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Issue #10



SCIENCE
APPRENTICESHIP FORUM

SAF Newsletter

The latest news, views and announcements

Letter from the Forum

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the October edition of the Science Apprenticeship Forum Newsletter.

We've got something to celebrate this month – the Science Apprenticeship Forum has just won the **'Contribution to Skills & Training'** Award at the Lab Innovations Conference!

It's an incredible honour and a huge reflection of all the hard work that goes into supporting and developing our amazing science apprentices.

A big thank you to everyone involved – our apprentices, supporters, and collaborators – your passion and commitment make everything we do possible.

In this edition, you'll find more about our award win, some exciting calls-to-action, the latest updates from across the apprenticeship world, and a few ideas on how you can get more involved with the Forum.

Enjoy the read, and here's to a bright and busy November ahead!

The Science Apprenticeship Forum Team



Lab Awards 2025

We are thrilled to announce that the Science Apprenticeship Forum has **won** the prestigious '**Commitment to Skills & Training**' award at the Lab Innovations Awards!

This recognition highlights our dedication to offering skill development opportunities to science apprentices and advancing science apprenticeship programmes.

This year alone, we have rebranded the forum, released our **Best Practice Guidelines for Science Apprenticeships** document, created **monthly newsletters** including all the latest news and greatest achievements of our members, hosted the **third annual science apprentice conference** and we still have **more** to come before the year draws to a close!

A heartfelt **thank you** to all of our **apprentices, supporters** and **collaborators** whose hard work and passion have made this possible. Together we hope to continue shaping the future of science through making continuous meaningful impact in the science apprenticeship space!



Calls-To-Action

Manchester Metropolitan University

If you're planning your career path, don't miss MMU's Degree Apprenticeships Careers Fair on 6 November – a fantastic opportunity for anyone interested in degree apprenticeships, particularly those studying at Level 3 or 4.

[Book your place here](#)

Royal Society of Chemistry

nominations are open for RSC Prizes 2026! 21 October 2025 - 14 January 2026

Incredible contributions take place in the chemical sciences every day, at every intersection of the global community. This is your chance to make sure they are recognised!

Whether you'd like to nominate colleagues, teams or even self-nominate, these awards can boost morale, support career progression, and highlight the crucial work happening in the chemical sciences industry.

What can I nominate someone for?

- Research & Innovation Prizes
- Inclusion & Diversity Prize
- Horizon Prizes
- Technical Excellence Prizes
- Apprentice Prizes
- Rising Star in Industry Prizes

How to nominate?

Nominations are open until 14 January 2026. Don't miss the chance to shine a spotlight on excellence in the chemical sciences. [Nominate now!](#)



SIAS Leading the Way on New Engineering Maintenance Technician Standards

SIAS



SIAS is continuing its mission to drive bold, meaningful change in STEM skills and innovation. As the leading assessment organisation for the Level 3 Science Industry Maintenance Technician (SIMT), SIAS is uniquely placed to support training providers and employers as they prepare for the new Level 3 Engineering Maintenance Technician (EMT) standards, which cover both Single and Dual Disciplines.

To help ensure a smooth transition, the SIAS team is offering a comprehensive package of support, including curriculum mapping, webinars and tailored one-to-one guidance. This approach is designed to give providers and employers the confidence to deliver against the new requirements and ensure learners are equipped with the skills industry needs.

Organisations interested in finding out more about how SIAS can help are encouraged to contact partnerships@siasuk.com.

Together, we can unlock potential, shape the future of skills and keep #AlwaysMovingForward.

www.siasuk.com

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**ASSESSMENT
AWARDING
ACCREDITED**

Key Updates

Labour Announce New Apprenticeship Plans

The Labour Party has revealed a new apprenticeship strategy designed to reshape UK skills training and position apprenticeships at the heart of workforce development. The plan focuses on expanding access across both traditional trades and growing sectors such as healthcare, digital and green technologies. It proposes a review of funding models to better support smaller employers and high-quality training, and emphasizes stronger partnerships between government, employers and training providers to ensure programmes match real-world business needs. With rapid industry change, the strategy also signals a future-ready approach – equipping apprentices with digital, sustainable and innovative skills. As noted by Next Step Apprenticeships, this move is a welcome step in supporting learners, career-changers and employers alike – and they'll be watching closely as the policy evolves.

[Read more here](#)

Apprenticeship students outperformed those taking a traditional chemistry degree at the University of Bradford

A recent study at University of Bradford comparing its part-time "Laboratory Scientist (Chemistry)" degree-apprenticeship programme with its traditional full-time BSc chemistry degree found that the apprenticeship students consistently achieved higher pass rates on their modules. Both programmes shared the same core curriculum and assessments, but the apprenticeship route was delivered part-time with online/blended learning alongside on-the-job work experience, and rarely affected by the shifts to remote teaching during the pandemic. The findings suggest that vocationally-linked, work-based learning models can offer a strong alternative to traditional full-time study in STEM fields, particularly when aligned with flexible delivery and real-world employment.

[Read more here](#)



Key Updates

New V levels and post-16 qualifications explained

The Department for Education has announced major reforms to post-16 education from 2027, introducing new “V Levels” to join existing A Levels and T Levels as a clear vocational route. These V Levels are Level 3 qualifications designed for students who want a hands-on, vocational pathway rather than purely academic study.

At Level 2, two new pathways are also being introduced: an Occupational Pathway aimed at moving straight into skilled employment or apprenticeships, and a Further Study Pathway for those preparing for higher study. Additional support measures include tailored English and maths qualifications for 16-19 year-olds who haven't yet reached GCSE grade 4, with required in-person teaching hours and extra funding.

The reforms aim to simplify the system—cutting down around 900 mixed qualifications—ensure every student has a high-quality route to work, further study or university, and invest heavily in technical education and new specialist colleges. A consultation is now open to shape how these pathways will be implemented

Key Dates & Impacts:

October 2025: Reforms announced by the Department for Education.

From 2027: Launch of new V Levels at Level 3, replacing many existing vocational qualifications.

2027 onwards: Introduction of two new Level 2 pathways – the Occupational Pathway (for direct employment/apprenticeship routes) and the Further Study Pathway (for progression to Level 3).

Ongoing (2025–2027): Consultation period and rollout of 29 new Technical Excellence Colleges and £800 million investment in 16–19 education.

Employers: Can expect better-prepared, sector-relevant young talent and opportunities to partner with colleges.

Learners: Will gain clearer, better-funded options tailored to employment, vocational training, or higher education.

[Read more here](#)



Key Updates

Apprentice of the Month Nominations!

We're celebrating our amazing apprentices by featuring those who go above and beyond—whether through outstanding performance, teamwork, or workplace impact. Nominate a deserving apprentice by sharing their achievements and help us highlight the incredible talent in our community!

Use the link [here](#) to nominate now!

We Want to Hear from You!

Our newsletter is all about celebrating your stories, experiences, and questions. Whether you've recently worked on an exciting project, want to share your journey so far, or are looking for advice from the community, we'd love to feature your voice.

This is your space to inspire others, ask questions, and highlight the amazing work happening across our network. No story is too big or too small—every contribution helps to build a stronger, more connected community.

If you'd like to be featured in our next newsletter, simply get in touch by emailing **o.brittain@scienceapprenticeshipforum.org**

We can't wait to hear from you!



Upcoming Events / Dates:

Men's Health Awareness Month	November 2025
International Stress Awareness Week	03 - 07 November 2025
Remembrance Day	11 November 2025
World Kindness Day	13 November 2025
International Men's Day	19 November 2025
St. Andrews Day	30 November 2025

Any Other Business (AOB):

Science Apprenticeship Forum Membership Form

As we continue to enhance the way we support and connect with our community, we kindly ask all members to complete the new SAF membership form. This will help us ensure we have the most accurate and up-to-date information about your members.

You can find the form [here!](#)

