

Employability Boost Award:

Engaging students with employability and career development skills in uncertain times

John Barrow (j.barrow@abdn.ac.uk) – Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship
Tracey Innes (t.innes@abdn.ac.uk) – Head of Careers and Employability Service



Background

- The new Aberdeen Employability Boost Award was launched in May 2020, to help students across our campuses, directly after the Covid-19 pandemic forced closure of our campuses
- Additional support was needed for students at a time of severe labour market disruption and career uncertainty
- The 'always on' aspects of the Boost Award Programme can be completed anytime throughout the year including:
 - 16 new online courses using Rise Articulate technology
 - 4 self-awareness assessments
 - 7 "tiny bites" videos
- The 'live' aspects of the Boost Award Programme are offered during three key months (May|Oct|Feb) including:
 - 141 live events
 - 15 live "career bites" seminars, each topic is run multiple times
- The "Pathways" functionality within the University Target Connect system enabled students to track their own progress through the 3 award levels award and was efficient to administer – 857 students have completed an award so far
- A gamification approach was adopted as a mechanism to enhance engagement in the programme
- Each Boost Programme was developed in an agile way using labour market and Student Career Ambassador insights to align with market trends and meet the needs of students and graduates at that specific time
- This agility has enabled the building of a resilient programme that can adapt and flex to meet future stakeholder requirements and needs

What is the Boost Award?

Topics covered across the various programmes, informed by employer data insights via ISE survey results on the impact of Covid-19:

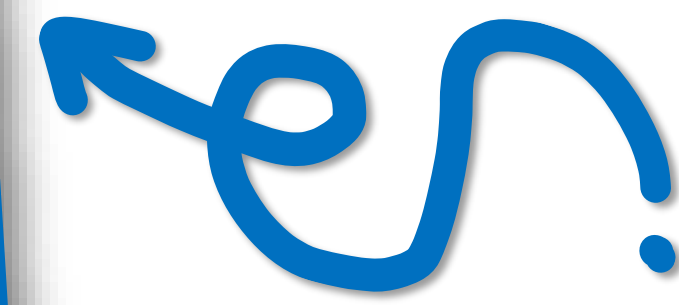
- Building resilience
- Navigating online recruitment and selection
- Sector insights (e.g. energy, digital, life sciences, finance, tourism and culture)

See below for a snapshot of the varied and wide-ranging programme of events and topics covered so far...

Aberdeen Employability Boost Award
OCTOBER VIRTUAL PROGRAMME
MONDAY 19th OCTOBER
Connect, Inspire, Succeed
10.00-11.00am: Employer insights: Environment sector
11.30am-12.30pm: Alumni insights: Law sector
3.00-4.00pm (UK time): What is commercial awareness?
3.00-4.00pm (Qatar time): What are enterprising and entrepreneurial skills?
Live Career eBites
2.00-2.30pm: Creating CVs
VIEW THE FULL PROGRAMME AT abdn.ac.uk/careers

Aberdeen Employability Boost Award
February virtual programme 1st - 25th February
The Aberdeen Employability Boost Award is a programme consisting of LIVE CHATS | CAREER EBITES | MINI CAREER COURSES | CONNECT, INSPIRE, SUCCEED | SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES
★ Learn key skills sought by employers
★ Understand how to stand out in job applications
★ Gain an Award to evidence your personal development
★ Maximise your employability and develop confidence

Aberdeen Employability Boost Award
MAY VIRTUAL PROGRAMME
Connect online with careers professionals, employers and alumni and earn an e-certificate to evidence your skills development on your CV.
LIVE CHATS | CAREER E-BITES WORKSHOPS
MINI CAREER COURSES | TINY BITES VIDEOS
finding graduate opportunities ★ finding work experience postgraduate study ★ virtual recruitment practices ★ LinkedIn building resilience ★ employment sector insights ★ freelancing & self-employment ★ applications ★ CVs & cover letters ★ upskilling online presence ★ self-awareness ★ networking ★ interviews video interviews ★ smart goals ★ skills audit ★ SWOT analysis
... plus much more
MORE INFORMATION, FULL PROGRAMME, LINKS AND LIVE EVENT SIGN UP AT:
www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/virtual
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE
EXPLORE | DEVELOP | CONNECT



Click on the infographic to see all three infographics for May, October and February Boost Programmes

Evaluation

- Each Boost Award Programme event that was run so far has participant data insights, which are summarised in the infographics above
- Participant and employer evaluation garnered feedback with some selected responses shown below

"This online initiative has allowed me become more confident and curious about different directions in which I could go with my skills and knowledge!"
Jitka Drahotská (MA History Student)
Click me to see more student comments!

"It's fantastic to see Aberdeen University adapt so quickly to the new environment with such great response from the student community.."
Stoyan Djourov (JP Morgan)

What actions have you taken because of the event?



What have you gained from your involvement?



- Participant evaluation was conducted via a survey
- A snapshot of survey responses to three survey questions is shown above as word clouds of the 20 most frequent words/statements from the free-text responses (taken from 124 respondents from the May Boost Programme)

Discussion

- Very positive response from each Boost Programme that has ran to date
- Very clear actions and knowledge has been gained from participation in the events, especially linked to professional development of students for profile building (e.g. LinkedIn), CV's, cover letter writing and gaining a better overall understanding of the careers and employability landscape