Personal Skills Programme

A whole-school programme for building skills and developing character in pupils
The Personal Skills Programme (PSP) allows schools to track their pupils’ progress in the development of personal skills, providing evidence of character development in line with Ofsted inspection framework requirements.

During the creation of the PSP programme, SLQ carried out extensive research among teachers and senior leaders in schools, looking at the benefits of and demand for accredited personal development education.

### Summary results of our 2019 Teacher and Education Survey

- **97%** schools surveyed in May 2019 believe that learners are better prepared to progress onto further education, training or employment as a result of learning programmes which develop soft or transferable skills.
- **89%** of schools surveyed agree that making students ready for their next step (ie education, employment or training) is a current priority.
- **87%** of school SLT see an accredited learning programme as a valuable way of delivering personal development education to pupils.

“*There’s a particular focus in the next few years on developing students beyond the exam results, making them ready for the workplace.*

- Head of PSHE, Secondary Academy

“*There is a positive change in the Ofsted framework around enrichment and well-being, life-skills, and there seems to be a real focus around that now.*

- Head of Department, Sixth Form College

“A grade with a piece of paper may open the door for pupils, but the transferrable skills actually get them to where they want to achieve.*

- Teacher, Sixth Form
The benefits of the Personal Skills Programme

The Personal Skills Programme provides schools with all the resources and support needed to help pupils develop their personal skills throughout their secondary school education.

Learners are assessed in each of the three awards against five skills in the SLQ Skills Framework: Communication, Teamwork, Self-Belief, Problem Solving and Self-Management. By providing evidence of the behaviours that develop these skills, learners create an effective portfolio of their abilities, demonstrating their progression while developing character and building resilience to challenges.

Schools that deliver PSP can also expect a quality assurance programme built on the experience of learners in relation to the intent and impact goals set for schools, the quality of which is reviewed during the delivery of the awards.

Ofsted Inspections and Personal Development

According to the revised inspection framework in place from September 2019, schools now have a duty to support the character development of pupils.

Under the heading of Personal Development, judgements in this area will take into account how schools are developing pupils’ character, including the personal traits, dispositions and virtues that inform their motivation and guide their conduct.

In order to achieve to ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ in this judgement, schools will need to demonstrate that their curriculum and wider work support pupils in developing their character.
What is the Personal Skills Programme?

The Personal Skills Programme provides schools with accredited learning and certifications for pupils across secondary education (Years 7-11).

Consisting of three separate awards, schools have the flexibility to either offer the entire programme or individual awards:

Through ten hours of teaching time, learners will create an effective portfolio of their abilities, providing evidence of their progression while developing character and personal skills.

This provides schools with their own evidence of the intent, implementation and impact of their curriculum design aimed at developing resilience and character in their pupils without creating additional workload for busy teaching staff. All three awards can be delivered through existing timetabled sessions, enrichment days or tutor time.

About SLQ

SLQ is the awarding body with over 35 years’ experience in developing leadership and life skills in young people. We have built a recognised portfolio of qualifications and awards that boost confidence, aid attainment and develop employability skills.

Qualifications from SLQ have been achieved by over 1.2m young people in the UK to date. By partnering with Youth Employment UK, we have created a Skills Framework that identifies the key skills most in-demand by employers, preparing learners for success in education and throughout their lives.
Our Skills Framework

We believe that every young person should be given the opportunity to realise their potential. Employers continue to feel that young people are not always prepared for work effectively, especially in regard to their development of transferable skills.

To help with our ambition, we’ve created a skills framework that identifies the skills and behaviours that have been identified by employers as being most in-demand.

This framework is based on research carried out by Youth Employment UK and identifies five skills as being most important: Communication, Self-Belief, Teamwork, Self-Management and Problem Solving.

We’ve mapped these skills into all our Qualifications and Awards, including PSP, to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the skills and behaviours developed through our programmes.

As learners progress through each award, they build up an effective portfolio of their abilities, while also developing their confidence and learning more about themselves and their potential.
The Personal Skills Programme consists of three individual awards that have been designed to allow learners to develop the skills and behaviours they need to be better prepared for their next step in education or employment.

These awards have the flexibility to be delivered as an entire programme or as individual courses, applied to specific year groups. The three awards that make up the Personal Skills Programme are as follows:

### How does each Learner benefit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested School Year</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 11</th>
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<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Learners develop and demonstrate the personal skills needed to feel and be part of their new school environment. Towards the end of their course, pupils work with their peers to create and deliver a ‘welcome pack’ for the next year’s intake.</td>
<td>Learners develop the skills and behaviours in the Skills Framework through becoming an active part of their school community. They identify and explore an issue that is important to your school’s environment, delivering an awareness-raising campaign to peers.</td>
<td>Pupils deliver an event in an area of interest to their school, encouraging others to participate in their school community through the event.</td>
<td>Learners identify what they want to achieve in their potential career journey and plan the development of their own personal skills to accomplish this.</td>
<td>Pupils reflect on their personal and character development throughout their school life and focus on the benefits that this will give them in achieving their next steps.</td>
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Through 10 hours of teaching time, learners will create an effective portfolio of their abilities, providing evidence of their progression while developing character and personal skills.

All three awards provide schools with their own evidence of the intent, implementation and impact of their curriculum design aimed at developing resilience and character in their pupils without creating additional workload for busy teaching staff. The award can be delivered through existing timetabled sessions, enrichment days or tutor time.
North Bromsgrove High School and Sixth Form is a mixed comprehensive high school in Worcestershire, England, near Birmingham. With approximately 850 students aged 13 to 18, the school prides itself on offering a respectful community where learners can feel safe and secure while striving to achieve their potential.

After learning about SLQ’s Personal Skills Programme, the school became the first in the country to sign up and deliver the programme, in the process becoming a Pioneer School and agreeing to help shape the development and refinement of the award series.

The school’s Assistant Headteacher, Donna Hodgson, has been instrumental in setting up the school’s delivery of PSP. She said: “Since joining the school in September 2018, I became acutely aware that there was a gap in our provision for developing the whole student. Whilst PSHCE is a weekly slot on the timetable we needed to embed our recently launched CARE (Community, Aspiration, Respect and Endeavour) values.

“SLQ’s Personal Skills Programme seemed to provide the opportunity to do this. Following discussions with SLQ, we were able to explicitly link it to our values and our school ethos with the added incentive of it being formally recognised as a certified programme that students can work towards. The traditional soft-skills highly rated by employers and higher education are an integral feature of the award.”

Since Ofsted’s updated inspection framework came into force in September 2019, schools have been provided with a statutory duty to provide evidence of their provision for personal development, including character education and building resilience. With a clear pathway for progressively building skills, PSP has presented the school with a recognised programme for addressing the gap in provision highlighted by the Ofsted report, helping to raise standards across behaviour, enrichment and personal skills.

The school began delivering PSP in January 2020 with pupils taking part in an entire day of sessions and activities from the Transition Award, which is designed to help them adapt to life in a new school. Since beginning the award, learners have been quick to pick up its sessions and activities, in addition to already demonstrating the required behaviours.

Following their participation in the award’s sessions, pupils have commented that it has given them a chance to get to know their peers better and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, which the school has then been able to consider and set targets towards improving on them.

Looking towards the next academic year, the school is planning to build a dedicated character slot into their timetable, giving the programme greater focus. With tangible rewards and certificates available for pupils on successfully completing the programme’s different awards, pupils will soon be able to see its place in their regular study schedule and it will feel a central part of their learner journey.

Read the full case study on the school’s implementation of the Personal Skills Programme at slqskills.org
Further Information:

To find out more about our Personal Skills Programme and how it could support your school’s curriculum for personal development, contact Maria Hoather, our National Lead for Character Education on talk@slqskills.org or call 01908 689180.