

Aspiration Awards 2026



Terms and conditions

Eligibility criteria

You can nominate a school / college / training provider / teacher / tutor / learner or apprentice for any award, taking into account the overall requirements for each award category, as outlined below.

1. Against All Odds

Recognises a learner or apprentice who has overcome difficult personal circumstances to achieve success. This may include overcoming personal challenges (physical, emotional, financial – for example), or caring for others whilst studying and still going on to achieve.

2. Apprentice of the Year

Recognises an exceptional apprentice for their work, within their apprenticeship in the workplace or related to their studies. This may include high performance, innovative approaches to their work, going the extra mile, or using what they've learned during their apprenticeship to create an opportunity for themselves to strengthen their achievements.

3. Centre of the Year

Recognises a school / college / training provider that is shaping smarter learning by going above and beyond to create transformational learning experiences and implement innovative approaches. This could include initiatives to support learners or apprentices, introducing programmes or processes to support learner or apprentice outcomes, or increasing additional support to ensure success.

This year, we'll be awarding an overall centre of the year as well as highly commended to the following subcategories:

Accreditation Centre of the Year

International Centre of the Year

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4. Learner of the Year

Recognises an exceptional learner for their work, either within their programme of study or in relation to a particular project related to their studies. This may include high performance or achievement rates, innovative ways of presenting work, going the extra mile, conducting voluntary work alongside their studies, or using what they've learned during their qualification to create an opportunity for themselves to strengthen their record of achievement.

This year, we'll be awarding an overall learner of the year as well as highly commended to the following subcategories:

- Adult Learner of the Year
- T Level Student of the Year
- V Cert Pupil of the Year
- Level 3 Learner of the Year.

Learners must be registered on the NCFE Portal.

5. Support Staff of the Year

Recognises a member of behind-the-scenes staff who has gone above and beyond to help learners or their colleagues. This award is open to Exams Officers, Teaching Assistants, Facilities, Pastoral or Support Staff, or any other non-teaching roles within education.

This year, we'll be awarding an overall winner as well as highly commended to:

-Exams Officer of the Year

6. Teacher / Tutor of the Year

Recognises a teacher or tutor who has gone above and beyond to support their learner or apprentices. This could be anything from supporting a learner or apprentice facing difficult circumstances to ensure they can continue with their studies and achieve, helping their learners or apprentices to overcome obstacles to flourish and surpass expectations, or delivering innovative and high quality teaching that resonates. This teacher or tutor must either teach an NCFE qualification or support an apprentice who is going through EPA with NCFE.

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Evidence and nominations

When making nominations, you may be expected to submit examples of evidence to support an application.

Nominators are responsible for ensuring that any personal data contained within any supporting evidence is submitted to NCFE in compliance with applicable data protection and privacy legislation in force from time to time in the UK (including the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679) (UK GDPR); the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) (and regulations made thereunder) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2426) as amended)).

Nominations must relate to the 2024-25 or 2025-26 academic session, ie, a learner or apprentice must have been studying an NCFE or CACHE qualification during the 2024-25 session or currently studying in the 2025-26 academic session. A school / college / training provider nomination must relate to initiatives or work carried out during the above academic sessions.

- Nominations are relevant for UK schools / colleges / training providers / learner or apprentices / teachers / tutors only.
- Learners must be registered on the NCFE Portal and centres must be NCFE / CACHE approved.
- Apprentices must be completing an apprenticeship with NCFE as the end-point assessment organisation.
- You agree to the terms and conditions below by submitting a nomination for an award.

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Definitions

1. The "Nominator" refers to the school / college / training provider / associated persons submitting the nomination, in accordance with the above eligibility criteria.
2. The "Nominee" is the school / college / training provider / learner or apprentice who is being nominated in line with the eligibility criteria with their full knowledge of the nomination taking place, and, if under 18 years old, with the full knowledge their parent(s) or guardian(s).

The awards

3. These terms and conditions shall be binding upon submitting a nomination for The Aspiration Awards 2026 (the "Awards").
4. The Awards are promoted by NCFE, with registered address at NCFE, Q6, Quorum Park, Benton Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8BT. Registered Charity No. 1034808 and Company No. 02896700 ("NCFE").
5. Enquiries relating to the Awards should be addressed to "NCFE - Aspiration Awards" using the above address or by emailing marketing@ncfe.org.uk.

Eligibility

6. The Awards are open to Nominators who satisfy the eligibility criteria outlined above.
7. Employees or contractors of NCFE or their families or anyone connected to the Awards may not be nominated.

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8. Only one nomination per Nominee for the Learner or Apprentice of the Year award is permitted.
9. Automated entries will be invalid. If multiple entries are received for an individual, the first entry received by time and date received will be accepted. An individual cannot nominate themselves for an award.

Permission for under 18s for participation

10. It is the Nominator's responsibility to ensure that they have obtained written permission from the Nominee, (including from parents or legal guardians for Nominees under the age of 18), before their name and address and that of their school or college is forwarded to NCFE to be considered for an award.
11. NCFE will require written consent from nominees/winners (and/or from their parents or legal Guardians (as appropriate), -) if they wish to give NCFE permission to use their own or their child's personal information for publicity purposes. Details of the way in which NCFE may use personal information for these purposes, the consent mechanism and the right to withdraw consent, will be clearly set out in the appropriate consent form which will be issued to the nominees/winners.

Data protection

12. Each Nominator agrees to indemnify NCFE from and against any claims or liability under all applicable data protection and privacy legislation in force from time to time in the UK including Data Protection Act 2018 (and regulations made thereunder) the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (UK GDPR) and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2426) as amended ("Applicable Data Protection Legislation"), arising from the supply to NCFE by that nominator of any third party personal data made without such knowledge, consent and co-operation.
13. Proof of completion of an online entry form is not proof of our receipt of the nomination. NCFE is not responsible for nominations that are lost, delayed or damaged or for problems with nominations outside its control.

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14. Each Nominator agrees to indemnify NCFE from and against any and all liability arising from their nomination infringing any third-party intellectual property rights (including without limitation copyright) being defamatory, libellous, or otherwise unlawful. All material submitted as part of any nomination and the copyright in such material shall become the property of NCFE. Nomination(s) and/or or supporting material will be returned by NCFE.
15. NCFE will retain the personal details of all Nominees for five (5) years from the date of receipt and in compliance with Applicable Data Protection Legislation to enable any prize(s) to be delivered to successful Nominees, to verify compliance with these terms and conditions and for auditing purposes.

Judging

16. The panel of judges will comprise of employee(s) of NCFE, journalists and where possible, partners and stakeholders of NCFE. The judging panels' decision is final.
17. NCFE reserves the right to request further information and/or evidence in support of a nomination.
18. All nominations must be received by midnight (GMT) Friday 13 February 2026. Nominations not submitted in accordance with these terms and conditions and/or the Eligibility Criteria and/or incomplete or illegible entries will be disqualified.
19. Winners will be contacted by NCFE week commencing 20 April 2026 to arrange case study sign off and post-awards promotion eg photography and videography, but winners will not be announced publicly until June 2026.

The prizes

20. The 2026 Aspiration Awards winners will receive a prize worth up to the equivalent value of £250 and a paper certificate.
21. Any commendations by the judging panel will receive a prize up to the value of £100 and a paper certificate.
22. There are no cash alternatives and prizes are non-transferrable.

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Liability

- 23. NCFE accepts no responsibility for any damage, loss, liabilities, injury or disappointment incurred or suffered by you as a result of entering the competition or accepting any prize.
- 24. NCFE shall not be liable for any damage, loss or disappointment suffered by any person taking part or not being able to take part in the Awards.
- 25. NCFE further disclaims liability for any injury or damage to you or any other person's computer relating to or resulting from participating in the competition.
- 26. Nothing in these terms and conditions shall exclude the liability of NCFE for death, personal injury, fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation as a result of its negligence.

Acceptance of terms and conditions

- 27. By submitting a nomination you confirm that you have read and agree to these terms and conditions.

Governing law

- 28. These terms and conditions are governed by the laws of England and Wales.

Change in circumstances

- 29. In the event of unforeseen circumstances NCFE reserves the right to alter, amend or foreclose the Awards (including changing any award category) without prior notice.