



## 2024 Heads of Sixth Form Survey Summary

### Foreword

Heads of Sixth Form and their colleagues have a vital role to play in making sure Reading List Scholarships are awarded to exceptional students. Therefore it is important to seek their feedback on the process. We always aim to ensure that the administration of the programme is minimal, 'school friendly' and respects their knowledge of the students. To this end, we ask for a voluntary survey to be completed. This year's responses reflect both the ease with which teachers can engage with nominating their students and most importantly, the clear benefits to our targeted students in financial and wellbeing terms.

We remain mindful that there is always the potential to improve and will always respond to suggestions that can ensure the RLF continues to grow and reach many more exceptional students. We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the survey, and we look forward to continuing to support you and your students for many years to come.

**Julie Sadler-Smith, Trustee and ex-Head of Sixth Form at Churston Ferrers Grammar School (Devon)**

### Summary

- An overwhelming **83% of Heads of Sixth Form or similar think the programme is 'extremely valuable'** from their perspective as a School or College leader, with a further 15% considering it 'very valuable'.
- **The programme is 'light touch'** – with 97% considering it easy to administer.
- **93% would recommend the programme** to a colleague in Post-16 education – and we're always looking to welcome more schools and colleges into the programme.
- Three-quarters of the schools and colleges awarding our Scholarships **don't offer any similar financial prizes to Year 13 students** – we've always been delighted to offer Scholarships to schools and colleges that might not otherwise offer them.

### 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 2024. A total of 148 individuals completed the survey (out of 416 contactable schools and colleges involved in the programme in 2024), a healthy response rate of 36%.

## Our Scholarships are valued by schools and colleges as well as students

Our regular surveys of Scholarship winners shows how much students value the awards, and it is rewarding to see the extent to which the Scholarships are also valued by the schools and colleges that award them.

*“This is an amazing opportunity for our students as they come from the most deprived areas and tend to be the first in their family to go to University. So to offer a student this Scholarship is a privilege and goes a long way to support them.”*

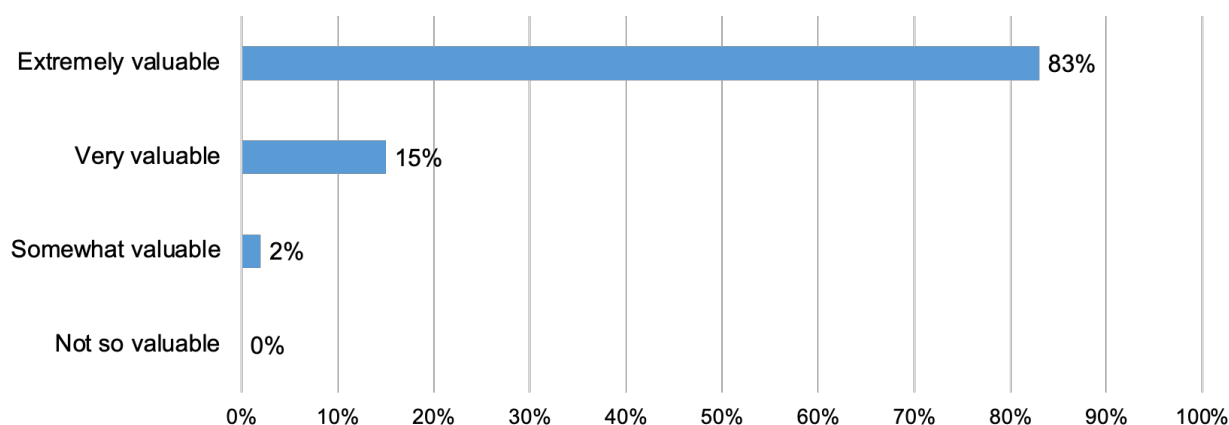
*“I think it is excellent and so generous. Every year we have awarded the Scholarship, the student has been absolutely over the moon and it’s great to recognise someone for the totality of their efforts, not just on likely results.”*

*“I really value the opportunity to reward our eligible and deserving students in this way. It is a really positive experience all around and I look forward to participating every year.”*

*“Thank you very much for running it. It is the most cheered award we give at the Leavers’ Assembly.”*

*“Thank you for such an exciting and supportive opportunity - it was truly transformational for the student and gave them both financial stability and a real sense of pride and celebration to build their confidence into their next steps.”*

From your perspective as a school leader, how would you rate the Reading List Foundation's Scholarship scheme overall?



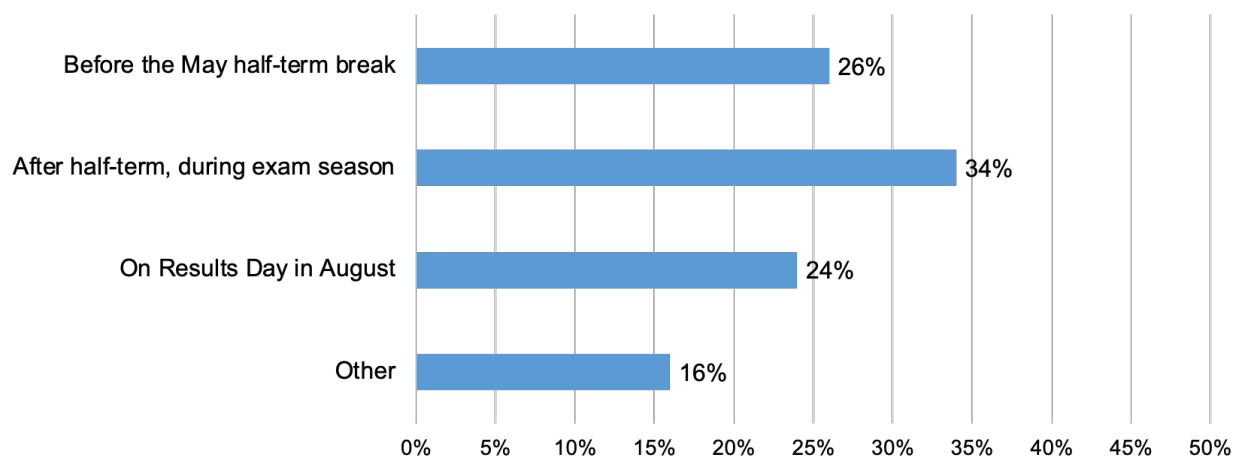
Base: all Heads of 6<sup>th</sup> Form or similar (145)

This value is also evident in the 93% who would recommend the programme to a colleague in Post-16 education (score of 9+/10 on a 0-10 ‘would recommend’ scale). This enthusiasm has also been apparent in the number of word of mouth enquiries we have received over the past 12 months, building up our network of Post-16 schools and colleges to the point where we estimate we now have connections with around one in five Post-16 schools and colleges in England.

## There is flexibility in how the programme is administered

In our first year (2016), we mailed out Scholarship packs in time for the Awards to be made on or shortly after Results Day in August. However, after receiving a number of requests for an earlier mailout, we now send out packs in the first week of May so that schools and colleges can, if they wish, present the award at a Leavers' Assembly or similar in late May. The survey findings suggest this flexibility in timing is appreciated.

Can you tell us when you told the student they had won the Scholarship award?



Base: all Heads of 6<sup>th</sup> Form or similar (145)

It is also encouraging that the programme is again seen as easy to administer, since we aim for the programme to be light touch - an overwhelming 97% consider it 'easy' to manage.

The survey also demonstrates the benefit of mailing-out Scholarship packs both by email and by post, since the survey suggests 8% of our emails don't get past school firewalls, and 13% of postal packs don't find their way to recipients' desks or pigeon-holes.

## Generating a new wave of Scholarships

Part of our founding mission was to generate a new wave of Scholarships – inspiring people who wouldn't otherwise have considered it to fund a Scholarship, and placing many of them in schools and colleges that don't have a long-standing tradition of philanthropic prize-giving. Refreshingly then, we see that 75% of the schools and colleges awarding a Reading List Scholarship don't offer any similar financial prizes or scholarships to Year 13 students.

*"Thanks, it is amazing - as an inner-city school we could never award this to anyone by ourselves, so it makes a massive difference to an FSM student starting uni."*

As part of our ultimate goal of offering a Scholarship in every state-funded Post-16 setting in England, we are delighted to engage with these schools and colleges, just as we are to engage with schools that date back to the 1500s and have donors who have been supporting Scholarships since before the Reading List was but a twinkle in someone's eye.

Lastly, we would like to share a note we received from a Head of Sixth Form outside of the survey, which nonetheless sums up what we hope to achieve with the programme – to help exceptional students from lower-income backgrounds succeed at university.

*“I just wanted to say THANK YOU for allowing us to pass on the Scholarship you have offered us – Lilly\*, our student, is a bright and hard-working girl. As one of the teachers who taught her last year I was very aware that she made cost-conscious decisions at every stage e.g. self-catering accommodation costs less and living further from campus will cost less even if it means she has to walk further etc, so the Scholarship you have given her has meant she has one less thing to worry about - which is BRILLIANT! She was tearful when we gave her your letter on Results Day, because she said it meant that it was a sign of people believing in her when so many (who should have) didn't!”*

(\* Not her real name)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan".

Alan Terry, Co-founder and Trustee

The Reading List Foundation

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