

December 2025  
Issue #12



# SAF Newsletter

The latest news, views and announcements

## Letter from the Forum

Dear Readers,

As we reach the final month of the year, December gives us a welcome moment to pause, reflect, and celebrate all that our community has achieved together. This edition of the newsletter will shine a light on the achievements, milestones, and moments of pride that have shaped our forum over the past year - small and large!

We're excited to share contributions and reflections from across our membership, highlighting the dedication, progress, and collective effort that continue to strengthen our community. These shared experiences capture the spirit of the forum and serve as a reminder of what we can each achieve.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed, engaged, and supported the forum throughout the year. We hope you enjoy this special December edition as we celebrate the year just gone and look ahead to the opportunities of the year to come.

Festive regards,  
The Science Apprenticeship Forum



## Tyler Harvey-Cowlshaw



We are thrilled to announce that the Science Apprenticeship Forum founder, Tyler Harvey-Cowlshaw has been recognised for her achievements at the Department for Education's National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards.

The awards are designed to recognise and reward the achievements of exceptional apprentices and T level students, skills champions alongside apprenticeship and T Level employers.

Tyler was selected as a **finalist** for the Royal Navy Degree Level Apprentice of the Year Award at the national ceremony. After **winning the East Midlands regional award**, she received a **Highly Commended award at the national stage**.

Tyler is an inspiration to us all, especially at the forum, and we are so proud of her achievements in the apprenticeship space.

Commenting on the award, Tyler said: "I feel incredibly honoured to be Highly Commended at the National Apprenticeship & Skills Awards. This recognition from HM Government means so much, and I am grateful to everyone who has supported my journey, from mentors, colleagues and the wider apprenticeship community. I'm proud to champion science apprenticeships and excited to keep pushing for stronger pathways for future technical talent."

Jodie Chatfield, Head of Technical Services in the School of Life Sciences at the University of Nottingham, said: "Having supported Tyler from the beginning as a new apprentice, growing in skills, ability and knowledge, it is a proud moment to see her achieve her degree apprenticeship, and to get national recognition for her achievements is outstanding. Tyler is an inspiration to all."



## 2025 RSC Apprentice Prizes



### Christina Dumitriu Jackson

Christina, a peptide discovery apprentice at AstraZeneca and degree-level chemistry student, won the 2025 RSC Apprentice Prize for her excellence in peptide chemistry and her work championing sustainability and STEM advocacy.

She works on improving therapeutic peptides and actively supports initiatives for early-career researchers, inclusivity, sustainability, and accessible pathways into science, championing apprenticeships and diversity within the chemical sciences.

### Georgia Wignall

Georgia Wignall won the **2025 RSC Apprentice Prize** in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the oligonucleotide platform at AstraZeneca, where her work has enabled more efficient process development, and for championing a positive and inclusive workplace culture



### Mia Outram

Mia Outram won the **2025 RSC Apprentice Prize**, recognised for her key formulation work in developing a new high-SPF skincare product and for representing apprentices and promoting STEM nationwide through her role with No7 Beauty Company.



## 2025 RSB Apprentice Prizes

### Rebecca Bojarski

Rebecca from Vertex Pharmaceuticals was named Apprentice of the Year (Level 5+) by the Royal Society of Biology, which recognises her commitment, skill and professional contribution.

Reflecting on her achievement, Rebecca shared:

“I am very proud of how much I have achieved in the past 3 years of my apprenticeship, from contributing to workplace projects to volunteering for apprentice outreach and helping drive sustainability initiatives. It is amazing to have this recognition, not just for my personal growth but also as a platform for promoting apprenticeships to a wider audience.”

### Tamara Martinez

Tamara from Nottingham Trent University was also named Apprentice of the Year (Level 5+) by the Royal Society of Biology, which recognises her commitment, skill and professional contribution.

She said: “Winning the Apprentice of the Year Award means so much to me, as it shows that the hard work, dedication, and perseverance I have put into my work have truly paid off. An apprenticeship is a unique journey where you are constantly learning while contributing to real-world work. At times, it can feel as though you are always one step behind, still finding your feet, but this award proves that growth and progress are recognised and celebrated along the way.

Apprenticeships offer an invaluable opportunity to learn while working, to take part in meaningful projects, and to grow both technical skills and confidence.”

### Pia Boeber

Pia from AstraZeneca received the Highly Commended award in the Apprentice of the Year (Level 5+) category by the Royal Society of Biology, highlighting the exceptional standard of work being delivered by apprentices.



## Manchester Metropolitan University Shout-Outs!



### Isabel Dunton

Laboratory Scientist (Chemical Science) Degree Apprentice at GSK, Highly Commended in the Royal Navy Degree Level Apprentice of the Year (East of England)

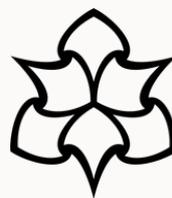
### Keira Chippendale

Keira was a finalist at the North East of England Apprenticeship and Skills Awards 2025. On LinkedIn, she shared: "I was deeply honoured to be selected as a finalist for The Royal Navy Degree Apprentice of the Year. While I didn't take home the award, I couldn't be prouder of reaching this stage and reflecting on the journey I've taken so far as an apprentice. This milestone is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion I've poured into my career development, and I'm excited for what's yet to come."

### Nina Milnes

Nina Milnes from Solenis Bradford has been named Apprentice of the Year at the Bradford Means Business Awards 2025.

Nina's employer said: "Nina's passion, dedication, and hard work has truly paid off – a shining example of what commitment and talent can achieve."



**Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University**



## University of Kent Shout-Outs!

**Megan from UCB** received the top Aspire Award through the WOW Awards, recognising her exceptional dedication and contribution to a key pre-clinical project. The nomination highlighted the following:

“Through consistent hard work and resilience, Megan has played a pivotal role in running complex in vivo models, ensuring the highest standards of scientific rigour and animal welfare.”

This year also marked a significant professional milestone for **Ryan at Pharmaron**, who has been DSP Manufacturing Lead on a Priority A client project. Under his leadership, the team successfully completed an Engineering Batch in November - a hugely important achievement for both the business and the client. His line manager emphasises that this milestone would not have been possible without Ryan’s ‘expertise, organisation, hard work and leadership, making it a fitting way to conclude another excellent year of achievement.’

These achievements highlight the real contribution our apprentices make across the University and beyond. From national awards to leading major projects, their work continues to make a genuine difference to our science community.

University of  
**Kent**



## Apprentice Spotlight: Owen Hewitt

Owen Hewitt is a Level 6 Scientist (Chemical Science), working at the University of Southampton who has excelled in promoting apprenticeships and championing the role of technicians in scientific research. Passionate about developing the next generation of scientists, he actively engages with students, early-career professionals, and the wider community to highlight diverse career pathways and the vital contributions of technical staff in supporting cutting-edge research.

In April 2025, Owen attended the British Crystallographic Association (BCA) Conference in Leeds, where he presented a poster titled "Apprenticeships: How to produce a new generation of scientists." His poster was awarded a prize sponsored by the Institute of Physics.

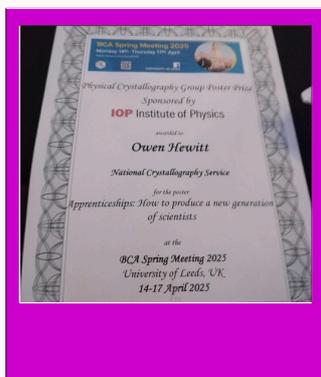
**Event:** [BCA Conference](#)

Building on this work, in July he attended the Solutions in Science (SinS) Conference in Brighton, delivering a presentation on apprentices and technicians. His presentation showcased the facilities available at the Chemistry and Chemical Engineering department at the University of Southampton and emphasized the critical role of technicians and other staff in maintaining these facilities.

**Event:** [SinS Conference](#)

In November, Owen participated in the BBC Bitesize/Technicians: We Make The Difference careers campaign. He sat on a panel alongside other early-career professionals and BBC presenter Kathryn Wilson, speaking to students across multiple year groups about his journey from secondary school to his current role. He provided insights into opportunities available outside traditional career paths.

**Event:** [BBC Bitesize Careers Tour](#)



# Apprentice Spotlight: Owen Hewitt



## Apprenticeships: How to produce a new generation of scientists

A Look Into The Straightforward Process, Usefulness And Wide-range Applications Of An Apprenticeship; How They Work And What They Can Lead To.

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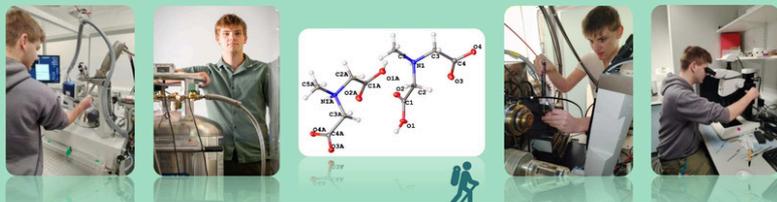
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### Why Technicians?

The demand for new technicians is rising. The 'invisible workforce' is integral to higher education, labs and research but with the technical workforce aging, there could soon be a shortage of lab technicians that will impede the development of science in the UK.

Over 120 universities and research institutions have already agreed to support their technicians in the areas most needed including recognition and career development, but most importantly: sustainability of technicians. There must be consistent training of new laboratory technicians to fill those vital positions in institutions.

There are over 630,000 people currently participating in apprenticeships and with the amount of training providers increasing and their teaching quality improving, apprenticeships are easily becoming the best way to train technicians up to support research infrastructure and provide long-term and sustainable practical knowledge.



### My Apprentice Journey

I have just completed my Level 3 Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship, a 2-year course for technicians in a wide range of settings such as chemical or pharmaceutical industries, nuclear companies and analytical science services.

I work with the National Crystallography Service (NCS) on X-ray & Electron diffraction. I have been involved in multiple projects and international collaborations, working on co-crystallisations and crystal sponge synthesis, along with instrument maintenance.

### My Experience

On top of my normal role of X-ray Crystallography, the structure of this course allowed me to learn many new skills including –

- Procurement
- Laboratory maintenance
- Infrared spectroscopy
- Hot stage microscopy
- 3D Modelling and printing

I also spent time working in the Mass Spectrometry facility and the Advanced Composite Material Facility.



### Outreach and Engagement

One of the things I enjoy most is the spectroscopy in a suitcase (SIAS) outreach. We visit schools and colleges to introduce analysis techniques (IR, NMR and Mass Spec) to A-level students.

We take a portable Infrared spectrometer to allow students to use a more advanced piece of instrumentation than is typically available. The positive feedback received from teachers and students show how much the students enjoy it, and that it persuaded them to pursue science beyond A-level.



### How do I get an apprentice?

Many universities pay into the apprentice levy, and are now looking to take advantage of government support for apprentices. You may already have a university programme to support an apprentice.

You can also –

- Find a local training provider on the government website
- Engage with the training provider to check what commitments they need from you
- Speak to other facilities and groups around the department / university to find complementary training opportunities

### What level of apprentice do I want?

Apprenticeships can be undertaken at many different levels (between 1-5 years to complete), and it is important to understand these to know the amount of experience an apprentice may have before joining.

	Level	Equivalent Education Level
Intermediate	2	GCSE
Advanced	3	A-level
Higher	4&5	Foundation degree, HNC or NVQ
Degree	6&7	Bachelor's or Master's degree

Different providers will offer different courses so you may need to look around to find the apprenticeship standard you want.



### What does the course involve?

Apprenticeships have course specific requirements that must be demonstrated in the End Point Assessment. This includes workplace observations, exams, presentations of evidence and projects.

Evidence of skills, knowledge and learned behaviours are captured in duty booklets, a form of coursework completed throughout the training.

College work typically takes place in person, one day a week with the training provider. Some training providers offer remote learning with a summer-school component to complete required lab-based work.

A set number of 'off-the-job training' hours need to be completed across the duration. This can include any experience that is not typical of 'day to day' working.

### What Next?

I will be continuing my role as an apprentice shortly as I start the Level 6 (Laboratory) Scientist Course. This is a 5-year course that, once completed, will mean I have a BSc equivalent in Chemistry, and the level 6 qualification.

For this qualification, the apprenticeship standards detail that I must expand my overall knowledge of chemistry, meaning I will work in multiple areas in the school. Additionally, there is great emphasis on performing research, which was required much less in the lab technician level 3 standards.

## Apprentice Spotlight: Dudzai Kamonere

We are also pleased to celebrate a range of achievements from Dudzai Kamonere this year.

Dudzai is currently completing a science apprenticeship at MSD Animal Health, where she has taken a highly proactive approach to her development, consistently exceeding the requirements of in-company training, while actively seeking opportunities to build new skills and broaden their technical knowledge.

Alongside her role, Dudzai recently participated in a BBC Bitesize Career Tour, where she spoke to students about pathways after school and was invited to take part as a panellist. During this experience, Dudzai shared her personal journey through apprenticeships and encouraged young people to consider careers in science.

Dudzai has also been featured by the Gatsby Foundation as part of the '*Technicians: We Make A Difference*' campaign, which highlights the vital role technicians play across the science industry.

These achievements have been particularly meaningful, as they not only demonstrate strong professional growth but also reflect a clear commitment to inspiring and supporting the next generation of scientists and technicians.



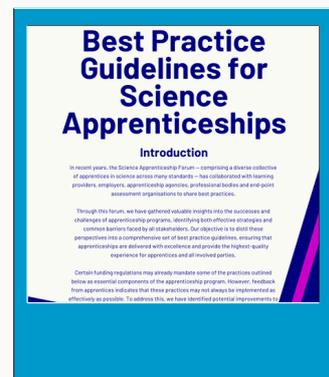
## Science Apprenticeship Forum Achievements

In 2025, the Science Apprenticeship Forum marked a year of major progress and impact across the apprenticeship community.

One of our flagship achievements has been the release of our **Best Practice Guidelines for Science Apprenticeships** document, developed to support employers, training providers, and apprentices in delivering high-quality, effective apprenticeship experiences. These guidelines have helped to share conversations about excellence in apprenticeship design and have provided practical tools and approaches to strengthen standards across the sector.

We were also delighted to host our **third national Science Apprentice Conference**, bringing together apprentices and industry partners for a day of workshops, networking, and peer-led discussions under the theme *Shaping Your Future*. This event, supported by organisations such as Innovate UK, the Science Council, and the Royal Society of Chemistry, offered an invaluable platform for apprentices to connect, share experiences and gain insights into career progression and sector developments.

In addition, the Forum was recognised for its commitment to skills development and training by winning the **Commitment to Skills & Training Award** at the Lab Innovations Conference. This was a testament to the community's growing influence and the tangible value apprentices bring to the laboratory workforce.



## Calls-To-Action

### The Institute of Science and Technology (IST)

IST, in collaboration with Innovate UK and Greater Manchester Colleges, are currently offering a fantastic apprentice training opportunity for 2026. The, free of charge, 2 day Innovation Literacy programme, is being held in Manchester, on 4th & 5th March 2026.

IST are also generously offering to fund reasonable travel costs for its current apprentice members and for any apprentice who applies for and is awarded IST Membership by 1st January 2026.

Places are limited and registration closes on 30th January 2026. Attached is a programme flyer. Detailed information, including benefits to both the apprentice and their employer can be found at: <https://istonline.org.uk/apprentice-training-opportunity/>

This is a great chance to build your innovation skills, meet apprentices from across the country, and take part in a programme backed by respected scientific and technical organisations.

### Royal Society of Chemistry

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

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!](#)

