



**arts
award**

**Making the most of
Arts Award and careers education**

What is Arts Award?

Arts Award is a range of unique qualifications that supports all children and young people aged 25 and under to grow as artists and arts leaders. It is suitable for all learners and can be delivered as a universal offer, a targeted intervention or extra-curricular activity. In England, Arts Award is managed by Trinity College London in association with Arts Council England and 10 regional Bridge Organisations.

Arts Award can be offered **at five levels**, one introductory award and four regulated qualifications. Two levels (Discover and Explore) have been developed with primary school aged children in mind. Learners can progress through all five levels, or start at the level most suited to them. At Gold level, students can achieve 16 UCAS points.

Making the most of Arts Award in Careers Education

Arts Award supports young people to develop 21st century skills such as confidence, communication and leadership, as well as gaining a national qualification in the arts. Arts Award's **Impact Study** shows that young people working towards the qualification feel more engaged and motivated to progress in their education, with 3 out of 5 saying they better understood the options for a career or for further study in the arts.

With employment in the creative industries currently growing at twice the national rate, now accounting for more than 6% of all jobs in the UK (DCMS 2019), we take a look at the benefits of including Arts Award as an important tool for careers education in schools and colleges and how Careers Leaders can work with Arts Award advisers in their shared settings to make this happen.

'For a number of our older students, Arts Award has offered an invaluable insight into, and preparation for, a career in the creative industries.'

Lesley Turner, Assistant Principal, , Ormiston Sudbury Academy.

The Gatsby Benchmarks and Arts Award

Central to the UK Government careers strategy to raise standards around career guidance in England are the **Gatsby Career Benchmarks** for schools and colleges. These benchmarks map closely to the Arts Award criteria at different levels of the qualification. Arts Award can directly support settings to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks and add value to careers education in the following areas:

1. Learning from career and labour market information

At Arts Award **Silver & Gold** levels young people consider the future and prepare for what comes next. They work alongside arts practitioners and conduct research into future opportunities for careers or further education. In Silver Unit 1 Part D, young people explicitly address this benchmark by seeking information about how to progress in their own arts career.

Gatsby's guidance suggests that pupils '...will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.' This is the role of an Arts Award adviser: helping to direct young people's research and ensure that they reflect on the impact the research has had on their own arts journey.

2. Encounters with employers and employees

This takes place at all five levels of Arts Award. Schools often use visiting artists or trips to arts organisations as a way of introducing young people to careers in the arts. As early as Arts Award Explore (Entry Level 3) young people experience what Gatsby refer to as a meaningful encounter with an employer: 'One in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.' This is the first step towards conducting detailed research at the higher Arts Award levels, introducing young people to a range of jobs available in the arts which they might not have been aware of previously. These encounters become more in-depth as young people progress through the levels. During Arts Award Gold, young people spend extended periods with practitioners during work placements, volunteering or training.

3. Experiences of workplaces

Whilst linking directly to experiences gained at Arts Award Silver Unit 1 Part D and Gold Unit 1 Part B, Unit 2 leadership projects at both levels are a great way of framing workplace experience. They require young people to take on a level of responsibility which can mirror that of an employee. Using this aspect of Silver or Gold can support work placements, with young people having to consider their development and experience throughout.

We know that schools are using Arts Award to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks in a variety of other ways, including building links with local further and higher education organisations (Benchmark 7); speaking with a careers leader or Enterprise Adviser to form part of young people's

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Uckfield Community College Photo: Kirsten Holst

research (Benchmark 8) and if Arts Award plays a part in developing a stable careers programme, that meets Benchmark 1.

Achieving Arts Award not only enables young people to gain a wide range of employability skills, it also provides them with tangible, real life examples of projects they have planned, led and evaluated. It provides them with opportunities to learn about enterprise, prove that they have customer focus and marketing skills as well as a chance to show numeracy and IT skills that they can talk confidently about when they come face to face with a potential employer. Take a look at our [employability mapping resource for the Silver and Gold levels](#) of Arts Award for further information.

Linking early careers education to Arts Award

Arts Award also provides opportunities for children and young people in KS 1-3 to begin their careers education. These link closely to the [Skills Builder Framework](#) and its eight essential skills for success. At Arts Award Discover, Explore and Bronze levels young people research the career of an artist, encouraging them to consider their own career options in the arts and develop a personal action plan. At Explore level they also find out about a chosen arts organisation, gaining an understanding of how the creative industries support careers in the arts. Through participating in Arts Award, young people will develop essential skills in all of the Skills Builder areas including creativity, leadership and aiming high.

Arts Award level	Qualification information	Suggested age range	Links to Gatsby Benchmarks
Arts Award Discover	Introductory certificate	Designed for ages 5-9, open to anyone aged up to 25	Gatsby Benchmark 3, 4, 5
Arts Award Explore	Entry Level Award in the Arts (Entry 3)	Designed for ages 7-11, open to anyone aged up to 25	Gatsby Benchmark 3, 4, 5, 6
Bronze Arts Award	Level 1 Award in the Arts Same level as GCSE grades 1-4	Designed for ages 11-14, open to anyone aged 11-25	Gatsby Benchmark 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
Silver Arts Award	Level 2 Award in the Arts Same level as GCSE grades 5-9	Designed for ages 14-16, open to anyone aged 11-25	Gatsby Benchmark 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Gold Arts Award	Level 3 Award in the Arts 16 UCAS points	Designed for ages 16+, open to anyone aged 11-25	Gatsby Benchmark 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8



King's Worcester Photo: George Archer

How to make this happen

For existing Arts Award advisers and centres: making the connection with careers education

For those who are already trained as Arts Award advisers in a school or college that is registered as an Arts Award centre, we encourage you to connect with your school Careers Leader. Together you might make plans for some **extra-curricular Arts Award activity** that targets students who are aspiring to work in the creative industries, enabling them to explore their arts skills and career pathways whilst gaining a recognised qualification in the arts. You might also consider how to advocate for Arts Award to be offered **during curriculum time** across a range of subjects as part of your broad and balanced offer and your commitment to the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Careers Leaders:

Recognising Arts Award as a tool for careers education

If you are a school Careers Leader interested in finding out more about how your setting can introduce Arts Award as part of your wider careers offer, first check in with members of your art departments (Art, Music, Drama, Dance, DT) to find out if any colleagues are already trained as Arts Award advisers. The next step is to consider joining an **adviser training course** or hosting an in-house course. Wondering about making the leap to get started? **Contact us** so that we can advise you and offer pre-training support.

Voice features inspiring interviews with achievers and industry practitioners. The website helps young people find out about the wide range of career routes through personal stories of professionals, and interviews with creative organisations revealing how they work. All content is created, commissioned and curated by young people. **Visit artsawardvoice.com**

"Arts Award has had a huge impact on my artistic skills and even helped me take my first steps in becoming an engineer."

"The leadership and communication skills I have gained through participating in this award will stay with me and benefit me for the rest of my life." Heather

"The opportunity to lead a team has helped me gain confidence in my own ideas" Poppy

"I learnt new skills which helped me complete a collection of garments and I will always have those skills and hopefully I can eventually become an expert in tailoring and designing. I was also able to teach these skills to others in my group by demonstrating what I had learnt." Orla

For more inspiration about embedding Arts Award into existing programmes for employability and careers visit our **[employability webpage](#)**.