

# Boarding Life Skills Awards Scheme

Guidance Notes for Schools

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# Boarding Skills Awards Guidance Notes

## Introduction

Economist and Government advisor Will Hutton endorsed the concept of a Boarding Award to evidence the soft skills learnt by boarders in a Boarding community that employers will use as a currency for employability alongside academic results in an ever more competitive market.

This series of Awards was originally created by SBSA in association with ASDAN to reflect the experience and skills of being a boarder. There are 3 levels – Basic, Advanced and Higher, so that boarders from Year 5 to Year 13 access these awards.

## How will it work?

It is expected that the Award will fit a variety of Boarding environments and Boarding communities and is designed to be facilitated/delivered by any member of the house staff team e.g. HsMs, Assistants, Houseparents, Tutors or Matrons, with the assessment and internal verifying completed each individual school. Standardisation will be coordinated by SBSA at an annual Standardisation event with External Verifiers for the Award.

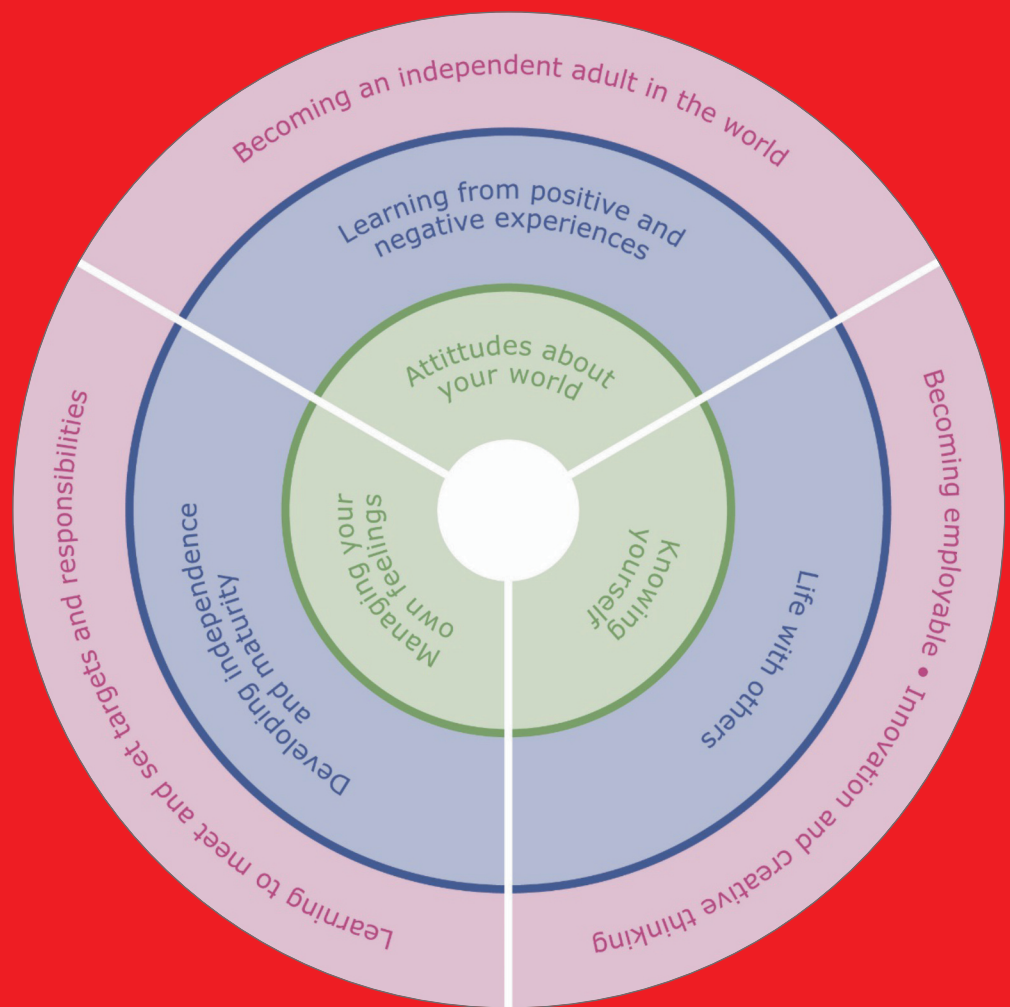
## In short the Boarding Life Skills Awards:

- are aimed at ages 8-19
- are across 3 levels to allow access by a wide range of abilities
- present a framework of activities (challenges) within topic specific areas through which personal, social and employability skills can be developed and accredited.
- provide a learner centred approach to learning and development
- support achievement
- develop skills
- are flexible and able to meet the needs of both students and staff
- are 100% portfolio evidence based
- have progression opportunities into other national awards/qualifications

To gain a Boarding Skills Certificate, boarders need to present evidence of their achievements. They do this by compiling an organised portfolio (file or folder).

The Boarding Skills Model – Development of Skills

The model reflects the learning process of a typical boarder. The boarder develops the inner circle skills first and moves to the outer circles with greater experience and understanding. The Boarding Skills Award can help facilitate this learning process.



Inner circle	Internal – about you
Middle circle	Developing in a community
Outside circle	Transition to becoming a successful and functioning adult in the outside world

Identifying the Skills inherent in Boarding

The skills generated by the Award are:-

Boarding Skills Awards Accredit...

living in a multicultural community	planning	empathy and emotional intelligence	rapport and relationship management	understanding different cultures
managing friendships	diversity	punctuality	community voice	leadership
dealing with change and challenging situations	financial awareness and budgeting	nutrition	negotiation and compromise	valuing others
understanding personal space and boundaries of others	critical thinking	setting own targets	local and global awareness	being a role model
working with others	work-life balance	household skills	managing work and deadlines	adaptability
reflection	managing emotions and stress	holding conversations	developing arguments	good communication
positiveness	asking for help	advocacy	taking criticism	mentoring
	listening skills	problem solving	hygiene management	

How this Award Scheme Works

We have created a user friendly system of Awards, where staff, in boarding establishments, can run this Award without the need for any extensive training or indeed the need for prior qualifications. Houseparents, Matrons, Gap Students and Duty Tutors are all able to support their boarders to achieve the Awards.

These Boarding Skills Awards have been designed by staff from boarding backgrounds, who still work at the chalk face. Each level is flexible enough to allow the needs of both UK based and overseas boarders to be met.

The Student Booklet for each level is self-contained with guidance notes, details of each module and evidence proforma and records of achievement.

What the boarder needs to do

It is expected that boarders will have a lot of fun as they work through the challenges for each Award, but they will also learn to be critically reflective about themselves and the community they live in. Of course the level of that learning experience contrasts greatly between the Basic Boarding Award and the Higher Learning Award.

The boarder must complete a number of challenges in each of the five modules. At Basic and Advanced levels this is set as 3 challenges per module.

At the Higher level these challenges are more complex, it is not expected that the boarders completing this level will be required to generating masses of work. At this level they have a target of 1 challenge for each module.

There is an option at all levels in each of the modules for schools to create their own Challenge – the Free challenge option. This challenge enables each school or boarder to include a challenge that suits them culturally. It needs to be related to the Module it is set within. It should also be pitched at that same level i.e. Basic, Advanced and Higher.

In essence completion of these Awards is about the boarder covering all aspects of the challenge and giving a personal perspective, individual to them.

Forms of Evidence of Achievement

A wide range of items can be used as evidence as long as they clearly demonstrate the work that the individual boarder has done for a particular challenge.

Evidence Sources:

- Audio/video recordings
- Consent forms
- Questionnaires/surveys
- Certificates
- Drawings
- Newspaper clippings
- Plans
- Designs
- Scripts
- Task sheets
- Feedback reports
- Lists
- Graphs/Charts
- Computer printouts
- Receipts
- Witness Statements
- Photographs (annotated)
- Letters
- Travel/Event tickets
- Emails
- Posters
- Maps
- Diaries and Journals
- Minutes
- Registers
- Worksheets
- PowerPoints
- Leaflets

Gathering Evidence & Completing the award

Students will maintain a portfolio of evidence. It is recommended that they split the file into the modules with dividers, have a numbered contents page at the front of the file and number the evidence/pages. They should collect evidence as they progress and do not leave this to a later date. All documents requiring signatures must be printed and signed by hand.

Boarders will maintain a **Record of Progress** which shows the consolidated achievement for each of the 5 modules for their Award – see Appendix 1.

Boarders will also produce a **Record of Achievement** for each module: see Appendix 2.

Where necessary a **Witness Testament** can be used to evidence achievement – see Appendix 3

Their Portfolio will also include a **Summary of Achievement** (see Appendix 4, **Key Skills Assessment** (see Appendix 6) and **Personal Statement** (see Appendices 7 to this guide).

Schools are free to provide a folder for these portfolios of evidence and achievement.



# How will it work school level?

## 1. REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT

Schools will need to register with the BSA office to run this scheme. When schools have students about to complete an award they should then submit pupils' details and registration to BSA for certification to occur. Details of how this will work are set out below. Forms and all other documents are available on the BSA website: [www.boarding.org.uk](http://www.boarding.org.uk)

There are two elements to the registration:

- a Scheme registration and
- b Student certification

### Scheme Registration

Schools can register at any time; contact the BSA office for a proforma, or email Emma at [emma@boarding.org.uk](mailto:emma@boarding.org.uk)

### Student Certification

Schools should contact the BSA when they have students ready to be awarded their certificates. Each certificate costs £10 and schools will need to provide the full name for each successful student. Certificate will take up to 4 weeks to return to the school.

## 2. SETTING IT UP

These Awards have been created to fit flexibly into your school. The idea is to think about your existing boarding programme and consider how the Award might fit into existing aspects of your Boarding provision or it may require you to create/add opportunities for new activities for your boarders. You could arrange for the boarders to tackle these Awards in their free time i.e. outside of the classroom, or possibly you could designate a special period in the week when they can focus on the various activities. Indeed you are free to integrate the award into your existing programme and timetable or boarding schedule. The choice is ultimately yours.

## 3. STEP BY STEP GUIDE

A step by step guide for schools is attached – see Appendix 8.

## 4. WHAT DO YOU NEED IN PLACE TO RUN THE AWARD

Each school needs to create a 'structure' to enable the running of this Award.

### a. Coordinator

Dependent on the number of boarders participating in the Award, you will need a number of staff to support the boarders in creating their portfolios and ultimately to assess the evidence in these. Any member of your Boarding and Teaching Staff can take on this role. Indeed It does not need to be just one person, as some Boarding Schools operate a rota/duty system. Non-academic staff need not be fearful, as the Awards do not require a teaching or lecturing background to run them.

Quite often the member of staff will be in an observer role watching the boarders complete one of their challenges/activities e.g. planning a sports events, constructing a butterfly garden or running mock interviews.

At the Basic level the tasks will probably require the Assessor to give a lot of support and intervention. At the Higher level the challenges are likely to be carried out with minimal Assessor intervention.

All Assessors, Internal Verifiers and boarders/candidates will benefit from frequent revisits to the Boarding Skills Model (see page 2), as this Model reflects the learning process across all 4 Boarding levels. It is a fluid process, and it may well be an be useful to review the model from time to time and to consider where the boarder is in the learning process at that moment.

### b. Internal Coordinator/verifier

Schools will also need to nominate a more senior member of staff to take on the position of the Internal Verifier for these Awards. It will be their job to ensure that the boarders' portfolios meet the standard required. Supported by a SBSA/ASDAN Standardisation event they will be made aware of the required standards for each Award and will feed this back to their in-house Assessors/Houseparents/Matrons/Tutors. With experience both the school assessor/facilitator and verifiers will become more aware of what each boarder must do to reach the required standards.

### Standardisation, External Verification and Moderation

Details of the Standardisation/Assessment process are included as a separate appendix to this guide.

Schools will be expected to send their internal verifiers to a Standardisation events; it is anticipated that these will be held regionally. In addition to bench marking the portfolios against the standards, it is expected that the Internal Verifier will also be able to share and understand the best practice from their colleagues from around the country. The exchange of ideas and projects generated by the boarders will be a very important benefit of running the Awards.

We can expect that each Standardisation event would be a celebration of the hard work and creativity of boarders and the excellence of U.K. Boarding as a whole. This will also allow a sharing of positive boarding experience, articulated by the boarders themselves. Through these Standardisation events we will be able to demonstrate the skills and knowledge that boarders are generating from their boarding experiences, and thereby allow them to evidence the Soft Skills that employers are crying out for.

## Conclusion

Although this might feel a little daunting at the moment, everything will fall into place, when you start using the Boarding Awards. It is expected that much of your existing boarding programme and activities will easily and quickly be aligned/integrated with the modules and the associated challenges.

In short by using these Awards schools will begin to create concrete evidence to demonstrate what we already know, that is that Boarding gives its young people key experiences, skills and learning that will benefit them greatly in their lives.



# Student Record of Progress

(example – each level has a specific Record)

	Boarding Skills Award	Challenge Completion (Circle)	Credit Earned
A	Living in a Boarding Community	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5	
B	Life Skills	B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	
C	Happy & Healthy	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5	
D	Achieve & Enjoy	D1, D2, D3, D4, D5	
E	Ready4Life	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5	
		Total Credits	
Organised Portfolio of Evidence			
Summary of Achievement			
Personal Statement			
Tutor Signature			

Completion Date:



# Summary of Module Achievement

Challenges	Portfolio Reference		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
Verified by/date			
Skills used in this Module			
Working with Others		Communication	
Improving Own Learning and Performance		Information Technology	
Problem Solving		Use of numbers	



# Peer Witness Statement

(template)

Name of Student:

Date of event:

Activity observed:

Witness Statement:

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Staff signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary of Achievement

**Name :** .....

**Congratulations! You have now completed the required number of challenges. This is an opportunity to highlight some of your achievements and describe the skills you have shown. Please check with your houseparent to make sure that you fully understand how to complete this summary and that you have enough evidence in your portfolio to support your statements, including the three action plan reviews.**

### Completing the summary

In your own words please try and describe at least two examples of challenges or activities where you have shown each of the following skills to the appropriate level

- Working with others
- Improving own learning and performance
- Problem solving

Example - Working with others	File/evidence reference

**Hint:** The more detailed the description the more helpful it is to your houseparent, and others, to find and understand your evidence. It must include page references to the appropriate action plans and reviews.

### The personal statement

Complete the personal statement on Page 4 describing what you feel you have gained as a result of completing the programme and what your plans are for the future. You may also ask your tutor to comment on your Wider Key Skill developments, achievements and future plans. At the end of the summary, both you and your tutor must sign to say that your achievements are true and that a portfolio of supporting evidence at the level indicated, with action plans and reviews, has been produced.

# Summary of Achievement

(Exemplar)

Name : .....

Congratulations! You have now completed the required number of challenges. This is an opportunity to highlight some of your achievements and describe the skills you have shown. Please check with your houseparent to make sure that you fully understand how to complete this summary and that you have enough evidence in your portfolio to support your statements, including the three action plan reviews.

**Completing the summary**

In your own words please try and describe at least two examples of challenges or activities where you have shown each of the following skills to the appropriate level

- Working with others
- Improving own learning and performance
- Problem solving

Example - Working with others	File/evidence reference
e.g. Working with others to action plan and set goals, carrying out your challenges to get things done and achieve shared objectives, reviewing progress. This will involve working with one person and in a group.	
1 I worked with Mr Brewer to organise cooking a meal. I planned what ingredients I needed, what cooking times and how to cook the meal. He also agreed to watch me for safety.	P32 Action plan P14
2 I worked with Danny, Samuel and Penny on a gardening project. It was my job to count in and count out the tools each day. We all worked to dig and over-turn the soil, then to plan some flowers. At the end of the day we talked about what we needed to do next time. At the end of the challenge we talked with the house parents about whether we achieved our targets.	Page 9 in portfolio Action Plan review Page 18

**Hint:** The more detailed the description the more helpful it is to your houseparent, and others, to find and understand your evidence. It must include page references to the appropriate action plans and reviews.

**The personal statement**  
Complete the personal statement on Page 4 describing what you feel you have gained as a result of completing the programme and what your plans are for the future. You may also ask your tutor to comment on your Wider Key Skill developments, achievements and future plans. At the end of the summary, both you and your tutor must sign to say that your achievements are true and that a portfolio of supporting evidence at the level indicated, with action plans and reviews, has been produced.

# Achieving the Key Skills

Please describe in your own words how you have developed your Key Skills in completing the challenges. Describe two activities for each of the Wider Key Skills - working with others, improving own learning and performance and problem solving, and provide references for evidence.

1: Working with others	File/page reference
e.g. working with others to action plan to complete shared challenges, carrying out your challenges to get things done and reviewing progress. This will involve working one to one and in a group.	
<b>Personal reflection on this key skill:</b>	

2. Improving own learning and performance	File/page reference
e.g. action planning and setting targets, working toward targets to improve your performance, reviewing progress	
<b>Personal reflection on this key skill:</b>	



# Personal Statement

<b>3. Problem solving</b> e.g. recognising problems, using different methods to find a solution, checking to see if problems have been solved, describing results.  <u>Personal reflection on this key skill:</u>	<b>File/page reference</b>
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<p>Write a brief personal statement, describing what you feel you have gained as a result of completing the programme and what your plans are for the future.</p> <p><b>Achievements (and things I am good at):</b></p>          <p><b>Things I need to improve:</b></p>          <p><b>Future plans:</b></p>          <p>Your tutor/houseparent may also comment on your Wider Key Skills, developments, achievements and future plans.</p> <p><b>Tutor comment:</b></p>          <p><b>Declaration:</b></p> <p>The achievements described are accurate and are supported by a portfolio of evidence, with action plans and reviews.</p> <p>Student Signature</p> <p>Tutor Signature                      Date:</p>
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# Step by Step Guide to the Boarding Skills Award

1. Register

  - Register with the BSA; the fee is £50 per level of the award
2. Plan

  - Decide what level you will be working towards
  - Plan what modules and challenges to do
  - Make sure each student has a student pack and portfolio for their evidence
3. The Big Five

  - To deliver the Boarding Life Skills Award, make sure you have the following in place:
    1. Boarding Skills Student Pack
    2. Record of Progress
    3. Evidence for each completed challenge
    4. Summary of Achievement
    5. Personal Statement
5. Check and Verify

  - Collect in the portfolios and student work
  - Check the "big five" are completed
  - Complete the Assessor Record in each student book
6. Certificate

  - Send a list of those students that have successfully completed the award, with details of the level and full names
  - Await certificates for your successful students
  - Present the certificates to your students and celebrate their achievements

BSA

The Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) champions boarding and promotes boarding excellence.

The BSA represents around 500 independent and state boarding schools in the UK and overseas. BSA services include professional development, government relations, communications, media, publications, conferences and events.

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