



2023 Impact Report

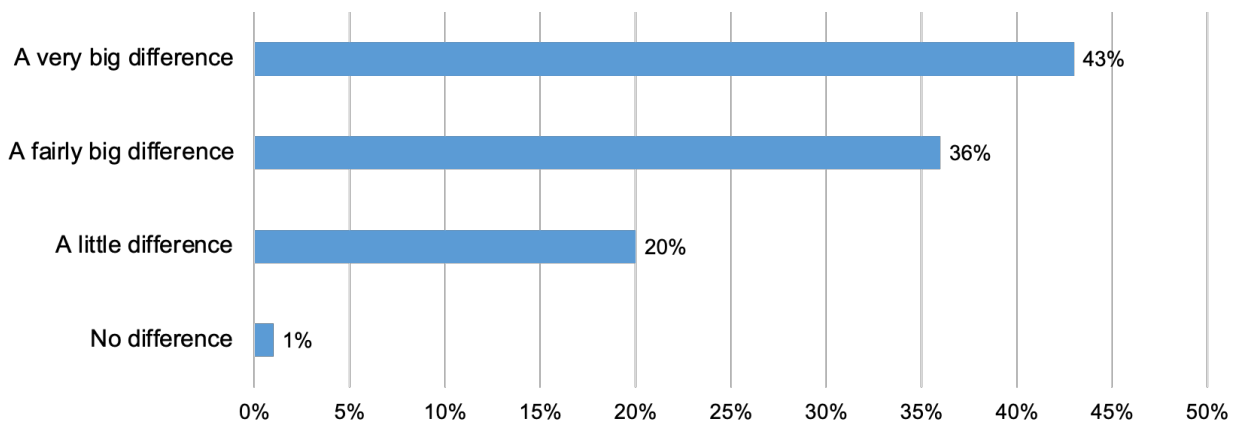
Note

The results are from our annual survey of Scholarship winners from the previous year i.e. students who started university in September 2022. The survey was completed in May 2023, towards the end of the academic year. A total of 73 students completed the survey (out of 232 Scholarship winners), a response rate of 31%. This is lower than previous years (which usually run at around 50%), which we believe is partly due to the survey going out in the run-up to exam season.

Our Scholarships have impact

An overwhelming majority of Scholarship winners – 79% - say the award has made ‘a big difference’ to their first year of university. We are also optimistic that this figure would rise over time, since around half of those saying it has only had ‘a little difference’ hadn’t actually used their award yet as they were saving it for 2nd and 3rd year purchases.

Overall, how much of a difference, if any, did the Reading List Foundation scholarship make to your first year of university?



Base: all Scholarship winners (73)

It is clear this impact is about more than just money

The Scholarship awards are in the form of a £250 Blackwell’s e-voucher, intended to cover the cost of a student’s textbooks in their first year of university (and often second and even third years as well). The awards are intended to help the student financially, but also provide benefits in terms of recognition, reward and a boost to a student’s confidence. Among the description of how they felt on receiving the award were the following comments:

“I felt overjoyed and completely happy, it was the only thing I thought about for a couple days.”

“I truly could not describe how happy I was. To be chosen out of all the exceptional students at School made me feel very special. It also made me look forward to uni just that little more, one less worry :)”

“It was great - I had never been awarded something like that before. The immense feeling of pride that I felt as soon as I was awarded was like nothing I had ever felt before. I knew how much it would help me in my studies and it took away a lot of the stress I had about money at university.”

“I felt genuinely humbled that my teachers thought I deserved the award, considering the amazing people in my year group. It was really heart-warming to know that they'd noticed the work I'd done.”

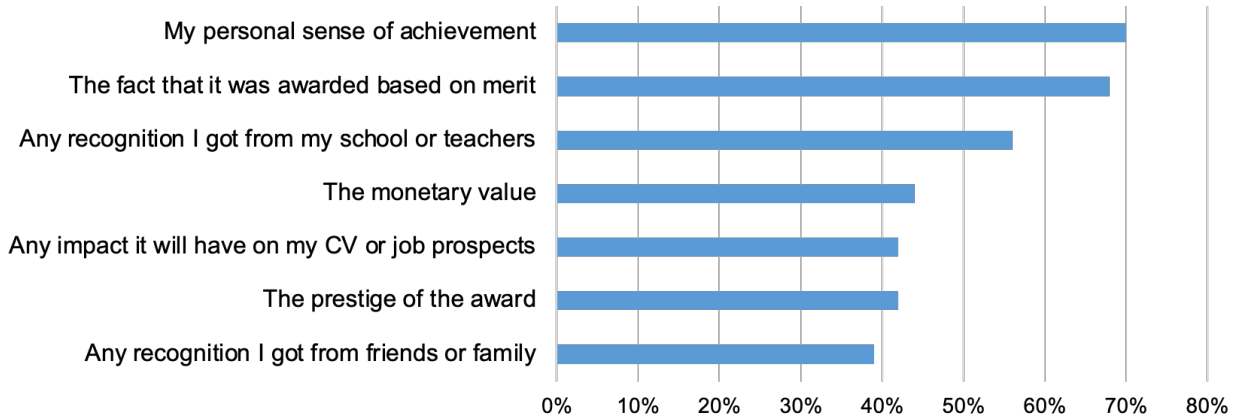
“Most of my books I was able to purchase with the voucher which saved me time and money! I am ever so grateful!”

These sentiments are also apparent when the Scholarship winners were asked to provide three words to describe how they felt about the impact of the award:



Although the headline value of the award is monetary, within a short time of establishing the Scholarships we realised that students place just as much, if not more, value in the merit-based element of the Scholarships – appreciating that they are awarded to exceptional students who have shown real achievement, resilience and character in Years 12 and 13. Being *awarded* the Scholarship is seen to be as valuable as the Scholarship itself.

In your opinion, how important are the following aspects of an academic scholarship?



Base: all Scholarship winners (73)

The awards support Widening Participation goals

Just under half of the students – 44% - are the first in their immediate family to go to university, and our Scholarship winners have progressed on to study an impressive range subjects at an impressive range of universities:



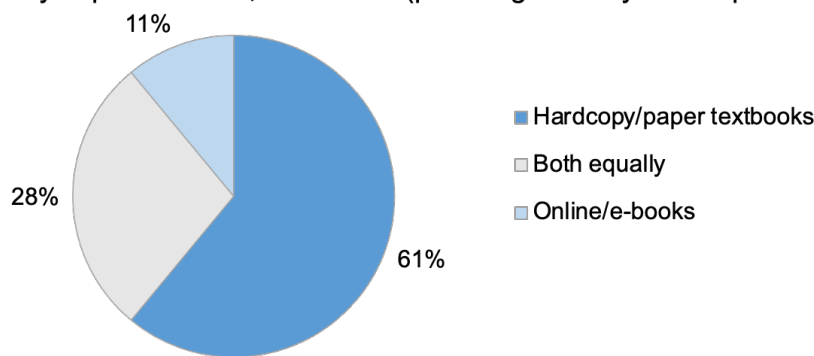


Our impact in terms of widening participation is apparent in the schools themselves, as well as among the students – our recent survey of participating schools and colleges (available on our website) showed that 81% said they don't offer any other similar financial prize or scholarship in Year 13.

Students still prefer 'traditional' textbooks over e-books

The Scholarship awards are in the form of a Blackwell's voucher, redeemable in their bookshops or online; they can be used for purchasing hardback books or e-books. Despite a general societal move online though, it is apparent that our students still value physical textbooks, with their appeal heavily outweighing that of their digital counterparts.

These days many textbooks are also provided either online or in the form of digital e-books. When thinking about academic study and revision, which form do you prefer to use, if available (please ignore any cost implications)?



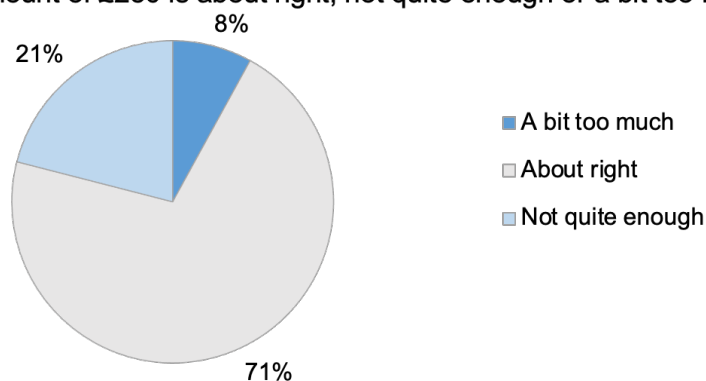
Base: all Scholarship winners using textbooks (72)

Inflation has unsurprisingly hit textbooks as well

The notional intention of the value of the Scholarships - £250 – is to cover the cost of textbooks for the average student in their first year, though in reality some students burn through the award in their first term, while others stretch it out across their whole degree. We have asked a question over the years around whether £250 *does* cover

the cost of textbooks in the first year, and while previously the proportion feeling it is not quite enough has consistently been below 10%, this year it has doubled, to 21% (with the relevant students largely studying Law, Medicine and Psychology).

The intention of the Scholarship award is that the £250 will cover your textbook requirements for your first year of university. Given this aim, do you think the amount of £250 is about right, not quite enough or a bit too much?



Base: all Scholarship winners (73)

The Reading List Foundation

May 2023