# Student Perceptions of Digital Badging Survey

## Page 1: Welcome

The Open University ‘perceptions of digital badging’ project team would be very grateful for your participation in this survey about digital badging whether or not you have ever been eligible for, or received a digital badge. As you may know, digital badging is an easy way of sharing detailed information about learning and other achievements via social media and electronic resumes. If you would like to know more about digital badges  here is a two and a half minute video from Ako Aotearoa a New Zealand education provider that explains them very clearly. Because the video is hosted on YouTube an advertisement may play when you take the link but you should be able to dismiss it after a few seconds.

Many organisations use digital badges in staff development and recruitment. A number of universities offer digital badges alongside formal qualifications to help students develop and demonstrate skills of interest to employers. At The Open University we use digital badges in a number of different ways, and we are interested in students' views on the value of digital badges, and how they might be used most effectively. Your responses will help inform The Open University provision of such badges.

We are carrying out this study as a student-staff scholarship team with funding from the University Scholarship Steering Group and Access, Open and Cross Curricular Innovation Team.

Our findings will be published in internal reports, conference presentations and academic papers. If you participate in the project you will be invited to receive a final report and to a webinar in which we will share project findings. All responses in our project outputs will be anonymised and data will be handled according to UK Data Protection Act (2018) requirements.

The questionnaire should take around 10 minutes to complete and will require you to answer questions about yourself and your attitudes to, knowledge and use (or

potential use) of digital badges.

There is an information leaflet about the project which you can download from this link

Before you decide whether you want to take part, please read the following information:

- The first question of the survey asks for your consent to your data being used as outlined above. If you have any queries you would like addressing before starting the survey, please contact project team member Dr Terry O'Sullivan, Faculty of Business and Law, by email at: terry.osullivan@open.ac.uk.
- If, having started it, you wish to leave this survey without having your data saved, simply close the browser window.
- The final page of the survey will offer you a formal receipt of your submission via print, email or download. If, having completed the survey, you wish to withdraw your data, please email terry.osullivan@open.ac.uk with your receipt number and your data will be deleted. Withdrawing your data in this way will only be possible until 31st March 2022, after which we will have started the combination and analysis of data.
- In keeping with the Open University's data retention policy, all research data from this project will be stored securely and retained for ten years (in case it needs to be revisited for publications or queries) – therefore up to 2031 - after which it will be destroyed. We will be using the Open University's ORDO database to store the anonymised data after the project has completed in September 2022.

Here is a link to the Open University Student Privacy Notice which explains how the Open University uses your personal data.

This project has been reviewed by, and received a favourable opinion from

- The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee, reference HREC/4159FOX
- The Open University Student Research Project Panel, reference SRPP/20212010
- The Open University Staff Survey Project Panel, approval date 01/12/2021
- The Data Protection Team, reference 3306185

If you have any concerns about the way this research project is being conducted please contact Mr Mick McCormick, Academic Lead EECP and advisor to the project, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK at: mick.mccormick@open.ac.uk

# Page 2: Your consent to proceed

*1.* **If you decide to take part please provide your agreement to the following statement**:

I have read the information about the study on the Digital Badge Survey Welcome Page and understand what the study involves. I understand that if I decide at any time that I no longer wish to take part in this survey I can withdraw immediately by closing the browser page, whereby my data will not be saved. I also know how I can withdraw data up until the 31st March 2022 after I have submitted my responses. I consent to the processing of my responses for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be anonymous and handled in accordance with UK Data Protection 2018 requirements. ✱ *Required*

- ○ I agree to participate
- ○ I do not wish to participate

# Page 3: Your experience of digital badges

These questions are about your individual relationship with digital badges to help us understand if this might be a factor in how you feel about them more generally

2. What is your current level of knowledge about digital badges? ✱ *Required*

- ○ Never heard of them before this survey
- ○ Had heard of digital badges before this survey but don't know very much about them
- ○ Know a reasonable amount about digital badges

3. How many, if any, digital badges do you currently hold? If you are unsure please make the best estimate you can. ✱ *Required*

- ○ None
- ○ 1 - 5
- ○ 6 - 10
- ○ More than 10

4. If you hold any digital badges, please briefly indicate what they are for. *Optional*

# Page 4: What might digital badges do best?

Your responses to the next few questions will help us understand how to develop digital badges relevant to your needs as a student.

*5.* Here are some potential uses of digital badges. Please indicate how relevant you feel a badge would be in each situation (rather than any other form of recognition such as a certificate). ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 7 answer(s).

| | Completely irrelevant | Largely irrelevant | Neither relevant nor irrelevant | Largely relevant | Completely relevant | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indicating competence in a technical skill (e.g. data analytics) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Indicating competence in a 'soft' skill (e.g. communication) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Denoting membership of a professional body (e.g. Chartered Institute of Marketing) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reflecting an extra curricular achievement at university (e.g. volunteering) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Reflecting an extra-curricular skill developed at university (e.g. peer mentoring) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Reflecting a specific skill developed while studying for academic credit (e.g. online collaboration in study counting towards a degree) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Demonstrating success in a university course not counting towards a degree (e.g. a badged open course or other microcredential) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*6.* If you have any other ideas as a student on what we should award digital badges for please share them here *Optional*

# Page 5: Using digital badges

7. Here are some things which people do with digital badges. Please rate each one as to its potential usefulness to you. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 6 answer(s).

| | Not at all useful | Not very useful | Neutral | Somewhat useful | Very useful | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Print out the badge and add it to a physical portfolio with other certificates | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Link to the badge from my LInkedIn page (or other social media platform) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Share my badge in applications for jobs or for promotion at work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Use the badge as evidence in appraisals | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Identify and keep track of opportunities for learning | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Use it to help me in my business networking activity | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# Page 6: Potential benefits of digital badges

By rating each of the statements in this question and the next, you will help us develop better digital badges and communicate more effectively about them.

*8.* Here are some things people have said about the benefits of digital badges for students. Please rate each on how much you agree it is a benefit. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 12 answer(s).

| | Disagree strongly | Disagree somewhat | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree somewhat | Agree strongly | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focuses on skills rather than academic achievement | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Provides more detailed evidence about my achievements than a module result or transcript | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Marks me out as someone who has made an extra effort | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Easy to share with my peers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Easy to share with present or potential employers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Badges are a simple way to gain recognition for my achievements | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Badges are more visible than a certificate or other student record | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| It encourages healthy competition to see who can win badges | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Badges help me stand out from the crowd | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Badges help me find out what I am interested in | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Badges help me plan and keep track of my learning | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| A badge makes me proud of the achievement it represents | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*8.a.* If there are other advantages of digital badges which are attractive to you, please list them. *Optional*

# Page 7: Potential downsides of digital badges

*9.* Here are some things people have said about the potential disadvantages of digital badges. Please rate each one as to how much you agree it is a disadvantage. ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 8 answer(s).

| | Completely disagree | Disagree somewhat | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree somewhat | Completely agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Badges have got a childish image | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Employers and other stakeholders may not recognise what a badge means | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Too many badges are too easily available | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Students should not need badges as a motivation to learn | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| It is difficult to manage privacy as to who can see badges | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Only badges from big-name universities and organisations are worth having | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| A badge is less prestigious than an academic certificate for the same achievement | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Gaining badges might distract me from my main study priorities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*9.a.* If you perceive there to be other disadvantages of digital badges, please list them. *Optional*

# Page 8: What next for you and digital badges?

Your answers to this question will help us understand potential trends in the market for digital badges.

*10.* Please indicate your disagreement or agreement with each of the following statements ✱ *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 4 answer(s).

| | Disagree strongly | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Agree strongly | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to earn badges as part of Open University modules | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I would like to earn badges from the Open University for other achievements (such as volunteering) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I would like to earn badges from OpenLearn Badged Open Courses | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to earn badges from other institutions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*10.a.* Please share any other thoughts or suggestions you have for how digital badges can be used at The Open University *Optional*

# Page 9: Placing a value on a digital badge

We are **not** aware of any plans to introduce digital badges for a fee, but the following questions invite you to put a **hypothetical** value on them in terms of time and money. This data will give us a sense of how important gaining a digital badge might be to students.

*11.* If you were offered the opportunity of studying and earning a badge for a fee, how much would you be prepared to pay? ✱ *Required*

*11.a.* If you selected Other, please specify:

*12.* A single academic credit in the UK equates to 10 hours study time - so a 30 credit module involves 300 hours of learning, doing assessments, and all the admin associated with being a student. How many hours do you think it should take to earn a digital badge? ✱ *Required*

*12.a.* If you selected Other, please specify:

# Page 10: Would you be willing to take part in an online discussion on digital badges?

*13.* We are planning to hold two online discussion events in March and April 2022 bringing together employers, Open University staff and students to talk about emerging knowledge on digital badges for employability and what would increase their value to all involved. These will take place during twilight sessions on optional dates and participants will be provided with refreshments (by mail) as a token of thanks for the time taken to contribute. Students taking part will also receive a £25 gift voucher. If you are interested in participating **please enter your name and an email address in the box below.** We undertake to use this information only for this research and for no other purpose. Providing your email will not compromise the anonymity with which your data will be treated in this survey. We will store this information securely, in line with the Open University's data security policies, and delete it at the end of the project (31/07/2022).

If you would like to be kept in touch with the project by

• receiving a copy of the report from the project and

• being invited to a final project webinar

please email us at BEAUPEEP@open.ac.uk with ‘add to mailing list’ in the subject line

# Page 11: Demographic information about you

This last set of (optional) questions will help us understand if feelings about, and use of, digital badges might vary between students with different characteristics.

*14.* Please indicate your gender. *Optional*

*15.* Please indicate your ethnicity. This drop-down list uses categories from the Higher Education Statistics Authority for the purposes of comparability. *Optional*

*16.* Please indicate your age. This drop-down list uses categories normally used by The Open University for the purposes of comparability *Optional*

# Page 12: Final page

Thank you for your participation on behalf of the project team. We are very grateful for your responses.

Best wishes

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## Key for selection options

**11 - If you were offered the opportunity of studying and earning a badge for a fee, how much would you be prepared to pay?**

- Not interested even if free
- Would only do it if free
- up to £30
- up to £50
- up to £70
- Don't know
- Other

**12 - A single academic credit in the UK equates to 10 hours study time - so a 30 credit module involves 300 hours of learning, doing assessments, and all the admin associated with being a student. How many hours do you think it should take to earn a digital badge?**

- Up to 10 hours
- 11 - 20 hours
- 21 - 30 hours
- Don't know
- Other

**14 - Please indicate your gender.**

Female
Male
Non-binary
Prefer not to say

**15 - Please indicate your ethnicity. This drop-down list uses categories from the Higher Education Statistics Authority for the purposes of comparability.**

White
White - British
White - English
White - Irish
White - Scottish
White - Welsh
Irish Traveller
Gypsy or Traveller
Other White Background
Black or Black British - Caribbean
Black or Black British - African
Other Black Background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British -- Pakistani
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British - Chinese
Other Asian Background
Arab
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
Mixed - White and Black African
Mixed - White and Asian
Other Mixed Background
Other Ethnic Background
Unknown
I prefer not to say

**16 - Please indicate your age. This drop-down list uses categories normally used by The Open University for the purposes of comparability**

25 or under
26 - 35
36 to 45
46 to 55

56 and over
Prefer not to say