

A Youth Achievement Award (YAA) is an accessible nationally recognised Scottish Qualifications Authority customised award for young people which provides a framework to accredit their personal learning and achievement, and which is recorded on their Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC) alongside their school and college qualifications.

They take a youth work approach and follow a plan-do-review format and allow young people to gain or develop skills through involvement in activities at various levels of responsibility, providing a progression pathway.

The young person identifies an activity or 'challenge' that they would like to be involved in, the level of responsibility they would like to undertake and set themselves personal targets to work towards. On completion of their challenge, they review their progress and reflect upon how they have benefited from the plan-do-review approach to their learning and the skills they have gained or developed rather than just record the activities they have been involved in. To gain an award, a young person must record their progress in an awards booklet and provide evidence of how they have met the award criteria in a personal portfolio of evidence. There is no final exam, assessment is based on the award booklet and portfolio of evidence, and there is no set timeframe, it progresses at the pace of the young person.

There are four levels of the Youth Achievement Award; Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum based on the level of responsibility a young person undertakes within activities. At Bronze they take part in organised activities, at Silver they help to plan and deliver activities, at Gold they lead activities for others and at Platinum they create learning opportunities for others. Young people enter at the level appropriate to their interests and abilities; they are not required to work through the lower levels to access the higher levels.