

Breakthrough Award brief

**Rewardingly
hard to win**

Entry deadline:
Sunday 26 October 2025

Contact:
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In partnership with:



The **DMA Awards** recognise the most inspiring and effective campaigns in data and marketing.

Every year it is a commitment to rigour and a stonewall belief in our three pillars: Strategy, Creativity and Results, that sets the **DMA Awards** apart as the most rewardingly hard to win.

Award winners are the shop window of our industry that act as a beacon to attract talent, teach best practice and inspire leaders – from the classroom to the boardroom.

Strategy Creativity Results

Lightbulb exploding moments of eureka creativity and bolder-than-bold innovation.

This all needs to be pulled together and brought to life seamlessly and effectively: strategically.

This key pillar of the DMA Awards is where we measure work against what it set out to do, the route it planned and mechanics it used to get there. Because ideas, no matter how brilliant, will always need the warm blanket of a sure-fire plan to succeed.

Creativity has been said to be evidence of intelligence having fun.

Today we are surrounded by a vibrant sense of the playful as we move about in our digital and “real” worlds, awash with colour.

That’s why creativity is key to the DMA Awards; we seek to celebrate those firecracker moments when ideas ignite to bring the world around us to life.

Where concepts surge on the page, screen, billboard or package to take up residence in our minds and imaginations.

The DMA Awards champion the role results play in crystallising brilliant creativity and rock-solid strategy.

Results are the evidence that the overall campaign mix was potent enough to make an impact and ripple out across the world.

Our judges will interrogate results because they matter. They are what people remember. They are the ultimate proof that work, works.

About the DMA Talent Breakthrough Award

The DMA Talent Breakthrough Award gives aspiring marketers across UK the opportunity to work on a creative brief for a well-known brand, get their ideas in front of senior marketers, and see their names in lights at the DMA Awards.

This is your opportunity to:

- Experience what it's like to work on a real-life client brief.
- Add real client work to your portfolio.
- Gain invaluable presenting experience.
- Win a major marketing industry award.

Barclays have provided the brief for 2025's Award, and they're asking you to come up with ideas to drive consideration for them as the go-to choice for student banking.

If selected to take part in one of our regional heats, you'll get to present your idea to a panel of industry experts and receive advice from them. Then, if you're selected as a Regional Winner, you'll present your creative campaign to Barclays in their Canary Wharf offices, and be invited to attend the prestigious DMA Awards in central London on the night of Tuesday 2 December 2025.



The DMA Awards ceremony is attended by some of the most successful advertising and marketing agencies across the UK who have created some of the best campaigns of the year, and you'll have the chance to network with them. The connections you make could be career-changing.

The DMA Talent Breakthrough Award is open to entries from students, interns and non-professionals.

Overview of Barclays

In 1690, 334 years ago – Barclays opened its doors. We're older than the United States of America, we've survived through World Wars, financial economic crises, and major health pandemics.

And since we opened our doors for business, much has changed. The world we live in has constantly evolved, fuelled by the possibilities of the digital age. And the Barclays brand has evolved with it - from the introduction of the first debit card in the UK, first cashpoint to contactless ways to pay; from statements in the post to mobile apps– the brand has always been consistently focused and innovating to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers.

But with age, is a natural tendency for our customer base to sway to the older demographic - we have been with them since they opened bank accounts, got their first mortgages, helped them save for their holidays. However, the banking market has changed rapidly in recent years with lots of new competitors entering the market, these brands give consumers advanced app-based banking features – leaving the traditional banks perceived as complex and outdated by the younger generation.



What is the challenge?

Each year, around one million people across the UK graduate university and look to enter the working world – Barclays, alongside its competitors, usually transition their student account holders on to a graduate bank account when this happens. Graduates are appealing customers to banks due to their expected future incomes making them more likely to be higher profit generating customers.

However, graduate accounts only offer limited benefits such as interest free overdrafts, so if a graduate doesn't need this, they may be better off switching to another current account with benefits more suited to their needs.

Barclays faces strong competition in the graduate market from the likes of HSBC and TSB, as well as from app-based banks such as Monzo, Chase and Revolut.

This is caused by three issues:

1. Graduates often prefer to stick with the bank they used for their student account.
2. 45% of students did not own a student account in the first place – instead favouring app-based banks such as Monzo, Chase or Revolut due to their advanced app-based banking features and benefits (not student specific accounts).
3. HSBC and TSB give graduates the option to switch to their graduate accounts, offering higher interest free overdraft limits than Barclays.

Therefore, we need to change perceptions to show graduates that there are tangible benefits to switching to a graduate account with Barclays.

Barclays Higher Education Account

Eligibility	Product features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged 18 or over • Live in UK • Completed full time higher education in the UK within last 3 years • Available for higher level apprentices (Level 7+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £175 off when you switch to Barclays • No monthly fee • Arranged overdraft up to £1500 free • Earn Monthly rewards with 'Blue rewards'. UK only £5 per month • Barclays app • Personalise debit card with photo, place, pet or even you at your graduation • Buy packs for extras like travel insurance and gadget cover for a monthly fee

Barclays Blue Rewards

Eligibility	Product features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged 18 or over • Live in the UK • Have an eligible current account • Pay the £5 monthly fee • Have at least £800 paid into your nominated account every month • Be registered for the Barclays app (digital first banking proposition) • Provide your email address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Apple TV+ subscription, worth £8.99 a month. • Watch every Major League Soccer match with an MLS Season Pass subscription, worth £14.99 a month during the season • Earn up to 15% cashback when you spend at selected retailers with the Barclays Visa debit card linked to your Cashback Rewards account • Earn our highest instant-access savings rate of 4.87% AER/ 4.76% gross p.a. on balances from £1 to £5,000, and 1.16% AER/ 1.15% gross p.a. (variable) on balances over £5,000 with our Rainy Day Saver.* • Get rewarded with a higher interest rate of 3.17% AER/ 3.12% gross p.a. (variable) in months where you don't dip in to your savings, and 0.76% AER/0.76% gross p.a. (variable) in months with one or more withdrawals with our Blue Rewards Saver.* <p><small>* Rates correct as of 25/04/25</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barclays app helps keep tabs on spending and bills

What do we want you to do?

Barclays is on a mission to transform the way graduates think about traditional bank account and drive consideration for the Barclays Higher Education Account and the benefits of Blue Rewards.

We want Barclays to become the go-to choice for graduates – with options that can support graduates with their financial needs both now and in the future.

So here's where you come in: there's a host of data available online on graduates in the UK. We want you to put the data to work and craft a targeted, digital creative strategy that speaks directly to the audience.

We have a wide range of content online you can take inspiration from and you have the option to leverage our access to Apple TV+ talent, but how you craft your message is entirely up to you. You'll need to consider what data you use, who you want to target and the additional metrics you will need to track to meet your targets.

So let's harness the power of data-driven marketing to amplify Barclays Higher Education Accounts, capture the attention of graduates and make Barclays the bank of choice from day one of their working life.

What are the targets and budget?

- To drive 10,000 new customers by showcasing the unique benefits that Barclays can offer graduates.
- £500k across 6-month campaign (March to September 2025) including digital creative development and media.

What do we want to see in your submission and judging process?

Get ready to dazzle us with your creative brilliance! We're seeking submissions that light up the room with innovative thinking – here's what we're looking for -

Step 1 - Initial creative brief submission

Craft your initial pitch around the "Get, To, Who, By" framework to show us your understanding of:

- Get – Who's our target consumer
- Who – What is the consumer problem we are solving?
- To – What's the desired response?
- By – What's the one key message or action?

More information on get, who, to, by can be found [here](#).

Step 2 – Regional heats presentation (10 mins)

If successful, get ready to present your creative idea and approach. Deep dive into:

- What should we say? – Showcase your creative concept and execution, emphasising a data-driven, digital response.
- How and where should we say it? – Lay out your proposed channels and media plan for maximum impact.
- Should other people help us say it? - Explore the use of influencers, PR, and experiential marketing to amplify your message.

Step 3 – Final heat presentation (20 mins)

The five regional winners will take part in the grand final on the morning of Tuesday 2 December 2025. This will involve presenting their creative campaign to the senior leadership team at Barclays in London. Don't forget to include a detailed budget breakdown to achieve our goal of 10,000 new customers.

This is your chance to shine brighter than ever - present your fully built out campaign backed by solid rationale, data, and insights, explain how your plan will change new graduates minds about who they bank with & why they should switch to Barclays Blue Rewards.

Then get ready for questions from our panel.

Step 4 - DMA Awards and announcement of winners

All grand finalists receive a VIP invitation to the DMA Awards in central London on the night of Tuesday 2 December. Accommodation will be provided overnight. As part of the evening, all DMA Talent Breakthrough Award Regional Winners will be announced and celebrated. Each of their campaigns will be shown on the big screen, and they will all receive certificates.

Prizes

The overall winner of the grand final will be asked to take to the stage to be presented with a DMA Awards Gold trophy. There is a £500 prize for the winning team. If you enter as an individual you'll take home the lot, if you entered as a team of two you'll each receive £250.

Questions? If you have any questions about the DMA Talent Breakthrough Award please email us. Email: dmatalent@dma.org.uk.

Let your creativity soar and show us why your campaign deserves to take centre stage at the DMA Awards. This is your moment to make magic happen!

The DMA is Europe's largest community of data-driven marketers.

Guided by our customer-first principles enshrined in the DMA Code, the DMA champions a rich fusion of data, technology, insight, creativity and diverse talent.

With a mission to be the UK's most customer-focused business community, we set, teach and promote standards to build trust and deliver marketing effectiveness for the UK's data and marketing community.

Stand out from the crowd!

DMA Student Membership is built to make you more employable.

Being one shows employers you're committed to your professional development and allows you to build on knowledge gained in your studies.

For just £45, which you can pay in 12 monthly instalments of £3.75, you get access to:

- The **Award in Marketing** (Usually £594), complementing your learning with industry practitioner led, up to date knowledge.
- The **Award in GDPR** (Usually £594), equipping you with the key knowledge you need to be a compliant, responsible, ethical & law-abiding marketer. This is a key attribute for all modern marketers, and something employers look for.
- A library of **DMA Award-Winning campaign case studies**, perfect to take inspiration from, reference in your assignments, and see how the marketing theory you learn is brought to life.
- **DMA Webinars & Events**, where top industry professionals from across the industry talk about the latest news and trends in their specialisms.
- **CPD Scheme**. With every award you do, webinar you watch and resource you look at, you will be allocated CPD points. Hit 35 for the year, and you'll receive your CPD certificate. In our ever-changing industry, this is a great way to demonstrate to employers that you are keeping up with the latest techniques.

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