

Apprentice of the Year Award Application Guidance

What is Apprentice of the Year?

The Apprentice of the Year award is an award to celebrate the contributions and achievements of apprentices to the bioscience community. The award forms part of the Royal Society of Biology's wider work supporting technical staff, through our support of the Technician Commitment and Technician Action Plan.

The award is divided into two groups for applications:

- **Group 1:** Levels 3 and 4 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Scottish levels SCQF 5-7. Irish levels 5 and 6.
- **Group 2:** Levels 5+ in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Scottish levels SCQF 8+. Irish levels 7+.

Who can apply?

The award is open to all apprentices working in the UK biosciences sector.

Applicants should be enrolled on an apprenticeship in a **technical role**, with a **strong basis in biological sciences**. This will typically, though not exclusively, involve designing and/ or conducting biological experiments, the preparation and management of biological reagents/samples/analyses, or the management of biological resources, such as biobanks or instrumentation.

We will also accept applications from anyone who has completed an apprenticeship within the last 12 months, however the **examples and evidence must be from during your apprenticeship**.

Application tips

This application is your chance to reflect on the skills and professional attributes you have gained and built upon during your apprenticeship so far.

- Throughout your written statement you should aim to write in a concise manner, technical descriptions of your work are not necessary.
- A limit of 300 words per competency has been added to applications to help apprentices consider the most important examples and write clearly. You can write in bullet points in some areas if this would be helpful.
- When writing your examples, make sure to describe what **you** have achieved, learnt and the **impact** to you and your organisation.

For more information and to download an application form, please visit: <https://www.rsb.org.uk/careers-and-cpd/careers/apprenticeships/apprentice-of-the-year>.

Testimonials and tips for applying

Aidee Sanchez, 2023 Apprentice of the Year (Group 1) winner says:

“It’s an honor to receive this award from the Royal Society of Biology! It encourages me to continue in my journey and to learn more. We always have the chance and the freedom to decide what are we going to do, what we are going to learn next, where we want to go next and plan the steps ahead. I hope many others feel encouraged to get trained or retrained and discover what they enjoy doing!”

Lucy Holland, 2023 Apprentice of the Year (Group 2) winner says:

“... My apprenticeship has provided me with unparalleled opportunities for professional and personal development. The fantastic mentorship from my colleagues has enabled me to gain technical expertise and contribute to impactful research projects. This award is a testament to the power of apprenticeships in creating STEM career opportunities for people from all backgrounds, and I am deeply grateful to the Royal Society of Biology for this recognition.”

Tyler Harvey-Cowlshaw, 2022 Apprentice of the Year winner says:

“[Winning the award] really made me feel like all my hard work over the years had been appreciated. The prestige of the award meant that lots of people in my large workplace became aware of the work I was doing and as a result, my award was celebrated and praised on multiple occasions by my workplace. Increasing my visibility has enabled me to gain further opportunities to continue to promote apprenticeships in science.”

Peter Ferguson, 2021 Apprentice of the Year winner says:

“Applying for this award is the perfect opportunity to showcase everything that you have accomplished in your apprenticeship to date, which often extends far beyond the experiments you have successfully carried out in the lab. Being an apprentice encompasses far more than that, as many of us continue to pave the way for what is still a new and growing pathway for what is still a new and growing pathway for young people.”

Tips for applying, from previous winners:

“I really tried to pick one area in which as an apprentice I had made the most impact and focused on that” – **Tyler**

“I spoke to the person I wanted to give a supporting statement to let them know the areas of impact that I was focusing on in my application” – **Tyler**

“When describing your contributions to your organisation, it is worth considering the true scope of your responsibilities, whether that be your contributions to scientific discussion, your attitude towards your own professional development or the support you provide your employer, both in and out of the lab.” – **Peter**

“In this application, it is important to summarise how being successful in your role has required you to maintain a strong and continued focus on an abundant number of different objectives, from keeping track of and fully preparing for upcoming coursework and exams, to attending and presenting in meetings on the work you do day to day, to supporting colleagues with their workload and educating others in your specialties. Focus less on your technical understanding of your role and more on how you’ve continued to push the boundaries within it, in order to assert yourself as an incredibly valuable employee and key contributor within your organisation.” – **Peter**