



# Award Scheme

Guidance notes for Schools

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## INTRODUCTION

Economist and former 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 created to reflect the experience and skills of being a boarder. There are 3 levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold, so that boarders from Year 6 to Year 13 access these awards.

## HOW WILL IT WORK?

It is expected that the Awards 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. Assistant Houseparents, Houseparents, Tutors or Matrons, with the assessment and internal verifying completed each individual school.



# IN SHORT, THE BOARDING LIFE SKILLS AWARDS:

- are aimed at ages 9-19
- 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
- support achievement, induction and integration
- develop skills
- are flexible and able to meet the needs of both students and staff
- provide an opportunity to showcase exciting boarding activities at your school
- can be used as evidence in applications and have progression opportunities into other national awards/qualifications.

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

The skills included in the Award are:

Living in diverse community	Planning and managing deadlines	Empathy and emotional intelligence	Managing friendships and relationships	Understanding different cultures and experiences
Punctuality	Dealing with and adapting to change	Financial literacy	Compromise	Leadership
Valuing others	Understanding personal space and boundaries	Critical thinking	Target-setting	Local and global awareness
Being a role model	Working with others	Work-life balance	Accepting feedback	Communication skills
Reflection	Managing emotions	Listening skills	Problem solving	Hygiene and household tasks



## 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. Any member of the boarding team can support their boarders to achieve the Awards.

These Boarding Life Skills Awards have been designed by staff from boarding backgrounds. Each level is flexible enough to allow the needs of both UK based and overseas boarders to be met.

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

The boarding Life Skills Awards are divided into three levels:

### **Bronze**

Years 6, 7 and 8

### **Silver**

Years 9,10 and 11

### **Gold**

Years 12 and 13

Once boarders have completed the challenges for their level, staff get in touch with the BSA. We will ask for samples of portfolios and conduct standardisation work before awarding participating pupils their Awards and certificates.

The BSA will collate examples of best practice and outstanding challenges and entries before presenting awards for the best projects. This is therefore an opportunity to showcase your school and your boarding community.

## WHAT THE BOARDER NEEDS TO DO

It is expected that boarders will have 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 Bronze and the Gold Award.

Boarders must complete a number of challenges in each of the five modules. At Bronze and Silver levels this is set as 3 challenges per module.

At the Gold level these challenges are more complex, it is not expected that the boarders completing this level will be required to generate large quantities of work. At this level they have a target of 1 challenge for each module in line with their heavier academic workload.

There is an option at all levels in each module for schools to create their own challenge – the Free challenge option. This enables each school or boarder to include a challenge which suits them best. It needs to relate to the module it is set within. It must also be pitched at the same level i.e. Bronze, Silver or Gold.

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



## SOURCES OF EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

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

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

## GATHERING EVIDENCE & COMPLETING THE AWARD

Boarders will maintain a portfolio of evidence. It is recommended that they split the file or electronic folders into the different modules. They should collect evidence as they progress and not leave this to a later date. All documents requiring signatures must be signed either by hand or electronically.

Boarders will maintain a **Record of Progress** in their booklet which shows the consolidated achievement for each of the 5 modules for their Award including space for reflection. Some of the challenges require someone to witness the achievement, this should be recorded in the booklet.

The Portfolio will also include a **Personal Statement** which encourages boarders to reflect on their achievements for each module.



# HOW TO GET STARTED WITH THE BOARDING LIFE SKILLS AWARDS

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## Registration and Enrolment

Schools will need to register to run this scheme, either by completing the form directly on the BSA website or by email [bsa@boarding.org.uk](mailto:bsa@boarding.org.uk)

## Annual subscription

The Boarding Life Skills Award is available to schools through an annual subscription invoiced based on the number of boarders in your school. This tiered system means there are no restrictions on the number of boarders in your school who can complete the Award. Once registered, the school will be invoiced accordingly and you will be sent the resources.

## Student Certification

Boarders who complete the Award will receive a personalised certification from the BSA. Schools should contact the BSA with a list of student names when all boarders participating have completed their appropriate levels.

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## 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. Some schools will choose to fit it into their induction programme for new boarders whilst others will see the module and the associated challenges as a resource which can complement the boarding activities programme or perhaps the PSHE curriculum. For example, you could have a dedicated time in the week when they can focus on the various activities and could integrate the award into your existing programme or boarding schedule. The choice is ultimately yours.

## Step by Step Guide

A step-by-step guide for schools is at the end of this guide.

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## What do you need in place to run the award

Each school needs to create a 'structure' to enable the running of this Award though this is not onerous.

### a Coordinator

Dependent on the number of boarders participating in the Award, you may need several staff to support the boarders in creating their portfolios and ultimately to assess the evidence in these. Any member of your Boarding staff can take on this role. It does not need to be just one person and does not have to be academic staff.

Quite often the member of staff will be in an observer role watching the boarders complete one of their challenges/activities. However, the Bronze level tasks will probably require the Assessor to give a lot of support and intervention. At the Silver and Gold levels, the challenges are likely to be carried out with minimal staff intervention.

### b Internal 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. This could be the Houseparent (if another member of staff acts as coordinator) or the Head of Boarding.

## Standardisation and Verification

Schools will be expected to internally verify the quality of the portfolios. The BSA will then ask for samples of the portfolios for verification and standardisation purposes. It is also possible that the BSA will invite the Internal Verifier 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.

## Conclusion

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 be able to demonstrate that Boarding gives its young people key experiences, skills and learning that will benefit them greatly in their lives.

# STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO THE BOARDING SKILLS AWARD

- 1. Register** Register with the BSA; the annual subscription is:
  - £100 (for schools with 100 boarders or less)
  - £200 (for schools with 100-200 boarders)
  - £300 (for schools with 200 boarders or more)
- 2. Plan** Match boarders with the correct Boarding Life Skill levels (Bronze, Silver or Gold)  
Plan modules and challenges  
Make sure each student has a student pack and portfolio for their evidence
- 3. The Essentials** To deliver the Boarding Life Skills Award, make sure you have the following in place:
  1. Boarding Skills Student Booklet
  2. Staff coordinator and staff verifier
  3. Clarity on how you want your boarders to present evidence (digital or paper)
  4. Completed personal statements and reflection
- 4. Check and Verify** Collect boarders' booklets and portfolios  
Check all necessary information is complete  
Complete the Assessor Record in each boarder's booklet
- 5. Contact the BSA** When your boarders have completed the Award, contact [bsa@boarding.org.uk](mailto:bsa@boarding.org.uk) and let us know. Send samples of portfolios for BSA to standardise as requested
- 6. Certificate** Send a list of boarders who have successfully completed the award, with details of the level and full names. Await certificates for your successful students.



