What is Arts Award?

Arts Award’s unique qualifications support anyone aged up to 25 to grow as artists and arts leaders, inspiring them to connect with and take part in the wider arts world. In 2014/15, more than 55,000 young people completed awards in schools, cultural organisations and youth groups, and the programme is currently growing by around 30% each year.

With skilled staff supporting reading and book-based activities, a growing digital offer, and resources such as books, magazines, CDs and DVDs, libraries have much to offer children and young people doing an Arts Award.

Arts Award is managed by Trinity College London in association with Arts Council England working with 10 regional Bridge organisations.

“Libraries are changing; we need to appeal to a more diverse audience and to show our worth to external funding bodies. We feel that the best way to do this is to embed Arts Award in as much of our delivery for children and young people as we can as it provides excellent evidence to demonstrate the value of the projects we run and something concrete that children and young people can achieve and take forward.”

Liz Gardner, Library Development Officer, Staffordshire Libraries
The story so far

Arts Award is growing fast in libraries: between April 2014 and March 2015 almost 2,000 young people achieved Arts Awards through library based projects compared to 13 in 2012/13. More than 100 libraries are Arts Award centres and 169 are Arts Award Supporters.

Trinity College London has been working closely with The Reading Agency: offering Arts Award Discover alongside the Summer Reading Challenge for the third year in 2015, linking Arts Award Explore with Chatterbooks, and Bronze and Silver Arts Awards with Reading Hack.

Libraries are running Arts Award projects in partnership with schools, for example, South Tyneside Libraries and Marine Park Primary School, and as part of county wide events, Staffordshire’s Summer Reading Challenge.

As well as providing a qualification that is valued by parents and young people, Arts Award can be as enjoyable for library staff as it is for those taking part:

“We had so much fun looking for art forms in the library and around South Shields!”

Pauline Martin,
Stock and Reader Development,
Jarrow Library

How can libraries get involved in Arts Award?

Be an Arts Award Supporter

Organisations bearing the Arts Award Supporter badge offer activities, events, expertise and resources which help young people working towards their Arts Award.

Being a Supporter gives libraries a route to working in partnership with organisations delivering Arts Award, including schools, museums and arts organisations, Scouts and Guides. Libraries can provide resources and activities that children and young people can use for Arts Award, with the partner organisation taking responsibility for delivery of the award.

Devon Library Services have registered all their libraries as Supporters and their webpage is a good example of how libraries can flag activities and resources that can be used for Arts Award.

Becoming an Arts Award Supporter is quick, easy and free: a short online tutorial, registering your library - or a library service can register all branches - and you can then promote your offer to children and young people and local Arts Award centres.
Be an Arts Award centre

Arts Award centres support children and young people to complete their Arts Award. A growing number of libraries are offering Arts Award at all levels, from Discover to Gold. Arts Award has five levels, four of which are qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

To run Arts Award, a member of staff with experience of working with children and young people needs to train as an Arts Award adviser. Once trained, it’s up to you how many children or young people you work with and how you want to run Arts Award in your library: through weekly sessions, as a holiday project or drop in activities. You decide on the timescale that works for you and the young people you work with.

Running Arts Award gives measurable outcomes of your library’s work for Local Authorities and other funders.

How does Arts Award link to libraries’ Universal offers?

Reading for pleasure can be part of all levels of Arts Award, from Discover to Gold.

Arts Award can help stimulate children’s desire to read for pleasure by providing a framework that links reading with other arts activities they may already be involved in.

Librarians offer guidance to help children and young people to practice and expand their reading skills. Arts Award can add value for children and their parents or carers by recognising the development of reading skills.

The skills and experience gained through volunteering at a library can be used towards Arts Award whether young volunteers are doing it at school or at the library, in the same way that volunteering contributes towards the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

Arts Award offers libraries a framework for partnership projects with schools and arts organisations and a network of partners to approach.

Health offer

Reading for pleasure improves wellbeing and reduces stress; taking part in Arts Award increases self confidence and self esteem as evidenced by independent research (artsaward.org.uk/impactstudy). These are all important factors in the health of children and young people.

Girl 1: ‘I like reading and art because it helps me to relax. I get so lost in my art that I don’t hear my parents or teacher speaking to me.’

Girl 2: ‘Me too. Finally I’ve met someone who feels like me.’
Summer Reading Challenge participants, London

Digital offer

Libraries provide digital services, skills and access for children, which can be especially valuable for families with low incomes who have limited digital access at home. Arts Award encourages the use of digital technology both for arts activities and to record evidence for portfolios.

Artsbox is a digital portfolio space and app where children and young people can record and share their arts experiences or work towards an Arts Award.

Arts Award Voice offers an online magazine where young people can research the arts and post reviews and blogs.
Arts Award has nurtured their self confidence and the high quality of the production will be an asset when applying for University and/or other opportunities.

Ruth Macdougall, artist working with Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, who ran digital animation sessions for young people doing Bronze Arts Award

Opportunities to learn, develop skills and take part in fun arts activities are fundamental to Arts Award. Libraries promote and signpost information to children, young people, parents and carers.

"My mum wouldn’t bring me to the library before but she brings me and my brothers every week now and we love it. I come to Lego Club every month now and if there’s stuff on at the library we can come. She reads with us more too and we do more making stuff at home together."

Jack, 10, Bronze Arts Award achiever Staffordshire Libraries

What support is available?

The Arts Award team at Trinity College London can help at every stage:

For support in developing Arts Award in your libraries contact Caroline Bray: caroline.brays@artsaward.org.uk

Arts Award Associate for Museums, Heritage and Libraries

For help with training, delivery and moderation call the helpdesk on 020 7820 6178 or artsawardenquiries@trinitycollege.co.uk.

If you need help registering as an Arts Award Supporter email supporter@artsaward.org.uk.

Arts Council England funds 10 Bridge organisations across England who can support libraries to engage with Arts Award, for example by helping whole library services register as Arts Award Supporters.

Trained Arts Award advisers can find case studies and delivery support in the Adviser Hub.

Find the latest news about Arts Award and libraries at artsaward.org.uk/libraries and artsaward.org.uk/summerreadingchallenge

Artsbox is a digital portfolio space and app where children and young people can record and share their arts experiences, work towards an Arts Award and collect rewards for cultural visits. It’s fun, free, interactive and safe.

www.artsbox.co.uk

Arts Award Voice is an online magazine run by young people for young people. They can research the arts, add blogs, reviews and events, or simply browse the site to get ideas for their Arts Award.

www.artsawardvoice.com