaluation. 45 responses were received. Areas of note include:

4.2 Key motivations for registering for Imperial Plus were:

- “To be acknowledged for the number of hours I spend volunteering” (84%)
- “To enhance my CV and employability” (74%), and
- “To be recognised by the Union for my volunteering efforts” (66%)

4.3 Overall, volunteers working toward both the Certificate and Accreditation **agree** that Imperial Plus both helps and encourages them to reflect upon the skills gained through volunteering. Overall Volunteer Certificate participants **agree** and Volunteer Accreditation participants **strongly agree** that Union staff that run Imperial Plus are helpful and supportive and provide good customer service. Overall those working toward the Accreditation who attended workshops **strongly agreed** our student trainers are helpful and supportive, and **agree** they are able to relate the workshop content to individual’s volunteer roles.

4.4 A majority of participants thought Imperial Plus should be extended to include all extra-curricular activities students undertake whilst studying at Imperial. Comments included “some people have no other way to document the time they spend on extra-curricular activities e.g. hall seniors!”

4.5 86% of those working toward the Volunteer Certificate and 91% the Volunteer Accreditation stated that Imperial Plus met their expectations.

4.6 As a pilot year, there are understandably aspects of the programme that could be improved or developed further. Completing the sentence '*If I could change one thing about Imperial Plus, it would be...*', volunteers suggested:

"...providing support or training for volunteers to make eActivities more accessible"

"Include hall senioring"

"That the certificate was clearly recognised by institutions/employers or as an official qualification"

"It's difficult for students to travel to South Kensington to attend the workshops due to time constraints/distance"

"Clearer progression onwards to the Volunteer Qualification. It would be demotivating if, after completing the Accreditation this year, all I could do next year was the same programme."

4.7 Completing the sentence "*the best thing about Imperial Plus is...*" garnered the following responses:

"The feeling you have when you know that in the past hour you have actually gained very useful skills."

"The recognition, especially the Volunteer Qualification programme which I am on. It is an invaluable opportunity to up skill myself"

"The idea behind it. The fact that Imperial is trying to improve the volunteering experience is excellent."

"It does not take much additional work, but offers students the recognition of their work"

"I didn't realise how many hours I actually put in before!"

## Challenges

5.1 Challenges we have encountered in delivering Imperial Plus this year include:

5.1.1 Translating the number of volunteers who register for Imperial Plus in to the number of volunteers who complete either the Volunteer Certificate or Volunteer Accreditation.

5.1.2 Volunteers completing the initial self-assessment and the final self-assessment simultaneously at the end of the process.

5.1.1 Lower numbers participating in the autumn workshops than anticipated.

5.1.2 Influx of assignments in July, where 109 assignments (43% of all assignments) were submitted and had to be assessed and moderated by staff placing pressure on resources.

5.1.3 Delay in volunteers recording their hours, with many back-dating hours in the final term which affects the quality of using Imperial Plus as a true record of their volunteer experience as a reference when writing job applications and CV's.

## 6.0 Year Two Delivery Plans

6.1 Registration for Imperial Plus 2014-15 opened on 1 August and to date 16 volunteers have registered. Delivery plans for Year two are as follows:

- 6.1.1 Inclusion of instructions for using eActivities in all registration confirmation emails sent to volunteers, which may go some way of translating the numbers for those who register to those who complete.
- 6.1.2 The Student Development team will ensure Imperial Plus is introduced at 50 meetings in the autumn term, including open briefing sessions, Management Group meetings, Hall Senior training, Club/Society/Project meetings, at Academic Rep training and at College led volunteering programme training events/meetings.
- 6.1.3 Increased and on-going Imperial Plus promotion throughout the year, encouraging volunteers to register and be acknowledged for their volunteering efforts.
- 6.1.4 Reducing the number of South Kensington Volunteer Accreditation workshops from 18 to 12 in the autumn term, aiming to run each workshop at or close to capacity.
- 6.1.5 Pilot the delivery of 2-3 Volunteer Accreditation workshops at non-South Kensington campuses in the autumn term.
- 6.1.6 Deliver Volunteer Accreditation assignment drop in session throughout the year.
- 6.1.7 Revise the assessment criteria and gain approval from ASDAN, improving the supporting documentation available to volunteers.
- 6.1.8 Working with the Systems Coordinator to ensure all other areas of Imperial Plus on eActivities are frozen until the initial skills self-assessment has been completed to prevent volunteers completing both the initial and final self-assessment concurrently at the end of the programme, which we feel may have skewed data this year.
- 6.1.9 Run competitions/incentives throughout the year to encourage people to log their volunteering hours regularly. An Easter egg hours log competition was ran over Easter which resulted in an increase in hours being logged.
- 6.1.10 Bringing the final date to submit assignments forward to mid-July (rather than 31 July) to improve resource management and give volunteers more time to resubmit their assignments should they not meet all criteria.
- 6.1.11 Review how Imperial Plus, and acknowledgement those completing it, can play a fundamental part in the Union Awards.
- 6.1.12 On-going conversations with College in relation to their Graduate Attributes Programme and their desire to produce an Imperial 'HEAR' type document, which Imperial Plus and its infrastructure could support.
- 6.1.13 Develop and pilot an Imperial Plus Volunteer CPD programme by July 2015.
- 6.1.14 Aiming to increase numbers completing the Volunteer Certificate and Volunteer Accreditation by 10%, Year Two objectives in the Union Operating Plan relating to Imperial Plus are:

Objective	Status
Launch bespoke Imperial Plus programmes from Constituent Unions and Welfare/Liberation Officers by November	CU's contacted w/c 08/09/2014
Review Imperial Plus Qualification scheme and launch 2015/16 scheme by April	
Deliver six Volunteering Accreditation workshops at non SK campuses by July 2015	Scheduled
Support current Cohort to complete Qualification by January	On track
Ensure Imperial Plus is fully communicated in Welcome materials by October	On track

