



2026 Impact Report

Foreword

Welcome to our 2026 Impact Report. It highlights a few of the key findings from our annual survey of Scholarship Winners, such as the fact that 82% of our Scholarship Winners say that the Reading List Foundation scholarship has made a big difference to their time at university – myself included. Our Scholarships reward exceptional students and encourage them to pursue and exceed in their studies, regardless of their financial circumstances. Whether students prefer physical textbooks, E-books or a combination of both, our Scholarships help them read beyond their set reading lists and expand their knowledge. At the Reading List Foundation it is also really important to hear students' feedback so we can learn and grow provide the support they deserve, and these surveys are a core part of that.

As a student, I know first-hand the vital role that this Scholarship plays in academic development, and I'm delighted to share these findings with you.

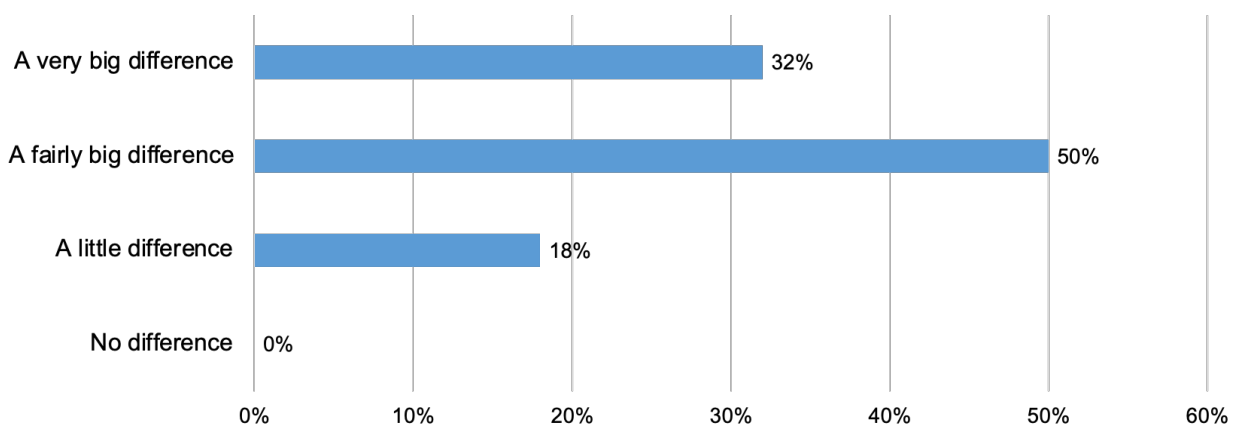
Oxana Bolshova,

Trustee and 2024 Scholarship Winner

Our Scholarships have impact

An overwhelming majority of Scholarship winners – 82% - say the award has made 'a big difference' to their time at university.

Overall, how much of a difference, if any, has the Reading List Foundation scholarship made to your time at university?

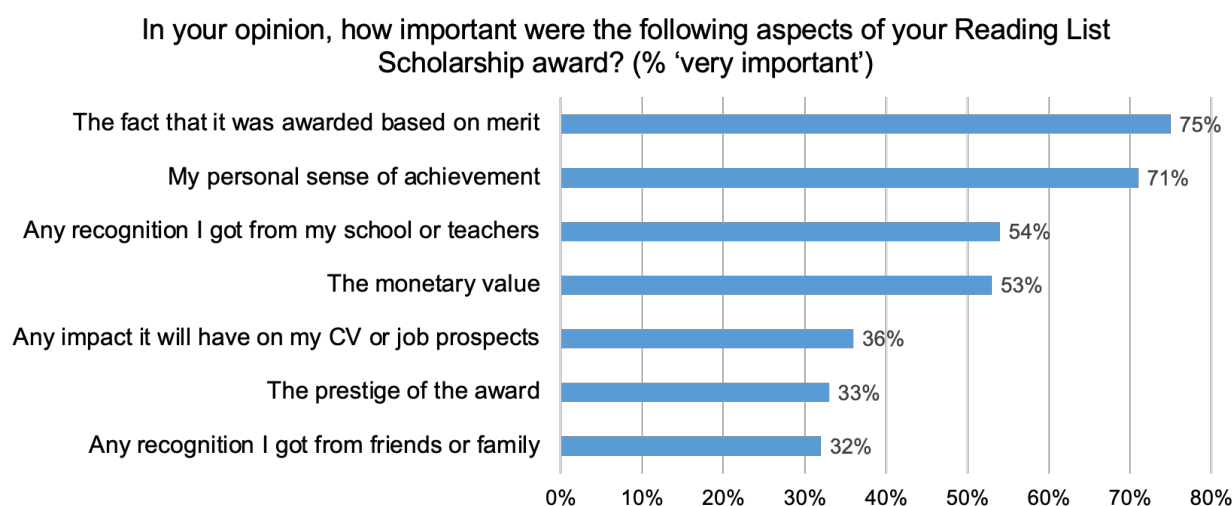


Base: all Scholarship winners having used their award (130)

Students value the award in many ways

The Scholarship awards are in the form of a £275 Blackwell's e-voucher, intended to cover the cost of a student's textbooks in their first year of university (and usually their second and often 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.

It is encouraging that students consistently tell us that the awards mean more than just the £275; in fact, the monetary value is some way down the list in terms of importance.



Base: all Scholarship winners (143)

The students tell us of the pride – and often surprise – they felt on being told they had won the award, and, importantly, the recognition from their teachers that the Scholarship represents.

"I felt really grateful that I'd been given so much help for my time at university. It made me feel like my hard work at College had been recognised, which was a great feeling."

"I was unbelievably shocked and excited that out of everyone in my Sixth Form, I was awarded the scholarship. I could not believe it. The difference that it makes is colossal."

"I felt ecstatic; I spent most of my breaks in Sixth Form reading and English was always my favourite subject in school so this award felt like it was designed for me."

"The award gave me the confidence to go to university. On results day I was still quite hesitant about going to university, especially with my university being in the Russell Group. I felt nervous, as I would be the first generation of my family to attend university. However, receiving the Scholarship reassured me that the people around me thought I could succeed at university. It was receiving the Scholarship that made me excited to attend university."

"I've never felt academically confident, but finding out I'd even been put forward for something like this meant so much to me. I'm now in my second year of university and the amount of confidence it's given me has literally changed me as a person. Thankyou. ★"

The awards support Widening Participation goals

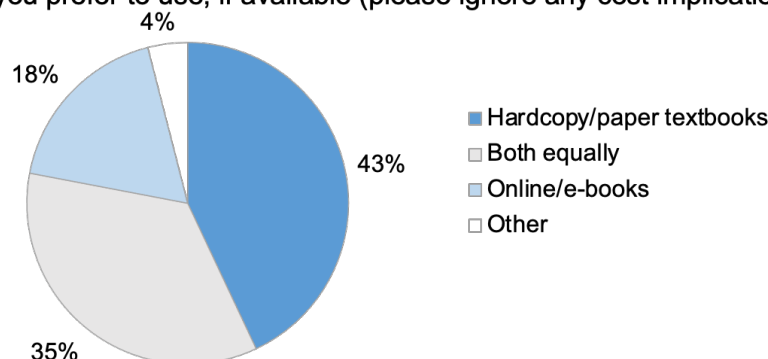
Just under half of the students – 45% - are the first in their immediate family (parents or siblings) to go to university, and this cohort of Scholarship winners have progressed on to study an impressive range subjects at an impressive range of universities:



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. 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)?

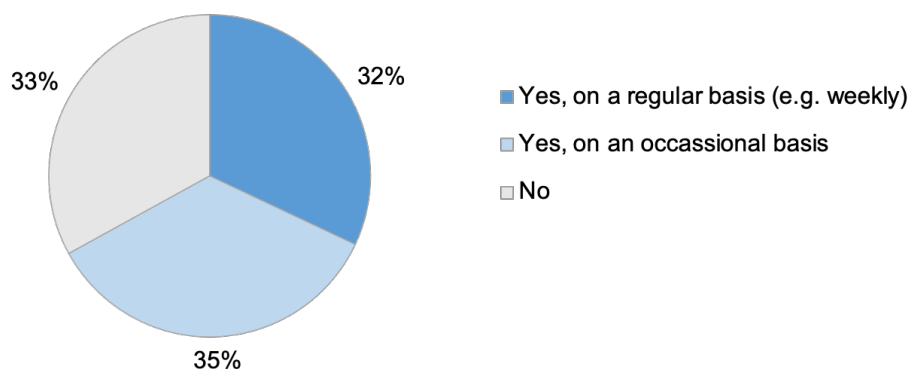


Base: all Scholarship winners (143)

A majority of students now do paid work in term-time

A 2023 Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report showed that 55% of all students were in paid employment in term-time, an increase of 10% in a year¹. While this clearly offers advantages to students in terms of gaining valuable work experience, it is also time taken away from studying, building social capital through activities, or simply relaxing and replenishing mental health reserves. Our survey shows as many as 67% of Scholarship winners have taken on term-time paid work since starting university, a clear reflection of the financial pressures they face once there.

Can you tell us whether or not you have taken up part-time work during term-time to help your finances?



Base: all Scholarship winners (142)

The Reading List Foundation;
April 2026

¹ <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2023/06/22/student-academic-experience-survey-2023/>

Note

The results are from our annual survey of Scholarship winners from the previous academic year i.e. students who started university in September 2024. The online survey was completed between 26 January and 9 February 2026. A total of 143 students completed the survey (out of 307 Scholarship winners), a very healthy response rate of 47%.

Demographic profile of Scholarship winners

Gender		Ethnic Background	
Female	68%	White	61%
Male	30%	Asian/Asian British	14%
Other	2%	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	13%
		Mixed ethnic groups	5%
		Other ethnic group	7%
Source: School submissions (424)			
Sexual orientation		Health conditions	
Straight or Heterosexual	65%	None	75%
Gay or Lesbian	11%	Physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more	25%
Bisexual	15%		
Other sexual orientation	3%		
Prefer not to say	6%		
Source: Survey responses (142)			