

# Goldsmiths, University of London

## The Gold Award

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### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Gold Award is to reward students who are developing their wider transferable skills through a range of extra-curricular activities. Their development is recorded in a Personal Development Record (PDR) in which they are required to reflect on their progress.

The award works to tie together the opportunities and activities that are already available to Goldsmiths students and to complement and enhance curriculum-based approaches to developing their wider skills and attributes. The award does not seek to accredit extra-curricular activities rather it sets out to formally reward students who actively participate in their development. The award works to encourage students to:

- Be able to take responsibility for their academic, career and personal development at Goldsmiths and beyond;
- Become critical and self-reflective thinkers;
- Be imaginative and creative and willing to take risks and where necessary to engage in constructive, informed and critical challenges to orthodoxy;
- Be flexible, adaptable, able to manage change and work effectively in a variety of contexts individually and collaboratively;
- Be enterprising and resourceful with the knowledge and skills to secure appropriate employment;
- Develop personally in ways which will enrich their lives and encourage them take an active and responsible role in public life equipped with an awareness of broader world issues and a sense of their own role as a world citizen.

### PILOTING THE AWARD

The Award has been running in pilot form for one year.

It was 'soft launched' in 2009/10, with the Award Coordinator addressing first years at induction along with posts on the Goldsmiths' website. 100 students were enrolled at the start of the academic year. Of these 35% completed their PDRs within the first term. It is estimated that about 20% of the students who initially enrolled will complete in the first year.

The aim for 2010/11 is for 50-100 students to complete the award. Two Academic departments have already expressed interest in all their first year undergraduates being automatically enrolled on the scheme.

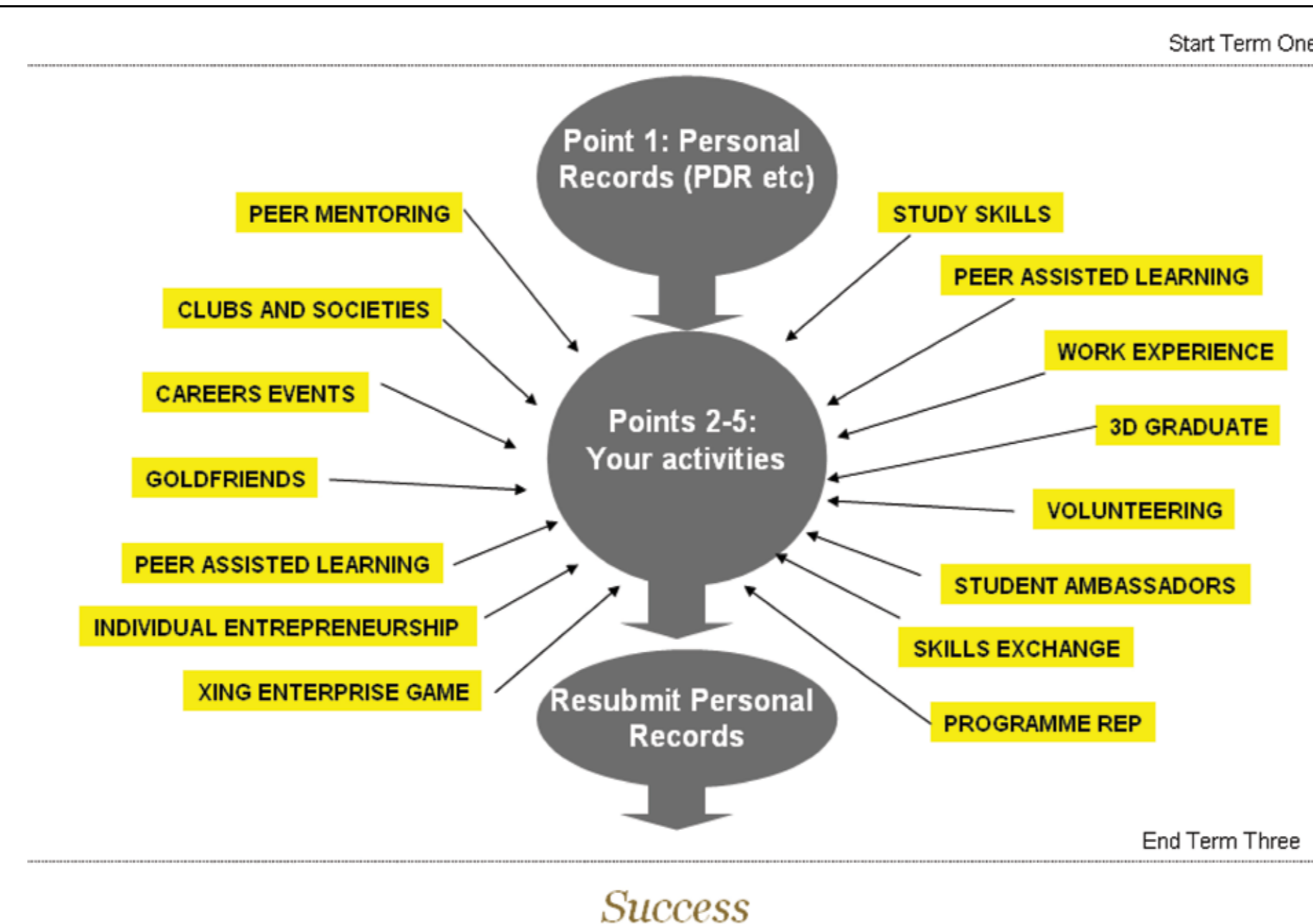
### HOW THE AWARD WORKS

The Award currently uses a 'points system' with students required to attain five points.

**Point 1** is obtained by completing a series of PDP exercises located on our VLE:

Introductory Self Analysis Statement  
SWOT Analysis  
Personal Development Record (PDR) in which they log their progress throughout the award

**Points 2-5** are acquired through extra curricular activities including: work experience, volunteering, peer mentoring, student ambassadorships, SU activities, careers and developmental workshops or any other activities in which students can demonstrate enterprise and initiative.



### WHY IT WAS DEVELOPED

For several years, Goldsmiths has worked to help students to develop beyond the confines of their academic capability and to develop general, transferable and employability skills through Personal Development Planning, which was initially offered through personal tutoring and an integrated website.

Like in many institutions, the scheme experienced issues with low student engagement particularly because of the alignment with personal tutoring. It suffered also from resistance from many academics who felt already over-stretched, logistical issues particularly in offering additional personal tutoring sessions and an over-emphasis on self-directed learning and utilising untested web-tools.

With endorsement from the SU, the Gold Award scheme was developed that would incorporate PDP practice, use existing opportunities and would take the additional responsibility of offering formalised PDP away from academic departments.

### MANAGING THE AWARD

The award is coordinated by Adam Cresswell from Goldsmiths Learning Enhancement Unit along with a project team of coordinators:

**Award Coordinators:** A established with representatives from support and service departments such as the SU, Careers Service, Student Support, Widening Participation, the Business Development Office and the Institute of Creative and Cultural Enterprise. Coordinators are responsible for the management of provision related to their area and to log achievement. Representatives from GLEU and the Careers Service have an additional responsibility of assessing and providing feedback on student PDRs.

**Web Presence:** The Award has its own area on the VLE, used to host the PDP materials as well as providing supporting resources, such as vodcasts and documents on reflective writing.



### STUDENT FEEDBACK

At the end of the second term students were asked to give a presentation on what they had learned on the award. This gave us excellent insights into what worked (and what didn't work) in managing the award. Feedback was almost entirely positive with students demonstrating clear engagement in and recognition of their skills development.

At the end of the second term we have had our first completion, who provided the following feedback:

*"It was a pleasure to take part in such an amazing scheme. Thank you for providing us with such a great opportunity, although at times it was very demanding, the feeling after completing a task was immense and very worth every moment"*  
3rd Year Psychology Student

### ACHIEVEMENT

Currently, once a student has achieved 4 points from their additional options, they submit a final revised PDR which is reassessed and they are given either further feedback or confirmation of success. It has been felt that the 'points' system is the weakest link in the award, as it is overly flexible and students have misinterpreted what constitutes points-worthy activity.

As such, the award will be slightly revised for 2010/ 11.

### DEVELOPING THE SCHEME

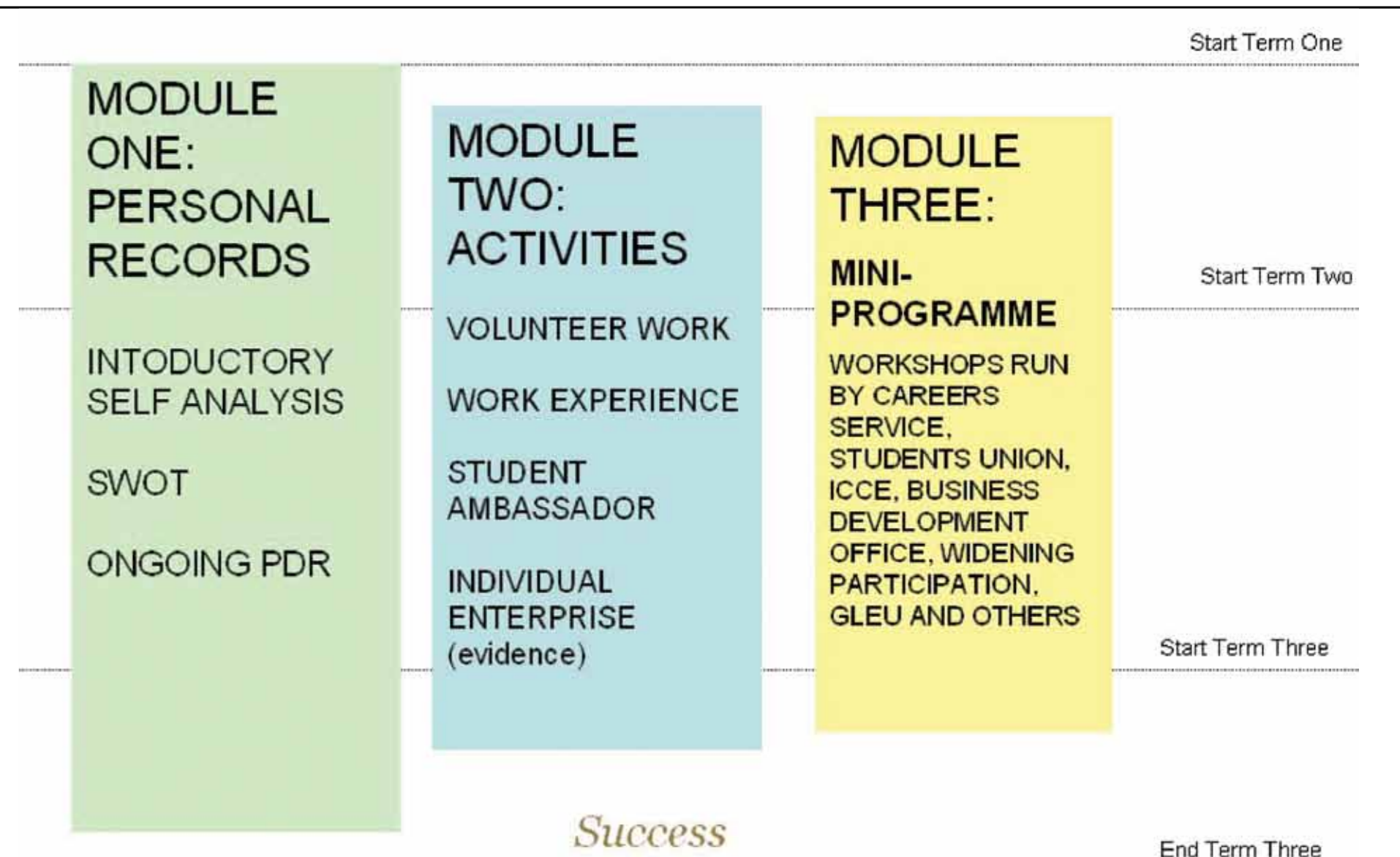
We will be rolling the award out in full for 2010/11 with no cap on student numbers.

In response to student feedback we are moving away from the 'points system' to a 'modular' format. With students completing 3 'modules':

'PDP Module' in which students will complete reflective exercises including SWOTs and PDRs.

'Activity Module' Students will have to be participating in work experience, volunteer work or Student Ambassadorships

'Workshop Module' all will be required to attend a mini-programme of workshops and to give a presentation.



### CONTACT INFORMATION

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