



# APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING AWARDS 2026

## Award Criteria

Total 20 Awards

### Intro

The Apprenticeship and Training Awards are the national awards that celebrate excellence in apprenticeship employers and training providers across the UK.

**Nominations for the 2026 awards will open in July, and all entries must be submitted by the end of October 2025.**

This is your chance to showcase what makes your organisation, apprenticeship programme, or training delivery truly exceptional. With hundreds of nominations expected, it's vital to ensure that yours stands out from the crowd.

Before submitting, take the time to carefully read the criteria for your chosen award category. Understanding exactly what the judges are looking for will give your entry the edge it needs. Be imaginative and bold in explaining what sets your provision and activity apart—whether it's innovative approaches, outstanding outcomes, or the impact you've had on learners and/or employers.

This is your opportunity to tell your story. Make it count!

For full terms and conditions, please visit:

<https://apprenticeshipandtrainingawards.com/terms/>

## Categories and criteria

### 1. Innovation in training delivery

- a. Celebrates creativity and innovation in how training or apprenticeship programmes are delivered, leading to improved outcomes.
- b. Open to: Employer or Training Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Introduction of new and creative methods for delivering apprenticeship or training programmes.
  - ii. Measurable improvements in learner engagement, retention, or achievement due to innovation.
  - iii. Adaptability of the training delivery method to different contexts and industries.
  - iv. Positive feedback from learners and employers on the innovative approach.
  - v. Contribution to advancing best practices in training delivery.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the innovative approaches you've introduced to your apprenticeship or training delivery. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What impact has this innovation had on learner engagement and success? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. How does this innovation meet the specific needs of learners and employers? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. What feedback have you received from learners and employers regarding these innovations? (Max 500 words)
  - v. What future innovations are you planning to implement? (Max 500 words)

## 2. Best partnership in training

- a. Recognises a successful collaboration between an employer and/or training provider and/or service provider that has led to outstanding results in apprenticeship or training delivery.
- b. Open to: employer and/or training provider and/or service provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Successful collaboration between an employer and a training provider leading to outstanding results in apprenticeship or training delivery.
  - ii. Evidence of shared goals, strong communication, and mutual benefits in the partnership.
  - iii. Innovation in partnership approaches that enhance the learner experience and outcomes.
  - iv. Positive feedback from both learners and partner organisations.
  - v. Long-term sustainability and impact of the partnership.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the partnership between your organisations. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. How has this partnership led to improved outcomes for apprentices and/or learners? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What challenges have you faced in developing and maintaining this partnership? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. Provide examples of innovation or best practices that have emerged from this partnership. (Max 500 words)
  - v. What future goals or developments do you have for this partnership? (Max 500 words)

### **3. Diversity and inclusion award**

- a. For an organisation that has made significant efforts to promote diversity and inclusion within its apprenticeship and training programmes.
- b. Open to: Employer or Training Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Evidence of proactive efforts to promote diversity and inclusion within apprenticeship and training programmes.
  - ii. Success in attracting and retaining a diverse range of learners.
  - iii. Implementation of inclusive policies and practices in training delivery.
  - iv. Demonstrable positive impact on underrepresented groups in the workforce.
  - v. Innovative initiatives to support diversity and inclusion in the training environment.
- d. Questions:
  - i. How has your organisation promoted diversity and inclusion in your apprenticeship or training programmes? (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What initiatives have you introduced to attract and support a diverse range of learners? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What outcomes or impact have your diversity and inclusion efforts achieved? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. Provide examples of how your training has addressed the needs of underrepresented groups. (Max 500 words)
  - v. What future plans do you have to continue supporting diversity and inclusion in your programmes? (Max 500 words)

## 4. Sustainability in training and apprenticeships

- a. Recognises an organisation that has integrated sustainability practices into their apprenticeship and training delivery.
- b. Open to: Training Provider or Employer
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Integration of sustainability principles into apprenticeship or training programmes.
  - ii. Evidence of learners developing sustainability-related skills and knowledge.
  - iii. Initiatives to reduce the environmental impact of training delivery.
  - iv. Contributions to sustainability within the wider community or industry.
  - v. Positive outcomes in promoting environmental awareness among learners.
- d. Questions:
  - i. How has your organisation integrated sustainability principles into your apprenticeship or training programmes? (Max 500 words)
  - ii. Provide examples of sustainability-related skills and knowledge you've embedded in your programmes. (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What positive outcomes have you seen in terms of environmental impact or sustainability awareness among learners? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. How do you plan to further incorporate sustainability into your training programmes? (Max 500 words)

## **5. Employer commitment to apprenticeships and training**

- a. Celebrates an employer's long-term commitment to developing apprenticeships and training as a key part of their workforce strategy.
- b. Open to: Employer
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Demonstrated long-term commitment to developing apprenticeships and training as a core part of workforce strategy.
  - ii. High levels of apprentice engagement, retention, and success.
  - iii. Significant investment in apprenticeship/training programmes over time.
  - iv. Evidence of progression opportunities for apprentices and learners within the organisation.
  - v. Positive impact on the industry through sustained apprenticeship and training efforts.
- d. Questions:
  - i. How has your organisation demonstrated long-term commitment to developing apprenticeships and providing training opportunities? (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What impact have your apprenticeship programmes had on your business and workforce development? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. Provide examples of how you've invested in apprenticeships and training options over the years. (Max 500 words)
  - iv. Explain how your efforts have positively impacted your sector. (Max 500 words)
  - v. How do you plan to continue supporting apprenticeships as part of your organisation's strategy? (Max 500 words)

## **6. Best new apprenticeship programme**

- a. For a new apprenticeship programme that has been launched successfully and has shown significant early impact.
- b. Open to: Employer or Training Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Successful implementation of a new apprenticeship programme launched within the last two years.
  - ii. Evidence of early success, such as high engagement and satisfaction levels among apprentices.
  - iii. Strong commitment to the continued development and expansion of the programme.
  - iv. Innovation in programme design and delivery that meets industry needs.
  - v. Positive feedback from apprentices and stakeholders.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe your new apprenticeship programme, including its goals and objectives. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What early successes have you seen in terms of learner engagement and outcomes? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What innovative approaches have you introduced in this new programme? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. How do you plan to further develop and expand this apprenticeship programme? (Max 500 words)

## **7. Excellence in learner support**

- a. Recognises a training provider or employer that offers exceptional support to apprentices and trainees, helping them to succeed.
- b. Open to: Employer or Training Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Comprehensive support services for apprentices and trainees, including mentoring, pastoral care, and career guidance.
  - ii. Evidence of improved learner outcomes as a result of the support provided.
  - iii. High levels of satisfaction with the support services among learners.
  - iv. Innovation in delivering tailored support to meet the needs of different learners.
  - v. Collaboration with employers to ensure holistic support for learners.
- d. Questions
  - i. How does your organisation support learners in their apprenticeship or training journey? (Max 500 words)
  - ii. Provide examples of how your support services have improved learner outcomes. (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What innovative approaches have you taken to deliver learner support? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. How do you work with employers to ensure holistic learner support? (Max 500 words)



## 8. Best use of technology in training

- a. Celebrates the innovative use of technology in delivering training or apprenticeships, leading to enhanced learning experiences and outcomes.
- b. Open to: Employer or Training Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Innovative use of technology in delivering apprenticeship or training programmes.
  - ii. Evidence of enhanced learning experiences and outcomes as a result of technology integration.
  - iii. Adaptability of technology solutions to meet the needs of different learners and industries.
  - iv. Positive feedback from learners and employers on the use of technology in training.
  - v. Contribution to advancing digital learning and technology in the sector.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the technological innovations you've introduced into your training programmes. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. How has technology improved learner engagement and success? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. Provide examples of how technology has enhanced the delivery of apprenticeships or training. (Max 500 words)
  - iv. What are your future plans for integrating technology into your training provision? (Max 500 words)

## **9. Outstanding contribution to apprenticeships and training (Individual)**

- a. Recognises an individual that has made a significant, long-term contribution to the advancement of apprenticeships and training in their industry and organisation.
- b. Open to: An individual from an employer or training provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Significant and sustained impact on the apprenticeship and training sector over several years.
  - ii. Leadership in promoting and advancing apprenticeships and training within the industry or community.
  - iii. Evidence of long-term commitment and innovation in apprenticeship and training delivery.
  - iv. Influence on policy or practice within the apprenticeship and training sector.
  - v. Positive testimonials from industry peers and stakeholders.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the individual's contributions to advancing apprenticeships and training in the UK. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What long-term impact have the individual's efforts had on the apprenticeship and training sector? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. Provide examples of leadership or innovation that have positively influenced apprenticeships and training. (Max 500 words)
  - iv. Provide three testimonials supporting this nomination. Each testimonial should be no longer than 500 words and include the person's Name, Role, Organisation and Email Address. Ideally, we'd like to see a testimonial from a colleague, a learner and an external representative.

## 10. Employer support for social mobility

- a. For an employer that has used apprenticeships and training to support social mobility and provide opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- b. Open to: Employers
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Demonstrated use of apprenticeships and training to support social mobility and provide opportunities for underrepresented groups.
  - ii. Evidence of successful outcomes in promoting social mobility through training programmes.
  - iii. Implementation of inclusive practices that ensure access to training and development for all.
  - iv. Positive impact on learners' career progression and socio-economic advancement.
  - v. Recognition of the organisation's efforts to support social mobility in the workplace
- d. Questions:
  - i. How has your organisation used apprenticeships or training to support social mobility? (Max 500 words)
  - ii. Provide examples of how your programmes have benefited underrepresented groups. (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What impact have your social mobility efforts had on learners' career progression? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. What future plans do you have to continue supporting social mobility through apprenticeships and training? (Max 500 words)

## 11. Best workplace readiness scheme

- a. This category is designed to acknowledge the crucial role that training providers play in readying young people for the workplace, ensuring they have the necessary skills and confidence to succeed.
- b. Open to: Training Providers
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Evidence of comprehensive pre-apprenticeship or pre-employment training programmes.
  - ii. High success rates in transitioning young people into apprenticeships, employment, or further/higher education.
  - iii. Innovative approaches to teaching employability skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
  - iv. Strong partnerships with employers to ensure training is aligned with industry needs and provides real-world relevance.
  - v. Positive feedback from young people and employers on the effectiveness of the preparation provided.
  - vi. Strong partnerships with charities and other education providers who have engaged people in the target group
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the pre-apprenticeship or pre-employment training programmes your organisation delivers, focusing on their key objectives and structure. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. Provide evidence of your success in transitioning young people into apprenticeships, employment, or further/higher education. Include data on completion rates and subsequent progression of participants. (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What innovative methods do you use to teach employability skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving? Provide examples of how these

approaches engage and benefit learners. (Max 500 words)

- iv. How do you collaborate with employers to ensure your programmes are aligned with industry needs? Describe how these partnerships contribute to providing real-world relevance to the training. (Max 500 words)
- v. Share examples of positive feedback you've received from young people and employers regarding your workplace readiness scheme. (Max 500 words)
- vi. How do you work with charities and other education providers to engage individuals in your target group? Provide examples of successful partnerships that have contributed to the success of your programmes. (Max 500 words)

## 12. Excellence in English and maths skills development

- a. This category is designed to highlight the importance of English and Maths skills in the success of apprenticeships and workplace training, recognising training providers who excel in delivering these essential skills in innovative and effective ways.
- b. Open to: Training Providers
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Evidence of innovative approaches to delivering English and Maths training that engage and motivate learners.
  - ii. High success rates in improving learners' English and Maths proficiency, leading to better outcomes in apprenticeships and employment.
  - iii. Integration of English and Maths skills into broader apprenticeship or training programmes in a way that is relevant and impactful.
  - iv. Use of creative teaching methods, resources, or technology to support the development of English and Maths skills.
  - v. Positive feedback from learners and employers on the effectiveness of the English and Maths training provided.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the innovative approaches your organisation uses to deliver English and Maths training. How do these methods engage and motivate learners? (Max 500 words)
  - ii. Provide evidence of your success in improving learners' English and Maths proficiency. Include data or case studies showing how this has led to better outcomes in apprenticeships or employment. (Max 500 words)
  - iii. How do you integrate English and Maths skills into broader apprenticeship or training programmes? Provide examples of how this integration has been relevant and impactful for learners. (Max 500 words)

- iv. What creative teaching methods, resources, or technologies do you use to support the development of English and Maths skills? How have these contributed to improved learner outcomes? (Max 500 words)
- v. Share examples of positive feedback you've received from learners and employers about the effectiveness of your English and Maths training. (Max 500 words)

### **13. Apprenticeship provider of the year**

- a. Celebrates a provider that specialises in delivering apprenticeships and has achieved outstanding results.
- b. Open to: Training provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Specialisation in delivering apprenticeship programmes with outstanding results.
  - ii. High apprentice completion and achievement rates.
  - iii. Strong employer engagement and alignment with industry needs.
  - iv. Innovative approaches to delivering apprenticeships that enhance learner success.
  - v. Positive feedback from apprentices and employers.
- d. Questions
  - i. Describe your organisation's key apprenticeship programmes and their impact on learners. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What are your achievement, pass and retention rates, and how do you achieve them? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. Provide examples of how you work with employers to align apprenticeships with industry needs. (Max 500 words)
  - iv. Explain how your organisation embraces widening participation. (Max 500 Words)
  - v. What innovations or best practices do you implement in delivering apprenticeships? (Max 500 words)



## 14. Employer champion of the year

- a. Recognises an employer that has been an advocate for apprenticeships and training, demonstrating leadership and commitment.
- b. Open to: Employer
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Demonstrated leadership in advocating for apprenticeships and training within the organisation and industry.
  - ii. Evidence of significant contributions to the promotion and advancement of apprenticeships.
  - iii. Strong commitment to developing a culture of learning and development within the organisation.
  - iv. Positive impact on the apprenticeship sector through advocacy and leadership.
  - v. Recognition from stakeholders for efforts in championing apprenticeships and training.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe how your organisation has been an advocate for apprenticeships and training. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. Provide examples of initiatives you've led to promote apprenticeships within your industry. (Max 500 words)
  - iii. How have your efforts benefited your organisation and the wider sector? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. What future plans do you have to continue championing apprenticeships? (Max 500 words)
  - v. Provide at least three testimonials from stakeholders supporting this nomination. Each testimonial should be no longer than 500 words and include the person's Name, Role, Organisation and Email Address.

## 15. Outstanding apprenticeship programme

- a. Recognises the most impactful and innovative apprenticeship programme an employer provider or training provider delivers.
- b. Open to: Training Provider or Employer Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Demonstrated impact of the apprenticeship programme on participants and the organisation.
  - ii. Evidence of innovative and effective programme design and delivery.
  - iii. High levels of apprentice satisfaction and success.
  - iv. Strong alignment with industry needs and employer engagement.
  - v. Contribution to addressing skills gaps within the sector.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Provide an overview of the apprenticeship programme, including its goals and key features and volume. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What makes this programme stand out as innovative or unique? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. How do you ensure the programme aligns with industry needs? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. What are your achievement/pass/retention rates for this programme and how do you support learners in their success? (Max 500 words)
  - v. What are your plans for future development or expansion of the programme? (Max 500 words)

## 16. Large employer of the year

- a. Recognises a large employer that has shown exceptional commitment to apprenticeship and workplace training programmes.
- b. Open to: Employer (Large (51+ employees and an annual turnover over £10m))
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Demonstrated exceptional commitment to apprenticeship and workplace training programmes.
  - ii. Evidence of a significant investment in the development and progression of apprentices.
  - iii. High retention and success rates among apprentices.
  - iv. Positive feedback from apprentices, training providers, and stakeholders.
  - v. Contribution to the wider industry and community through apprenticeship initiatives.
- d. Questions
  - i. Provide an overview of your organisation's apprenticeship and training programmes, including key objectives and outcomes. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. How has your organisation supported the development and progression of apprentices and trainees? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. Describe any innovative practices in your apprenticeship or training delivery. (Max 500 words)
  - iv. How has your organisation contributed to the wider industry or community through apprenticeships or training? (Max 500 words)
  - v. What future plans do you have for expanding your apprenticeship or training initiatives? (Max 500 words)

## 17. SME employer of the year

- a. Celebrates a small or medium-sized employer that has demonstrated outstanding dedication to developing apprentices and trainees.
- b. Open to: Employer SME (up to 50 employees or an annual turnover under £10m)
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Demonstrated exceptional commitment to apprenticeship and workplace training programmes.
  - ii. Strong commitment to apprenticeship and training despite being a smaller organisation.
  - iii. Evidence of the impact of apprenticeships on business growth and employee development.
  - iv. High retention and success rates among apprentices and trainees.
  - v. Innovation in addressing the challenges unique to SMEs in delivering effective training.
  - vi. Positive feedback from apprentices and training providers.
- d. Questions
  - i. Provide an overview of your organisation's apprenticeship and training programmes, including key objectives and outcomes. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. How has your apprenticeship or training programme contributed to your business growth and workforce development? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What challenges has your SME faced in delivering apprenticeships, and how have you overcome them? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. How has your organisation supported the development and progression of apprentices and trainees? (Max 500 words)
  - v. Describe any innovative practices in your apprenticeship or training delivery. (Max 500 words)

- vi. What future plans do you have for expanding your apprenticeship or training initiatives? (Max 500 words)

## 18. Specialist Training provider of the year

- a. Celebrates a training provider that excels in a specific sector or trade, delivering high-quality apprenticeships or training programmes tailored to that industry.
- b. Open to: Training Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Excellence in delivering apprenticeship or training programmes tailored to a specific sector or trade.
  - ii. High levels of learner success and industry recognition in the specialised area.
  - iii. Innovation in training methods that address the unique needs of the sector.
  - iv. Strong partnerships with employers and industry bodies within the specialism
  - v. Contribution to the development of skills and standards in the specialised sector.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the specialist training programmes your organisation delivers and their impact. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What makes your training unique in addressing the needs of the specialist sector? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What are your learner achievement/pass/retention rates, and how do you support learners in their success? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. How have your programmes contributed to skills development in this specialist sector? (Max 500 words)
  - v. What future developments do you plan for your specialist training provision? (Max 500 words)

## 19. Training provider of the year

- a. For the training provider that has delivered exceptional quality in apprenticeship and training programmes.
- b. Open to: Training Provider
- c. Criteria:
  - i. Proven track record of delivering high-quality apprenticeship and training programmes.
  - ii. High completion and achievement rates among learners.
  - iii. Strong partnerships with employers leading to effective programme delivery.
  - iv. Innovation in training methods and curriculum design.
  - v. Comprehensive support services for learners, resulting in positive learner outcomes.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the key apprenticeship and training programmes you offer, including objectives and target groups. (Max 500 words)
  - ii. What are your learner achievement/pass/retention rates, and how do you support learners in their success? (Max 500 words)
  - iii. What innovative practices have you implemented in your training delivery? (Max 500 words)
  - iv. How do you work with employers to ensure your programmes meet industry needs? (Max 500 words)
  - v. How do you go above and beyond for your learners and employer partners? (Max 500 words)
  - vi. What future developments are planned for your training provision? (Max 500 words)

## 20. Special Recognition Award

- a. The Special Recognition Award is designed to honour an individual who has made an exceptional and sustained contribution to the apprenticeship and training sector on a national level. This prestigious award recognises a figure whose leadership, advocacy, and dedication have significantly advanced the industry, shaping the future of apprenticeships and workplace training in the UK.
- b. Open to: an Individual
- c. Criteria:
  - i. The nominee must have demonstrated significant and measurable impact on the apprenticeship and training sector at a national level, influencing policy, practice, or strategic direction.
  - ii. The individual's contributions must have been made over a substantial period, reflecting ongoing dedication to the development of apprenticeships and training.
  - iii. The nominee should have played a key leadership role in promoting the importance of apprenticeships or workplace training, advocating for positive change and innovation across the sector.
  - iv. The individual should have made a positive impact on a broad range of stakeholders, including learners, employers, training providers, policymakers, and communities.
  - v. The nominee's work should leave a lasting legacy, demonstrating how their efforts have set a foundation for future advancements in the apprenticeship and training sector.
- d. Questions:
  - i. Describe the individual's contributions to the apprenticeship and training sector over time. Highlight their key achievements and the national impact of their work. (Max 500 words)



- ii. How has this individual demonstrated leadership within the sector? Provide examples of how they have advocated for apprenticeships or workplace training at a national level. (Max 500 words)
- iii. Detail the duration and consistency of the nominee's contribution to the sector. How have they maintained their influence and dedication over time? (Max 500 words)
- iv. Describe the individual's influence on learners, employers, training providers, and policymakers. Include examples of how they've positively impacted these groups. (Max 500 words)
- v. How will this individual's work continue to influence the future of apprenticeships and training in the UK? What legacy are they leaving behind? (Max 500 words)