



2023 Teacher Survey Summary

Summary

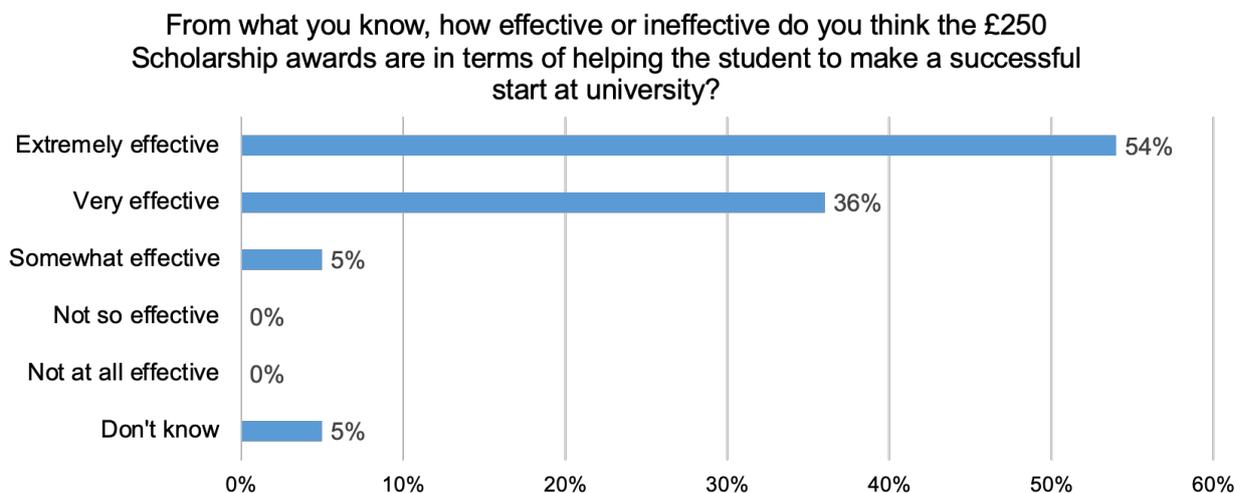
- An overwhelming majority (90%) of Heads of Year feel **the awards are effective** in helping the student make a successful start at university.
- 98% feel **the programme is very or extremely valuable** from their perspective as a school leader.
- We are **reaching new tranches of schools and colleges** – 81% said they don't offer any other similar financial prize or scholarship in Year 13.
- We are succeeding in being **administratively 'light touch'** - 96% say the process of administering the award is 'easy'.
- We have gone some way to **understanding the consistent male/female balance** in the Scholarships awarded (see below for details).

Note

The results are from our biennial survey of Heads of Sixth Form, Head of Careers and Heads of Year 13 involved in our Scholarship programme. The survey was completed in November 2022. A total of 126 individuals completed the survey (out of 347 schools and colleges involved in the programme in 2022), a healthy response rate of 36%. We would like to thank all of those who took the time to complete the survey.

Our Scholarships are felt to have impact

An overwhelming majority (90%) of Heads of Year feel the awards are effective in helping the student make a successful start at university.



Base: all Heads of Year or similar (126)

They are also valued by schools

Importantly, it is also very apparent that the Scholarship programme is valued by the schools and colleges that award them (some of whom will have awarded them every year since 2016).

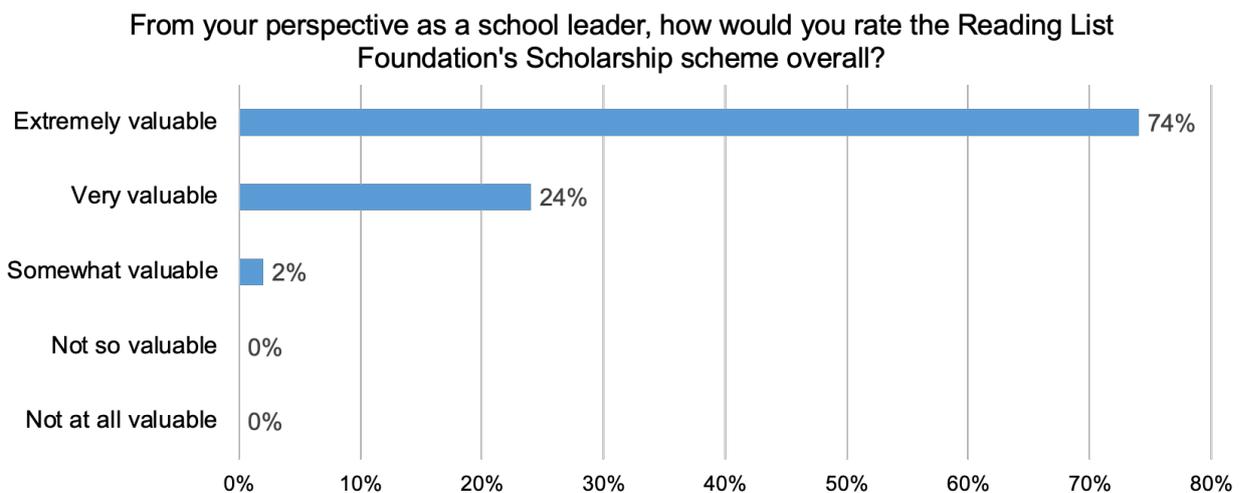
“Thank you! It is really nice to be able to award excellence and commitment to studies in this way. Our school do have prizes for academic excellence and effort but they are really just a token gesture. This award really does have an impact.”

“I think it's a great scheme. It really helps the confidence of the students who win the awards and gives us a nice opportunity to celebrate their achievement. We don't have money for prizes in our budgets so it's really helpful for our institution.”

“They are a ray of hope for those who are academically gifted but socially disadvantaged, long may they continue, and thank you!”

“It has been so rewarding to pass the scholarships on to our students the last couple of years, as we know what a difference it will make. We are a very small 6th Form and have little finances for the 'extras, so this has been a pleasure for staff too.”

“I think this is a fantastic initiative. We have been having a big drive on improving praise and rewards in our school and this fits in perfectly as it rewards students for long term commitment and positive habits.”



Base: all Heads of Year or similar (126)

One of the themes evident in the comments above (and in the wider survey responses) speaks to one of the Foundation's original aims, which was to bring Scholarships to schools and colleges that don't have a history of alumni donations or other philanthropy. The fact that 81% of respondents said their school or college didn't offer any similar financial scholarships or prizes to Year 13 students suggests we are achieving that aim.

The benefit the scheme brings to schools and colleges (as opposed to just the student) is also evident in the finding that 94% of Heads of Year would be very or extremely likely to recommend the scheme to a colleague in Post-16 education. (As an aside, we are always looking to bring new schools or colleges into the programme, so please feel free to mention it....)

Firewalls and Mailwalls remain a challenge

Every May we send out Scholarships packs to schools and colleges by both email and post (a belts and braces approach). The survey suggests we need to continue to do this, as 9% reported receiving the postal pack but not the email, and 13% receiving the email but not the postal pack. Although only 2% remember receiving neither, it is a reminder that sending via either approach has its problems, especially for email communications at other times in the year. We do keep a list of schools where we are aware our emails tend not to get past firewalls, but it remains an administrative challenge (albeit a minor one).

Otherwise, the programme is felt to run smoothly, with 96% saying the process of administering the award is easy.

Understanding the gender difference

We have always given schools and colleges freedom to choose the most appropriate student to receive the award (within certain criteria). Over the years though, this has consistently resulted in about two-thirds of the Scholarship winners being female. The Reading List Foundation has a stated commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and so we sought feedback from schools that might help us to understand why there is this balance between female and male Scholarship winners.

Three themes emerged in the responses – [willingness to open-up](#), a possible [female bias to humanities/reading-based subjects](#) over more practical options, and higher [female HE and Russell Group participation rates](#).

The most common response (mentioned by around one in ten) was a sense that female students were more likely to open-up to staff and share financial worries or Higher Education anxieties (with some evidencing this by their experience that female students were more likely to claim Bursary support).

“Our female winners have all overcome some form of adversity. It might be that as females, they are more open and maybe we are more aware and able to offer support to help?”

“From my experience it is the girls who will tell you about any hardship or resistance from family to them going to university, so they come to mind when you have such an award. The boys don't tend to admit that they need any support.”

“For us I think females are more likely to discuss where they need support, their background etc which probably influences the decision.”

There was also a sense that the balance reflected the higher participation rates apparent in the UK for females vs. males, a difference that is also apparent among Russell Group universities (where a high proportion of Scholarship winners progress to).

“Our girls have traditionally outperformed our boys (it is something we are consciously working on changing!), so it makes them an easier choice to reflect that high achievement.”

“We have more girls than boys in our VI Form and in terms of the most able students who go to competitive universities the majority are girls.”

Lastly, a number felt it was a function of a possible bias among female students to apply to courses underpinned by reading, rather than for instance technical or apprenticeship-based routes. Both routes may require textbooks, but teachers may feel

that the Scholarship will *be of more help* to a student studying, say, Medicine than Computer Science.

“Type of subject perhaps? Arts & humanity-type subjects can be weighted more to female participants.”

“Typically, we find females choose subjects that are more 'reading'-based, whereas males tend to go for more practical and research-based courses.”

“In our school, more girls go to uni than boys and they tend to be studying courses where more reading is involved.”

It was also pointed out that the submission form as it stands does not accommodate transgender identification, and so we will look to incorporate this in 2023.

We would like to finish with a quote that we think sums up what we hope to achieve – to help exceptional students from lower-income households succeed at university.

“This has been life-changing for both students that were awarded this Scholarship. They have been so grateful and, considering their difficult circumstances, it has allowed them to make a positive start to their university journey. One student was estranged from their parents and very much going into university alone, without any financial support. They managed to achieve AAA grades in their A-Levels, and went to a Russell Group university - something that they did not expect they would be able to achieve given their difficult personal circumstances and financial position. It was amazing to award them with this and we are grateful to be involved in this opportunity as a school and Sixth Form.”

The Reading List Foundation

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