



The Young STEM Leader (YSL) Award: Inspiring and Developing Young People Through STEM

An exciting new award which aims to spark greater interest and participation in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) among young people is being launched in Scotland.

Children and young people will be given the chance to inspire, lead and mentor their peers through the creation and delivery of STEM activities and events within their school, Early Years Centres or local community groups.

The key aim of the Young STEM Leader (YSL) programme will be to facilitate the development of peer STEM role models to inspire more young people to develop an interest in STEM and pursue the study of STEM subjects and relevant future careers.

In its *Strategy for STEM Education and Training (2017)*, the Scottish Government has committed to 'establish a new Young STEM Leaders programme to stimulate and strengthen the development of peer mentoring and inspiration in STEM for children and young people by children and young people.'

As well as helping the Young STEM Leader (YSL) develop important personal skills that are increasingly in demand from employers, it is hoped that working towards the YSL Award will motivate the Young STEM Leader to continue to progress their STEM studies and eventually embark on a career in STEM.

The Scottish government-funded programme is being led by the Scottish Schools Education Research Centre (SSERC) and a range of partners, including the four Scottish Science Centres, Scottish STEM Ambassador Hubs, Science Festivals, YouthLink Scotland, Young Scot, Children in Scotland, Education Scotland and the Scottish Mentoring Network.

The Young STEM Leader Award will be non-formally accredited at curriculum levels 2,3 and 4, underpinned by a framework that identifies the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of a Young STEM Leader at each curricular level.

SCQF levels 4,5 and 6 will be formally accredited and certificated, underpinned by outcomes and performance criteria for each level.

Every YSL will receive face-to-face and digital training related to the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to be a Young STEM Leader at each level. Those co-ordinating, supporting and assessing the YSLs will also receive training.

It is anticipated that the YSL Award will allow easy progression for YSLs to become STEM Ambassadors when they turn 17.

A Scotland-wide pilot of the YSL programme, which will include a diverse mix of schools, community groups and existing awards / initiatives, is due to launch in early summer 2019.

The programme will be fully operational across Scotland by 2020.

More information on the YSL Award is available at www.sserc.scot or from the YSL project manager Graeme Rough at ysl@sserc.scot.

