

Employer Perceptions of Digital Badging Survey

Page 1: Welcome

The Open University 'perceptions of digital badging' project team would be grateful for your participation in this survey about digital badging whether or not your organisation uses digital badges in recruitment and selection, or staff development. 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 an education provider in New Zealand 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 employers' 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 10 minutes or less to complete and will require you to answer questions about your organisation and your attitudes to, knowledge

and (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 prior to 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 the survey, you wish to abandon it 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.

If you are an Open University student 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 EECF 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 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: About you and your organisation

These questions are about your role and the kind of organisation you work for, to help us understand possible connections between these factors and the relevance of digital badges.

2. Which of the following roles are you responsible for? Please tick all that apply *
Required

- ☐ Graduate recruitment
- ☐ Staff development
- ☐ Learning and development
- ☐ Other

2.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

3. Which **one** of the following industry types most closely fits your organisation? *
Required

- ☐ Education and training
- ☐ Financial services
- ☐ IT, technology and telecoms
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Professional/ business services
- ☐ Health and social care (NHS)
- ☐ Construction

- ☐ Transport and logistics
- ☐ Health and social care (not NHS)
- ☐ Government (local)
- ☐ Government (national)
- ☐ Sciences, life sciences
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Wholesale trade
- ☐ Energy
- ☐ Creative and media
- ☐ Voluntary/charity/third sector
- ☐ Defence security
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Other

3.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

4. How would you categorise your organisation's size? * *Required*

- ☐ Micro business (1 - 9 employees)
- ☐ Small business (10 - 49 employees)
- ☐ Medium-sized business (50 - 249 employees)
- ☐ Large business (250 - 1000 employees)
- ☐ Super corporate (over 1000 employees)

Page 4: 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 they are valued in your organisation.

5. 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

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

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

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

Page 5: What might digital badges do best?

By rating each of the statements in this question, you will help us understand how to develop digital badges relevant to your needs as an employer.

8. Here are some potential uses of digital badges. Please indicate how relevant each is to your organisation's staff development and recruitment practices. * *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)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicating competence in a 'soft' skill (e.g. communication)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Denoting membership of a professional body (e.g. Chartered Institute of Marketing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflecting an extra curricular achievement at university (e.g. volunteering)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflecting an extra-curricular skill developed at university (e.g. peer mentoring)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflecting a skill developed while studying for academic credit (e.g. online collaboration on a university course)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating success in a university course not counting towards a degree (e.g. a badged open course or other microcredential)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. If you have any other ideas as an employer on the best way(s) of using digital badges please share them here *Optional*

Page 6: Using digital badges

Your answer(s) to this question will also help us understand how to develop digital badges relevant to your needs as an employer.

10. In what ways (if any) does your organisation currently use digital badges? Please tick all that apply * *Required*

- ☐ we don't use digital badges in any way
- ☐ we issue our own digital badges in our staff development
- ☐ we use digital badges from other training providers in our staff development
- ☐ when recruiting, we accept digital badges as evidence of a candidate's suitability
- ☐ we accept digital badges as evidence of continuous professional development in career progression and promotion
- ☐ Other

10.a. If you selected Other, please give details:

Page 7: 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.

11. Here are some things people have said about the benefits of digital badges in the context of staff development and recruitment. 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
Badges allow students to develop and demonstrate employability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognises specific skills and achievements not revealed through formal transcripts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marks out the badge holder as someone who has made an extra effort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Easy to share inside and outside the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badges are a simple way to demonstrate staff development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badges are more visible than a certificate or other student record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourages healthy competition to see who can win badges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing our digital badges increases brand awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badges help us find out what employees and job applicants are interested in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badges help us track and support employee development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Badges make people proud of the achievements they represent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Badges create connections with our future workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Page 8: Potential downsides of digital badges

12. Here are some things people have said about the potential disadvantages of digital badges. Please rate each on 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).

	Disagree strongly	Disagree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree somewhat	Agree strongly	Don't know
Badges have got a childish image	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employers and other stakeholders may not recognise what a badge means	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Too many badges are too easily available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees and job applicants should not need badges to motivate them to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing digital badges complicates data protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Only badges from big-name universities and organisations are worth having	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A badge is less prestigious than a certificate for the same achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaining badges might distract employees and job applicants from their main priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Page 9: What next for your organisation and digital badges?

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

13. Please indicate your disagreement or agreement with each of the following statements with regard to the next three years. * *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
Digital badges from universities will be increasingly important to our recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital badges from professional bodies will be increasingly important to our recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital badges from industry leading companies (such as MicroSoft) will be increasingly important to our recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital badges from my organisation will be increasingly important to internal staff development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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14. Please add any other thoughts you may have about how your organisation is likely to use digital badges over the next three years.

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

15. 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. 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: Final page

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

Best wishes

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