

IMPERIAL



Imperial Award **Student Guide**

Imperial students like you are the heart of the university community and I am so impressed by the breadth, depth and impact of the activities in which our students participate. Such activity not only makes a significant contribution to university life and our community, but also shapes students as a future professionals.



Peter Haynes
Vice-Provost (Education
& Student Experience)

You will find that your time at Imperial will pass much more quickly than you expect — the Imperial Award is designed to help you make the most of your experience, by providing a developmental journey within which you will reflect on your experiences and discover more about your potential.

The Award provides a structured approach to improving specific attributes that our students, staff and also employers have identified as key to lifelong success in the 21st century. It gives you the space not only to improve and build confidence, but also to enjoy and take pride in your achievements.

Upon completing the Award and receiving recognition from the university and Imperial College Union, you will have evidenced your development in each of the attributes and will have gained lifelong skills to help make the most of future opportunities.

...your time at Imperial will pass much more quickly than you expect — the Imperial Award is designed to help you make the most of your experience

The Imperial Award encourages self-reflection on specific skills 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. The Imperial Award is designed to support you in reflecting on, and evidencing vital attributes such as effective communication, leadership and problem solving. By participating in the Programme you will gain greater confidence in your skills and improve your ability to articulate your skills effectively to various audiences, including future employers.

The Imperial Award can shape some of your Personal Tutor or mentor meetings, helping you to get more out of them. Finally, it will help you discover more about yourself and your potential, empowering you to make informed choices for your life and career.



What are the benefits of the Imperial Award?

- Develop practical self-reflection skills
- Discover more about yourself and your potential
- Develop your ability to ‘pitch yourself’ to various audiences (self-advocacy)
- Support your peers and receive support from your peers
- Gain a formal recognition from Imperial

What is required to complete 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 helped them develop specific attributes.

Working towards the Imperial Award you will need to:

- Reflect on your experiences and activities
- Reflect upon the significance of the Imperial Award attributes
- Select the attributes you want to reflect on
- Prepare a reflective submission demonstrating how specific experiences caused you to develop these attributes and the impact that this has had on yourself and others
- Reflect on and incorporate feedback from peers and assessors during the process.

The Imperial Award process, as much as the end result, has impacted me more than I expected. I am more self-aware and I’ve noticed that I can handle difficult situations better than in the past.

— Sam, Imperial Award Achiever (PG, Business School)

The Imperial Award attribute framework consists of twenty attributes grouped into five themes. Completing the full Imperial Award will require you to submit two or three reflective pieces addressing attributes of your choice.





Personal effectiveness

Proactivity taking the initiative to act in advance rather than react

Adaptability ability to adjust easily to new or changing conditions

Discovery mindset curiosity-driven approach to self-directed learning

Creating connections connecting with others, leveraging those connections, and aiming for synergies in collaboration



Independent thinking

Strategic thinking big picture thinking, planning and making decisions in a goal-oriented manner

Problem solving intelligently approaching problems to which the solution is not immediately clear and justifying the chosen solution

Creativity and innovation generating something new or novel and making it a reality

Critical thinking analysis and evaluation in order to make a judgement





Effective teamwork

Awareness of group dynamics

an understanding of how individuals within a group interact to overcome challenges and achieve the collective goal

Effective communication

managing the flow of information between individuals to ensure a shared understanding and reduce miscommunications

Leadership

motivating and inspiring others with an appropriate style to achieve a collective goal or vision

Collaboration

working together effectively as individuals each with unique strengths, weaknesses, aims and interests



Valuing diversity

Social conscience

being conscious of how the way you think and perceive the world impacts yourself and others

Open mindedness

awareness and appreciation of alternative perspectives, cultures and backgrounds

Global mindset

awareness of the wider world and your contribution to it

Emotional intelligence

the ability to understand your emotions and those of others





Coaching and mentoring

- Active listening** listening to fully understand what someone is communicating
- Developing others** helping others develop by identifying areas for improvement and providing practical guidance to help them develop
- Effective feedback** actively participating in feedback dialogue through providing practical advice and guidance and responding to the other person's needs
- Motivating others** empathising with others to understand what motivates them and helping them to maintain their motivation

For the Imperial Award, you are on your own journey undertaking your chosen experiences, which means you aren't being measured against anyone else. That's a radically different feeling for students. And it finally frees them to see the value of the experiences they undergo, and what lessons they have learnt.

— Shil, Imperial Award Achiever (PG, Mechanical Engineering)



Stage 1

Initial reflection

For your first submission, you can choose any four attributes you would like to reflect on.

We will provide you with guidance and support to help you decide what attributes might be most beneficial for you to reflect on, depending on your career aspirations and development plans.

This stage will require you to produce a reflective piece addressing these four attributes. Your piece will be assessed by peers and assessors against the Imperial Award assessment criteria, which are outlined in the further section of this document.

You will be formally recognised on your official Imperial transcript for completing each stage of the Award.

Our Reflection Guide (available online) offers guidance and practical advice on how to produce a reflective piece that meets the Criteria.

Stage 2

Full Award

After completing the first stage of the Programme, you can decide to conclude your journey with the Imperial Award or follow:

- a 'Further reflection' path and continue reflecting on further eight attributes of your choice (different from the initial four you reflected on). You will need to submit two reflective pieces addressing four attributes each.
- a 'Mentoring' path, which gives you an opportunity to mentor other students participating in the Programme, and then to reflect on your experience in the context of four attributes (preferably from the Coaching and Mentoring theme). You will need to submit one reflective piece addressing these four attributes to complete this path.

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

Once your final submission is assessed as 'Met', you're going to be invited to a brief online interview to discuss your reflections and confirm their authenticity. After this, you'll be awarded a full Imperial Award, which will be officially recognised on your degree transcript. You're also going to receive the full Imperial Award certificate.



Stage 1



Welcome

- Learn more about how to get the most out of the Imperial Award Programme
- Choose the first four attributes you want to reflect on
- Use our attribute selector tool to start reflecting on these attributes
- Start planning how you want to engage with the Imperial Award, and when you want to complete various parts of the Programme
- Attend an Introductory session to help you get started



Getting started

- Begin capturing your reflections in a portfolio
- Attend a Reflection workshop to help you produce a reflective submission that meets the criteria.
- Attend a peer mentoring session to get initial feedback and guidance



Initial reflection

- Learn how to submit your reflective piece
- Complete our 'Effective feedback' training
- Start working on your reflective piece
- Get further advice from a mentor
- Take part in the informal peer review activity (required before formal assessment)
- Submit your reflective piece for formal assessment



Stage 2



Further reflection

- Reflect on eight further attributes of your choice
- Decide how you want to group them into two reflective pieces (four attributes per piece)
- Produce your two reflective submissions
- Get feedback from a mentor and peers (optional)
- Submit your reflective pieces for formal assessment



Mentoring

- Register as a mentor for the Imperial Award
- Complete a 'Mentoring' training (online)
- Offer mentoring to a student, who is working on completing the first stage of the Programme
- Reflect on your experience as a peer mentor
- Produce a reflective piece addressing four attributes (preferably from the Coaching and Mentoring theme)
- Get feedback from a mentor and peers (optional)
- Submit your reflective piece for formal assessment



Your reflective pieces can be submitted as one of these three methods. Whatever method you choose, keep your submission simple and criteria focused.

Choosing methods You can mix and match per submission. The same assessment criteria apply to all methods. The assessment criteria are outlined in the next section of this document.

Choosing the right method is an opportunity to master your skills, e.g. a written submission will help you practice writing job applications; and a video can help you improve your interview technique. You must submit your reflective piece through the Imperial Award system.

You must appropriately reference any media not created by you. Your reflective submission is about your developmental journey so be intentional about any media that you use that you did not create.

You may change submission methods when resubmitting. Keep in mind that assessors check past submissions to gauge whether you have understood and applied their feedback. Your resubmission must meet the Imperial Award criteria as a stand-alone piece.

See the Imperial Award course pages for more guidance.

Written submission



Developmental advantage

Practise reflective writing
e.g. when producing personal
statements

Limits

Up to 1000 words per reflective piece

Description

A reflective
essay

Video submission



Developmental advantage

Practise speaking technique
e.g. when being interviewed
for scholarships or jobs

Limits

Seven minutes in total per reflective
piece. It does not have to be one take,
cutting is allowed

Description

One video-
call-style
video of you
sharing your
reflections

Multimedia submission



Developmental advantage

Practise creative presentation
of information, e.g., when
creating a visual portfolio for
prospective employers

Limits

1000 words which you may distribute
as you would like within the following
parameters:*

- 1 min video is equivalent to 150 words
- 1 image is equivalent to 20 words
- Icons, symbols & spaces can be
used freely

Description

Text, images and/or
short video clips to
communicate
your reflections.

*Example 1: 3 × 1 min videos, six images and 430 words arranged as a poster;

Example 2: 2 × 1 min video, four images and 600 words arranged as a mind map



Carefully read the Imperial Award Criteria below and the definitions of the Attributes in the Imperial Award Framework. These are used by Assessors as the basis for checking whether your submission meets the Award requirements.

An appropriate number of attributes were chosen for reflection



Met

All four attributes are addressed.

Needs development

There are an insufficient number of attributes chosen for reflection.

The application demonstrates sufficient understanding of the attributes



Met

The student shows clear understanding of the attributes they chose and what they mean.

Needs development

The student doesn't understand the meaning behind the attributes and/or doesn't make their interpretation clear.

Understanding is demonstrated by linking the attribute to appropriate experience



Met

Understanding is demonstrated by linking the attribute to appropriate experience.

Needs development

The assessor doesn't see how the experience chosen for reflection links to the attributes.



The whole application demonstrates a sufficient level of reflection on the chosen attributes



Met

There are clear reflective elements in the application emphasising the rationale behind the student's thinking and providing more depth as to the experiences they focus on.

Needs development

The application is descriptive and does not include reflection on why something happened and how they developed. OR There are some reflective elements, but they are sparse and superficial.

The submission describes the transformative impact of the development of the attributes



Met

The student comments on the impact that the development of the attribute had on them.

Needs development

There are no references to transformation.
OR The references to transformation are superficial and do not explain the how the student has changed.

The application demonstrates reflection on the impact of transformation for future actions or decisions



Met

There is some indication of how similar situations will be approached in the future having gone through this transformation.

Needs development

There are no references to transformation. OR The references to transformation are superficial and do not explain the change approaching future situations.



What does my Submission outcome mean?

Needs Development

This means that you have not met the assessment criteria and your submission needs further development. The assessor will provide formative feedback explaining what you can work on to meet the criteria when you resubmit.

You can use any of the available submission deadlines to re-submit your piece.

Met

This means you have been successful in communicating how you have developed all the attributes within a particular submission.

Plagiarism

Cheating offences and plagiarism are taken very seriously and are dealt with according to the Imperial'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



Using Generative AI Tools

As you work on your reflective pieces, we understand that generative AI tools can be incredibly helpful in various ways. However, it's crucial to use these tools appropriately to ensure that your reflections remain authentic and genuine.

While AI tools can support you in refining your language and presentation, the core content must come from your own experiences and introspection. Your real, lived experiences are invaluable and irreplaceable. Embrace this opportunity to develop genuine self-reflection skills.

Complaints

If you encounter any issues concerning the Imperial Award, we encourage you to contact us by email: imperialaward@imperial.ac.uk



- Activities** 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.
- Attributes** An attribute is personal characteristic, developed because your transformative experience(s) have changed the way you think and, subsequently, act.
- Award Criteria** The criteria used by Assessors when assessing student submissions, as shown in the Student Guide.
- Descriptive writing** A style of writing only describing what you did and how you did it. In the context of the Imperial Award you should only use descriptive writing to provide context for your reflective writing.
- Evaluation** You examine complex issues using your high-level cognitive skills. More focused than a review. Leads to a solution, conclusion or recommendation.
- Experiences** An experience is anything that has had impact upon you during your engagement in an activity.
- Impact** The difference it makes to self, others or a situation. The difference between how things were before, and how things are now.
- Life events** Experiences of handling challenges or opportunities in your life. Includes health, money, personal responsibilities, legal situations, etc.
- Part-time work** Any type: does not have to be professional or degree-related



Personal development	Personal, as opposed to purely academic or professional, development of attributes.
Portfolio (diary/journal)	Collecting your experiences into one document (folio). Add past experiences and then top-up regularly with new experiences.
Reflection	Looking back on your experiences; sifting for significant moments, transformative of the way you think and act. More information in our Reflection Guide.
Reflective writing	Writing that reveals your deep, thoughtful reflection about the significance of your experiences in your personal development of the attributes.
Submission	Your reflective piece addressing four attributes of your choice, submitted for assessment.
Submission method	Your reflective pieces can be submitted as one of the three methods: written, video or multimedia. More information can be found in this Student Guide.
Transformation	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.
Volunteering	Any volunteering could give you transformative experiences: community, educational, health, engineering, medicine, environmental, Imperial College Union roles, STEMM ambassadors, etc.



