

# [2022 Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers ranking open for entries](#)

Entries are now open for the 2022 [Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers](#) ranking, which celebrates England's highest-performing apprentice employers.

Plus, this year, for the first time, small and medium sized (SME) businesses can also enter a new category honouring the Top 50 SME Apprenticeship Employers.

The annual rankings not only showcase employers providing some of the country's most successful apprenticeship programmes, but they help future apprentices, parents and career advisers identify opportunities with leading employers.

They also enable all employers to see what 'good' looks like, so they can benchmark against the best and understand how they might improve their apprenticeship programmes to progress up the rankings in future.

The rankings are produced by the Department for Education and are independently verified, assessed, and compiled by High Fliers Research.

**The Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi, said:**

The business benefits and career opportunities created by apprenticeships makes them a key feature of our commitment to level up skills and opportunity across the country.

There are thousands of employers of all sizes and sectors that are providing individuals with the chance to learn new skills and have successful careers, while boosting their business' success in the process.

The rankings will help everyone, from young people to career-changers, to make informed decisions about their future and unleash their full potential. I encourage all eligible employers to enter.

In the 2020 Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers ranking, the British Army came top. **Col Matt Ketterer, DACOS Education Branch**, told us:

Being listed top of the Top 100 was a really significant achievement for the Army. For those inside the organisation it provided reinforcement and validation of the outstanding training offer made to every soldier. Externally it demonstrated the breadth of the Army employment offer as well as its value to the individual whether their career aspiration remained within or outside the Army.

I would absolutely recommend that other businesses apply. Being listed allows potential apprentices to know you could be an employer of choice and with talent currently at a premium it is important that potential employees choose you as well as giving you the opportunity to choose and train the best.

**Marc Steventon, Recruiting Operations Manager for the British Army, confirmed:**

Having the ability to display the logo below has had enormous benefits to our profile and to our recruitment. It was regularly rolled out across Twitter and at careers fairs when speaking to students and parents. For most this was the first time they realised we actually delivered apprenticeships in the Army. The award and the use of the logo cannot be underestimated, this is an external award saying how good we are and is taken note of by the people we seek to influence.

**Richard Turner, Head of Apprenticeships at BT, stated:**

As one of the largest private sector employers of apprentices in the UK, we were delighted to secure fourth place in the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers 2020.

Every year, the number of people applying for our apprenticeship programme at BT increases. Being recognised externally not only raises awareness, but helps people to make a decision about which companies they'd like to work for.

It's really important to celebrate and highlight the crucial role of apprenticeships in bringing in new talent and helping to support our economic recovery. We'd encourage even more employers to get involved.

**Miranda Smith is the Head of Professional Development at Mazars, who placed sixth in the 2020 ranking. She commented:**

The recognition was fantastic: it showed that we're heading in the right direction, and it gave us even more motivation to support our team members with the highest standard of learning and development opportunities.

Being placed in the Top 100 also supported us in showcasing to potential new joiners and existing apprentices how important supporting their learning and development is to Mazars.

I definitely recommend for other businesses to apply for the Top

100; being ranked provides businesses with the recognition that they are investing in well-structured development programmes.

Entries are free-of-charge and the entry form has been specifically designed to be simple and straightforward for employers to complete.

The deadline for entries is **5pm on Friday 25th March 2022**.

For more information about the rankings and to enter your organisation visit: <https://www.topapprenticeshipemployers.co.uk/> and follow [Apprenticeships Twitter](#) and [Apprenticeships LinkedIn](#) for updates.

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## [£23 million to boost skills and diversity in AI jobs](#)

- Funding for conversion courses will help underrepresented groups get tech jobs even if they have no previous experience in the field
- Companies encouraged to contribute to funding to boost skills pipeline for future workforce

Up to £23 million in government funding will create more AI and data conversion courses, helping young people from underrepresented groups including women, black people and people with disabilities join the UK's world-leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) industry.

Up to two thousand scholarships for masters AI conversion courses, which enable graduates to do further study courses in the field even if their undergraduate course is not directly related, will create a new generation of experts in data science and AI.

The UK has a long and exceptional history in AI, from codebreaker Alan Turing's early work through to London-based powerhouse DeepMind's pioneering research which will enable quicker and more advanced drug discovery.

AI underpins the apps which help us navigate around cities, stop online banking fraud and communicate with smart speakers.

The UK is ranked third in the world for private venture capital investment into AI companies (2019 investment into the UK reached almost £2.5 billion) and is home to a third of Europe's total AI companies.

The new scholarships will ensure more people can build successful careers in

AI companies, create and develop new and bigger businesses, and will improve the diversity of this growing and innovative tech sector.

DCMS Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy Chris Philp said:

The UK is already a world leader in AI. Today we're investing millions to ensure people from all parts of society can access the opportunities and benefits AI is creating in this country.

We are doubling the number of AI scholarships previously available to underrepresented groups to build a diverse and inclusive workforce fit for the future of tech.

UK AI Council Chair Tabitha Goldstaub said:

Ensuring there is a diverse talent pool furthering AI developments is vital for the success of the technology and society.

These masters conversion courses welcoming people from non-STEM degrees attract a less homogeneous group which means the UK AI ecosystem benefits from graduates with different backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences.

Obum Ekeke OBE, Head of Education Partnerships, DeepMind said:

The next generation of AI researchers must be representative of the world around us if AI is to benefit the whole of society.

These scholarships will help to build a stronger and more diverse AI community in the UK, and bring a wider range of experiences – as well as valuable multidisciplinary expertise – to the field.

The government is encouraging companies to play their part in creating a future pipeline of AI talent by match-funding the AI scholarships for the conversion courses. Industry support would get more people into the AI and data science job market quicker and strengthen their businesses.

An independent organisation, to be announced later this year, will be responsible for encouraging industry participation and investment into the AI Scholarships scheme.

First round of AI courses a roaring success

The first stage of the AI conversion courses in 2019, delivered by the Office for Students, supported 28 universities in England to set up and provide degree conversion courses in AI and data science.

The [£13.5 million AI Scholarship programme](#) enabled a diverse group of

students to study AI and data science, as 76 per cent of scholarship students were women, whereas only 30 per cent of masters students on traditional computing courses are women. Nearly half, 45 per cent, of the scholarship students were black and 24 per cent had disabilities, boosting representation on the AI and data science courses.

The first phase of the AI courses also attracted tech talent outside of London and the South East, with 70 per cent of the total students and 84 per cent of the scholarship students based outside of these areas in England, levelling up AI and data science skills.

The programme is part of the government's [National AI Strategy](#), which commits to investing in and planning for the AI ecosystem over the next ten years, to boost the UK's leadership as a global science and AI superpower.

The new scholarships follow on from the [Industrial Funded AI Masters programme](#) supported by the government since 2019 to increase AI skills across the UK with industry investment.

John Blake, Director for Fair and Access and Participation at the Office for Students said:

The postgraduate conversion courses offer a valuable opportunity for students from all backgrounds to contribute fresh perspectives and innovation to data science and artificial intelligence. In turn, these courses provide an important opportunity for organisations of all sizes to address the digital skills gap and support the post-pandemic recovery right across the country.

The enrolment data for the first year of the programme indicates that the courses are contributing to changes in the tech industry towards a more diverse workforce. I look forward to the next phase of the programme and seeing how universities and organisations are collaborating to support access for underrepresented students, and the subsequent successes of students as they continue to develop their learning and experiences in this crucial industry.

ENDS

Notes to editors An open competition will be held later this year for universities in England to bid for the scholarships. The next round of the AI scholarship scheme will start in April 2023 and will be available until 2025.

At the 2021 Conservative party conference in Manchester the Chancellor confirmed the creation of 2,000 AI scholarships, adding to the existing 1,000 AI and data science conversion course scholarships.

Courses are inclusive by design providing students with flexible access to study (e.g. evenings, remote options) and course content suitable for non-STEM graduates

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Office for AI are also looking to make more underrepresented groups eligible for the 2,000 AI scholarships.

A broker organisation will be established by April 2022 to support industry investment into this programme and provide information to industry across AI skills initiatives. If you would like to support the programme please contact [AIskills@officeforai.gov.uk](mailto:AIskills@officeforai.gov.uk).

The Office for Students has developed a series of case studies about the students receiving scholarships, highlighting the benefits this investment has brought.

The National AI Strategy aims to secure broad public trust and support, and through the involvement of the diverse talents and views of society, focuses on three pillars:

- Investing in and planning for the long term needs of the AI ecosystem to continue our leadership as a science and AI superpower;
- Supporting the transition to an AI-enabled economy, capturing the benefits of innovation in the UK, and ensuring AI benefits all sectors and regions;
- Ensuring the UK gets the national and international governance of AI technologies right to encourage innovation, investment, and protect the public and our fundamental values.

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## [PM offers support to European allies facing Russian aggression](#)

- Prime Minister will travel to Brussels and Warsaw today for discussions with the NATO Secretary General and Polish leaders
- Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary travelling to Moscow as the UK leads international de-escalation efforts
- The Prime Minister announces 1,000 more British troops to be put at readiness to support to NATO and allies in the event of a humanitarian crisis

The Prime Minister will fly to Brussels and Warsaw today (10 February 2022) as he calls on international partners to demonstrate their solidarity with NATO allies who bear the brunt of Russian aggression.

The Prime Minister will stress to allies that they must not compromise on NATO's fundamental principles. This includes inviolability of countries' sovereignty, the right of every European democracy to aspire to NATO membership and NATO's obligation to protect the security of its member states.

The UK is ready to work for a diplomatic way forward and we believe this can be achieved. But it can only be based on existing international agreements and the fundamental principles of a Europe whole and free.

The UK has been at the vanguard of efforts to curb Russian hostility towards its neighbours. Earlier this week the Prime Minister welcomed Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė to Downing Street to discuss the need for NATO unity in the face of aggression.

In recent days he has also reiterated this message to the leaders of Germany, France and the Netherlands. In total during the past fortnight, UK ministers have spoken to more than a third of NATO's member states about the situation.

The Foreign Secretary is in Moscow today and the Defence Secretary will be there tomorrow for talks with their counterparts. They will stress the only way forward is for Russia to cease its aggressive campaign of hybrid warfare and engage in meaningful talks.

The Prime Minister said:

When NATO was founded, allies made an historic undertaking to safeguard the freedom of every member state. The UK remains unwavering in our commitment to European security.

What we need to see is real diplomacy, not coercive diplomacy. As an alliance we must draw lines in the snow and be clear there are principles upon which we will not compromise. That includes the security of every NATO ally and the right of every European democracy to aspire to NATO membership.

While in Brussels, the Prime Minister and the NATO Secretary General will discuss the UK's offer to bolster the alliance's defences. This offer includes doubling the number of UK troops in Estonia in support of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, deploying more RAF jets to create a squadron in Southern Europe, and sailing both HMS TRENT and a Type 45 Destroyer to the Eastern Mediterranean to help protect the seas and skies in NATO's southeast corner.

The UK is also one of the first countries to send support to Poland, demonstrating international unity on NATO's eastern flank. Earlier this week we announced up to 350 members of 45 Commando will deploy to Poland and today the Prime Minister has announced 1,000 more British troops will be put at readiness in the UK to support a humanitarian response in the region should it be needed.

In December, the UK came to Poland and Lithuania's aid after they requested support dealing with a migrant crisis engineered by Russia on their borders with Belarus. Any further Russian incursion into Ukraine would be a humanitarian disaster which would likely create mass forced displacement of people on Europe's border, which would particularly affect countries like Poland and Lithuania.

Personnel from 45 Commando who have already deployed to Poland and the Royal Welsh battlegroup who will arrive in Estonia over the coming weeks, will help Poland and other Eastern European countries cope with the impact of any Russian aggression. Their activities will include joint training, conducting exercises and supporting contingency planning. These efforts will be supported by the troops placed at readiness today if needed.

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## [Flexible apprenticeships to boost jobs in key sectors](#)

New flexible apprenticeships will soon be available to create opportunities for more people to earn while they learn in industries that boost the economy.

Up to 1500 apprentices will be recruited on the government's new flexi-job apprenticeship scheme, which will allow people to complete short placements across sectors such as construction and creative during their apprenticeship, opening up a new paid training route to a career in these industries.

Some sectors with flexible employment patterns and short-term roles have previously found it harder to take on an apprentice. Apprenticeships are at least 12 months long, and apprentices need guaranteed employment and pay for that whole period. The new scheme will put an end to this by using agencies that can act as employers and place apprentices on projects in different companies.

Almost £5 million has been awarded by the government to support employers, including the BBC and NHS, to offer the flexi-job apprenticeship scheme and support recruitment of apprentices.

Now an apprentice hired by the BBC will be able to work with several production companies in short-term roles during their apprenticeship, while an apprentice working in construction could fulfil several contracts – such as working on both home refurbishments and bigger infrastructural projects – and earn while they learn.

The announcement, which coincides with National Apprenticeship Week, forms part of plans to increase apprenticeship numbers in key sectors such as healthcare, construction, and the creative industry.



Secretary of State for Education Nadhim Zahawi said:

“Gone are the days when apprenticeships are restricted by a one-size fits all approach.

“Through our dynamic post-16 reforms, we are investing directly in people, delivering prestigious and flexible apprenticeships which suits learners’ needs.

“New flexi-job apprenticeships will not only help to deliver the skilled workforce needed to support a diverse range of sectors to grow, but it will create even more exciting opportunities for people to secure a great career.”

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Apprenticeships are a cornerstone of our Plan for Jobs, providing people with an excellent route into some of the best careers and contributing to a high-skill, high-productivity economy.

I’m thrilled to see such exciting new opportunities being created in a wide range of industries thanks to our flexi-job apprenticeships – supporting more people to find the apprenticeship that is right for them.

Following a rigorous application process, [a total of 15 organisations have been approved by the government to establish Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies](#). The agencies will recruit and employ apprentices and place them with host businesses to work on a range of exciting projects, so they gain the skills and experience in previously untapped industries, including film and television, healthcare, construction, and engineering.

Successful organisations include: the BBC, which has already launched its new BBC Apprentice Hub in Birmingham to offer the flexi-job apprenticeship scheme; ScreenSkills, which will work with partners Prime Video, Sky with APX Content Ventures, Banijay UK and Lime Pictures; as well as the NHS; and civil engineering specialists McGinley Ltd. All will offer people a unique opportunity to build experience across a range of sectors in the coming months.

BBC Director General Tim Davie said:

The importance of growing skills and introducing fresh, diverse talent has never been greater than it is today. It is the perfect time to be launching the BBC Apprentice Hub in Birmingham. We are working closely with local creative businesses to give apprentices from across the West Midlands the skills and experience they need to thrive in this exciting industry.

Seetha Kumar, CEO ScreenSkills, the industry-led skills body for UK screen, said:

We are delighted to be working with major industry partners Prime Video, Sky with APX Content Ventures, Banijay UK and Lime Pictures to create opportunities for people who have found it difficult to get into the exciting world of film and television. Our apprenticeships will address serious skills shortages – benefiting the UK's booming screen industries while opening up pathways, providing training and support and helping people earn as they learn on high-profile shows.

NHS North of England Care System Support' (NECS) spokesperson said:

We are delighted to be able to facilitate the flexi-job apprenticeship offer across the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System. We are hugely excited by this scheme which complements our very ambitious NECS 100 programme (giving graduates and 6th form leavers their chance to find a career in the NHS). We look forward to applying that learning and experience to the Flexi-Job Apprenticeship offer and provide even more job and development opportunities to the communities we serve.

Samantha Allen, chief executive designate of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, said:

We are delighted the Education and Skills Funding Agency have approved the flexi-job apprenticeship scheme application submitted by the North East and North Cumbria.

This will allow us to explore and implement innovative apprenticeship programmes to support the health and care system across the whole region. Developing our workforce of the future is a core priority and this will provide opportunities for local people to develop lifelong careers in health and care by gaining the skills, knowledge and experience to work across a number of settings. This scheme is testament to the strong partnerships that already exist in the North East and North Cumbria and we look forward to working with all stakeholder organisations as work gets underway to launch this exciting new apprenticeship programme.

Dermot McGinley, CEO of McGinley Support Services, said:

The flexi-job apprenticeship scheme will boost the workforce just when we need to create a legacy of future skills to deliver the UK's National Infrastructure Strategy. McGinley is delighted to be

asked to help deliver those apprentices and support their development.

The first apprentices are expected to start their flexi-job apprenticeship placements from late February. The flexible apprenticeship scheme is just one of several steps the government has taken to support employers to offer more apprenticeship opportunities. These have included offering cash incentives for employers hiring new apprentices and making it easier than ever for large employers to transfer unused levy funds to smaller businesses – allowing more employers to benefit from the skills and productivity apprentices can bring to their business.

This week marks the 15th National Apprenticeship Week, a national celebration of apprenticeships and the impact they are having on individuals, businesses, and communities up and down the country.

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## [Continuing our efforts to combat global terrorist threats](#)

Many thanks indeed Mr President, and I would like to begin by also thanking Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Acting Executive Director Chen for their informative briefings today. We also welcome the evident collaboration between your two teams, both in the preparation of this report and the delivery of your mandates. The work of the Monitoring Team, UNOCT and CTED in analysing and helping states to tackle the ever-changing terrorist threat is an indispensable part of combatting global terrorism. We also welcome the Secretary General's report on the global terrorist threat.

Mr President, recent events have reminded us of the continuing threat of terrorism and underline the importance of this debate today.

The January attack in North-Eastern Syria was a sobering reminder that despite its territorial defeat, Daesh continues to pose a threat in Iraq, and Syria and beyond. We condemn that attack – in particular, we share the concern of Mr Voronkov at the taking of children as hostages. The international community must hold firm in its determination to counter and defeat Daesh. That is why the UK is a committed member of the Global Coalition against Daesh, and co-leads its counter-propaganda efforts.

Alongside this, we provide significant humanitarian and stabilisation support to liberated areas of Iraq and Syria.

Mr President, we also continue to seek justice and accountability for Daesh. Those who have fought for or supported Daesh should face justice for their crimes in the most appropriate jurisdiction. In this regard, we welcome the

emphasis on battlefield evidence preservation set out in the report. It's our view that often justice will be best served in the region where the crimes were committed, and any such justice mechanism must respect human rights and the rule of law as well as ensure fair trials and due process.

Mr President, we must continue to be alert to the threat elsewhere in the world. The context in Afghanistan has changed, and we welcome the Taliban's commitment to tackle terrorist groups, and urge them to ensure that Al Qa'eda, and Daesh affiliates and other terrorist groups do not raise funds or plan attacks from Afghan territory.

And the threat continues to grow in sub-Saharan Africa, as we've heard again today. The UK provides security, stabilisation and humanitarian assistance in many of the affected countries to help them tackle the threat, build stability and support affected communities. But much more needs to be done.

Terrorist groups continue to incite and recruit supporters around the world, particularly now using social media and encrypted online platforms, and as the SG's report makes clear, this has been exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – as set out so clearly by Mr Chen just now. So it is right that this Council, as it came together at the end of last year to reaffirm the important work of CTED and renew its mandate, also encouraged a new focus on these technologies.

Finally, we must all ensure that we protect and promote human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as we go about this work. We welcome CTED's ongoing efforts to engage civil society and the emphasis Mr Chen placed on their involvement with other partners, including the examination of gender and masculinity in terrorism prevention.

Mr President, we are committed to working together to continue the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism in a manner that protects human rights and upholds international law. Thank you.