

A group of young people are gathered in a circle, with some lying on their backs and others supporting them from below, creating a human pyramid. They are in a bright, indoor space, possibly a gym or a large hall.

Arts Award and young people

main findings from
an impact study

“ Doing Arts Award,
I’ve discovered
myself as an actor
and a person

Introduction

Arts Award is a unique set of awards that support children and young people to enjoy the arts and develop as artists and arts leaders. Arts Award is managed by Trinity College London in association with Arts Council England.

Since Arts Award’s launch in 2005, over 240,000 awards have been achieved at one of five levels – Discover, Explore, Bronze, Silver and Gold. In 2012 Trinity College London and Arts Council England commissioned a three-year study to find out what impact Arts Award has on young people’s career choices, skills development, creativity and interaction with the world of arts and culture. The research, led by London South Bank University, focused on Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

How was the research carried out?

Researchers tracked 68 young people over two years during and after doing Arts Award. There were also one-off interviews with a group of older alumni and with the Arts Award advisers who support young people. The team analysed data held by Trinity and gathered more evidence through surveys sent to advisers and to young people taking the award.

“Before Arts Award I was really shy and I didn’t speak at all, or only in a whisper, but now I can talk, and when I speak I can find more words that flow and my speech is way better than before.



Delia,
new arrival in the UK from Poland. She completed Bronze Arts Award as part of ESOL provision at an East Midlands College.

What did the research find out?

Five key benefits of doing Arts Award

LIFE SKILLS
There was a wealth of positive impacts on young people. Many of these are transferable to the world of work, such as gains in confidence, leadership and organisational skills.

ARTS CHOICES
Arts Award influenced young people’s choice of subjects and supported successful applications for further study. It encouraged young people to explore new areas of the arts.

ACCREDITATION
Arts Award is a highly respected and truly universal qualification, based on sound approaches to teaching and learning.

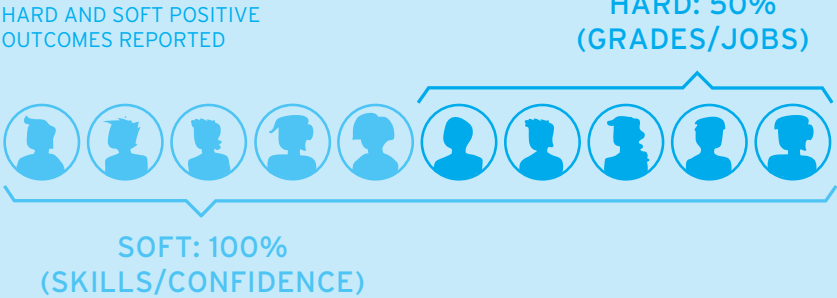
CREATIVE PATHWAYS
Arts Award was especially powerful in developing young people from all backgrounds as creative artists and arts leaders, nurturing their understanding of routes to employment in the creative and cultural sector.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS
Taking part encouraged independent learning, communication and networking, all vital skills for a career as a freelancer or arts entrepreneur.

“Arts Award gave me a whole new set of skills in photography and an interest in the arts. I also learned leadership and organisational skills which have all really helped me at university.



Carl
took his Gold Arts Award while doing photography as an extracurricular activity in the sixth form. He included his Arts Award on his application to study Politics.



Arts Award nurtures life skills

95% of advisers working with young people on Arts Award reported seeing a great impact on their self-confidence. More than 80% of young people reported that Arts Award had a positive impact on their communication and people skills, such as leading a project, working in a group, and sharing opinions and listening to others.

Organising activities in a 'real life' environment, such as an old people's home or a primary school, meant young people had to use practical skills and act on their own initiative.

"I wouldn't be able to do this phone call interview type thing if it hadn't been for Arts Award. I would have been too nervous to keep a conversation going with someone I don't really know."



Professional skills for life

'I never really thought I was much of a leader but I'm not afraid to lead people now and direct at drama school.'

Leadership

'Working at [clothing chain], I have been able to apply the skills I have gained. It has made me confident to help customers without being apprehensive.'

Communication & people skills

'Through Arts Award I learnt to try something, to be self-motivated to seek opportunities. That's played a role throughout the last six years.'

Organisational skills

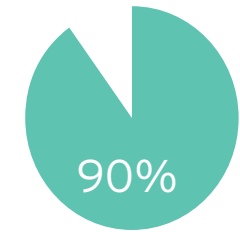
'Arts Award gives you confidence in your ability. Now if something goes wrong, I can handle the situation.'

Confidence

Arts Award improves artistic skills and encourages creativity

90% of the Arts Award alumni group continued to feel the impact on their artistic skills several years after completing their award. In particular, Gold and Silver hone young people's skills in their chosen art form. Arts Award fosters active producers of art, rather than passive consumers.

In the advisers' survey, over 90% agreed that Arts Award has a positive impact on young people's creativity. Young people understood creativity widely, from being able to make something of their own and solving problems, to writing their own opinions in a review.



"Doing Arts Award, I've discovered myself as an actor and a person."



Kitty, Gold Award

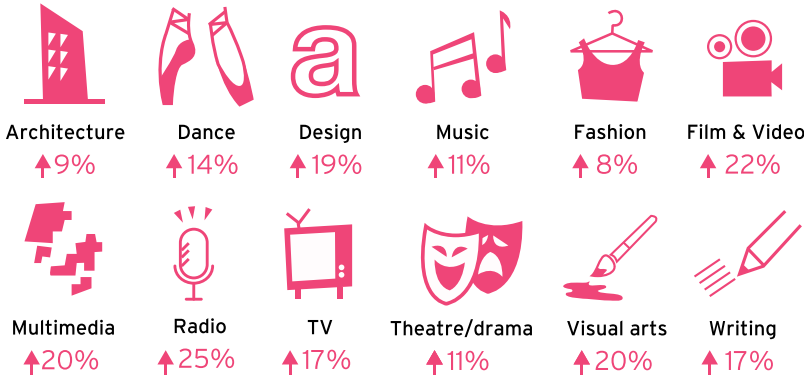


Feddi, Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards

"I used to be quite conventional in my thinking and schoolwork. I did what was required and nothing more, but now I think outside the box. I put on a musical and the organisation, logic and reasoning involved helped me to be more creative in my product design course."

Impact on subject and career choices
Young people felt more engaged and motivated to progress in their education. 3 out 5 said they better understood the options for a career or for further study in the arts after completing Arts Award. This was especially true at Gold level.

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE COMPLETED HIGHER LEVELS OF ARTS AWARD SHOW INCREASED INTEREST IN ARTS CAREERS:



Arts Award encourages arts entrepreneurship

Nearly two-thirds of the young people followed over two years continued to initiate arts projects and increased their participation in the arts.

Arts Award gives young people the chance to meet practising artists and to discover that working in the arts and cultural sector is a feasible option. They develop networks and useful contacts for taking their first steps towards employment. Arts Award helps young people's self-motivation and ability to seek new opportunities.

“ I met two other students who were deaf and we discussed the value of drama in our lives. I wanted to open a drama school and theatre for disabled students.

Vicki,
Bronze and Silver Awards

“ It was very valuable meeting with lots of artists from the arts centre where I was doing my Arts Award. I liked learning from people who are already doing it.

Eric,
Arts Award alumnus

“ Having Arts Award under my belt allowed me to prove I want to make films and say ‘look here are two short films I made.’ And that helped no end really.

Elliot,
Arts Award alumnus

The value of a recognised qualification

Arts Award is valued by young people and professionals because it is a recognised qualification. 95% of advisers said that they run Arts Award because it offers accreditation and recognition. Young people started Arts Award to get a qualification for arts activity, to improve their job chances and to boost applications for further study.



Conclusion The impact of Arts Award

Developing life skills

With its emphasis on independent and reflective learning, leadership and collaboration, Arts Award gives young people valuable life skills, which can be transferred into many different contexts and situations, giving them the flexibility and confidence to flourish in the modern world.

Inclusion

Arts Award appeals to a wide range of young people, including artistic high-fliers and the most disadvantaged, and there is some evidence that Arts Award can have a more marked impact on those with less ‘cultural capital’ to start with. It is extremely flexible and can be offered in many different settings.

Pathway into the creative industries and an enjoyment of the arts

The arts and creative industries are growth areas in the UK economy. Arts Award is especially successful in showing teenagers that they can find a wide variety of satisfying jobs in the arts and cultural sector. Higher levels of Arts Award in particular help young people build networks and contacts which can be vital first steps on a vocational journey. Young people learn that active enjoyment of the arts and culture can become a lifelong pleasure.

“ I didn't think you could get a job out of it. I thought it was a hobby. I finished my Arts Award and I was like: 'I want to be an artist'.

Zeynep,
Gold Arts Award alumnus who is now a successful performance artist

Why does Arts Award work?

The research shows that Arts Award has 10 characteristics which maximise its impact.

‘The research found advisers, other staff and young people full of praise for certain aspects of the Arts Award qualification which had produced a positive experience for them...Arts Award’s pedagogy is exemplary!’

Arts Award Impact Study

1. Reflecting on and shaping own learning
2. Leadership and peer tutoring
3. Collaboration
4. Personalised, independent learning
5. Applied learning
6. Accreditation
7. Portfolio assessment
8. Diversity of evidence
9. Learning outside the classroom
10. Inclusion of non-arts skills