

Applicant Guidance Notes – General route

April 2026

Contents

1. [About the UK Young Academy](#)
2. [Applying for membership](#)
3. [Eligibility criteria](#)
4. [The selection process](#)
5. [Selection criteria](#)
6. [Referees](#)
7. [Use of data](#)
8. [Submitting your application](#)
9. [Contact information](#)
10. [Additional support](#)
11. [Question guidance](#)

The following guidance notes accompany the 2026 application form for the general route to membership of the UK Young Academy. We would recommend you read through the entire document before proceeding with your application. Additional information about the UK Young Academy and the application process can be found on our [website](#) alongside our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section.

If you have any further questions about applying or the UK Young Academy in general, please contact enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org.

Completed application forms must be submitted via the [online application portal](#) by no later than 3pm (BST) on Wednesday 15 July 2026.

Email applications will not be considered.

1. About the UK Young Academy

Launched in June 2022, the UK Young Academy is an interdisciplinary organisation of UK-based early-career researchers, innovators and professionals from across society who share a passion to improve our world.

As part of a global initiative of Young Academies, it gives a voice to individuals with ideas, initiative and drive who wish to work together to contribute to national and global decision-making.

2. Applying for membership

We are looking for dedicated, driven and dynamic individuals who are committed to collaborating with others from a spectrum of different sectors.

Members will be selected from across the UK, from a variety of diverse backgrounds and with a range of experiences. They will be at the forefront of their field, having demonstrated excellence, leadership skills and creative and innovative thinking. Suggestions for what this may look like in practice can be found in the eligibility criteria section below.

Members will be encouraged to help define the UK Young Academy's activities and contribute to its projects. They will help to build the UK Young Academy's reputation and give it a credible voice on issues that matter. This will include engaging with fellow members and other institutions to understand the key issues facing society and pressing for best practice across the sectors they represent. Members have the opportunity to address challenges faced by their peers, inform national and international policy, and enable positive societal change.

Membership is typically for five years, and there is no membership fee. Travel and accommodation costs will be supported to facilitate participation in UK Young Academy activities for all members and additional support is also available to help cover the costs of childcare.

3. Eligibility criteria

You'll be in the early stages of a professional career

We are looking for forward thinking, innovative and proactive individuals in all key sectors of society. While not an exhaustive list, these might include entrepreneurs, researchers in academia or industry, engineers, professionals in the arts and creative industries, lawyers, teachers, clinicians, along with individuals working in business, charity and new and emerging fields. Please note, all applicants must be aged 18 years or older, in accordance with safeguarding and data protection considerations. Any applications from individuals aged under 18 will be removed during eligibility checks and not progressed to review.

You'll have approximately 3-12 years' experience in your field

Those eligible to apply will be in the early stages of their careers. As a guide, members may typically have at least three to twelve years of experience working in their profession or post their highest qualification or degree. We expect to welcome members from their mid-20s to their mid-40s, however this is just a guideline.

We appreciate that career paths can take many twists and turns. If you are early in your career and meet the selection criteria, you will be considered, regardless of age. When reviewing applicants' eligibility, documented career breaks (including parental leave, adoptive leave or extended sick leave) will be taken into consideration, and the 12-year upper limit should be considered to extend as appropriate to account for any breaks in career.

You must reside in the UK

Members will be selected from anywhere in the UK and from all backgrounds. Applicants will typically be UK citizens or live in the UK when you apply for membership, unless you have exceptional circumstances such as if you are a refugee or asylum seeker and are currently residing in the UK.

Applicants who are UK citizens but currently based overseas are eligible to apply. However, you should consider whether you can properly commit to the Young Academy and its activities and aim to demonstrate this throughout your application.

You'll have a track record of excellence

Members will be selected for their career excellence. Perhaps you've made a significant contribution to your field, won awards, or led a team to deliver an important new project. Your commitment and possible contribution to the UK Young Academy will also be important.

We would encourage you to apply, even if you think you might not fit all the eligibility criteria. If you see yourself as early-career and are passionate about our aims, we want to hear from you.

4. The selection process

Applications for membership to UK Young Academy will be reviewed by a selection committee, comprising members from the Young Academy, Fellows and Members from the seven partner academies and early-career and professional sector representatives covering different areas of knowledge, expertise and geography. Applications will be scored using the selection criteria outlined below to select the next cohort.

As part of the selection process, we ask you to submit a short supporting video. This video will give you opportunity to talk about a topic or issue that you are passionate about and why it might make a good project as part of the UK Young Academy's work programme. The selection committee are looking for you to demonstrate your enthusiasm and interest, as well as your ability to communicate a topic of interest succinctly within the limit of a 3-minute video.

If you are unable or uncomfortable to complete the video as part of your submission, we do offer alternatives for this part, as well as the rest of the application process. Please do get in touch with us at enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org to discuss how we can best support you in your application.

Timeline for the selection process:

Wednesday 15 July 2026	Deadline for applications
Wednesday 29 July 2026	Deadline for referees to submit supporting statements
August – November 2026	Review of applications by the selection committee
Mid-February 2027	Applicants will be contacted about application outcome

5. Selection criteria

The application form consists of three main sections that cover an applicant's:

- i. **Career history** (Section 1 and throughout, 50% of score)
 - Demonstrated excellence in career and professional achievement.
 - Note this will be viewed as a threshold criterion.
- ii. **Personal statement** (Section 2, 25% of score)
 - Demonstrated evidence or capacity for leadership.
 - Involvement or enthusiasm for innovation and entrepreneurial activity; interdisciplinary working; participation in international collaboration.
- iii. **Vision and commitment to the UK Young Academy** (Section 3, 25% of score)
 - Demonstrated evidence of flair for innovative and creative thinking.
 - Interest in both global and national professional and societal policy issues; international collaboration.
 - Demonstrable commitment to UK Young Academy activity.

Applicants are asked to use these sections to demonstrate evidence of outstanding professional achievement, together with other relevant skills, interests and experience they might have.

6. Referees

As part of the application process, we ask you to submit two references to support your application. When you submit your completed online application form, your nominated referees will be automatically contacted to provide supporting statements for your application.

Please ensure that you have already approached your nominated references beforehand to:

- Check that they are happy to provide a statement.
- Inform them that they will be contacted by email to complete the referee form via the application portal.
- Ensure their nominated email mailbox can receive emails from the @ukyoungacademy.org domain.

If you have applied for membership previously:

You will be given the option to reuse referees and their supporting statements from your most recent previous application. On the application portal, if we have had another application on the system from you, you will be asked to specify whether you would like to reuse any of the previous information or submit new referees to support your 2026 application. Referees will be contacted or notified accordingly depending on the options you select.

Referees will need to submit their supporting statements by the application closing date of Wednesday 29 July 2026, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure this part of the process has been completed. Applicants will receive a confirmation email for each reference that is submitted to support their application.

Applications and references which have not been fully completed by the closing date may be deemed incomplete and not progressed for review.

7. Use of data

The UK Young Academy is operating under the auspices of the Royal Society in first instance.

Please note that information regarding your application may be shared with the UK Young Academy, the Royal Society, and relevant partner academies, and Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) for data monitoring and evaluation purposes.

You may also be contacted by the UK Young Academy, the Royal Society or an agent acting on their behalf, for reporting and evaluation purposes throughout the course of your membership and after completion of your term.

Please refer to the UK Young Academy's [privacy policy](#) for further information on the use of your data.

8. Submitting your application

Please visit our online, dedicated [application portal](#) to submit your application.

- If you are a **new applicant**, you will need to register first to access the portal and the online application form.
- If you have **applied previously** you will need to log in, using your original contact details, to access your previous applications and information on the system.

You will be taken to a home page, where you should see several tiles, including an '**Apply now**' and, if you are a previous applicant, a '**Review my applications**' where you can view and download your existing or in-progress applications.

Click on '**Apply now**' to be taken through to the application form. Once you have selected '**Start application**' you will be asked to select which application route you are applying for membership through. Select '**General**' to be taken through to the General application form.

Unfortunately, we are unable to take submissions via email.

9. Guide for use of AI in preparing your application

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools and third-party software are powerful tools which have the potential to enhance written language. The UK Young Academy recognises that, where used appropriately, these tools can also provide equitable access to opportunities, such as our application process.

That said, we are looking for active and enthusiastic people to join the UK Young Academy who resonate with [our mission and values](#). Therefore, all examples and statements provided as part of your application must be truthful and provide an authentic representation of your skills, experiences, and ideas. Authenticity and enthusiasm shine through in the application process and provide a gauge of an individual's commitment and intention to actively participate in Young Academy work and activities.

Before submitting your application, we will ask you to declare whether you have used AI or any other third-party software at any point in the production of your application. You will then have an opportunity to outline in what capacity you used it (e.g. for language accessibility, to create an initial structure, etc). Your answer to this question will not be used to determine the acceptance or progression of your application.

See below for examples of appropriate and inappropriate use of AI.

Appropriate use of AI	Inappropriate use of AI
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Refining thoughts and ideasChecking spelling, grammar and to support clarity of written EnglishEdit/snip together video content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inflate or present fictionalised skills or experiencesTo create generic responses to bulk out an applicationTo create your video in full, without personal input

10. Contact information

If you have any questions about applying for membership, please [contact us](#).

Answers to most questions can be found on the UK Young Academy's [website or FAQs section](#).

11. Additional support

In addition, we will be running webinars throughout the call for applications to give potential applicants an opportunity to talk to the team and ask any questions you may have about the application process.

The scheduled webinar dates are:

- Thursday 14 May, 12noon - 1pm (BST)
- Friday 5 June, 11am - 12noon (BST)
- Wednesday 24 June, 1pm - 2pm (BST)

You can register to attend on the [events page of the UK Young Academy's website](#).

12. Question guidance

Please read the following guidance notes carefully as you complete your application form. In the table below, each box represents a page of the application form; the left-hand column contains the questions within each of these pages as set out in the form and the right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion.

Note that questions with * are mandatory fields.

Application route	
Please select which Membership Application route are you applying for *	Please select the 'General' application route.

Data protection	
Data protection *	Please agree to the data protection statement to proceed with your application.

Use of artificial intelligence or third-party software
<p>The UK Young Academy recognises that, where used appropriately, artificial intelligence (AI) tools and third-party software have the potential to enhance written language and can provide equitable access to opportunities, such as our application process.</p> <p>That said, we are looking for active and enthusiastic people to join the UK Young Academy, and all examples and statements should be truthful and an authentic representation. Before submitting your application, you will be asked to declare whether you have used AI or any other third-party software at any point in the production of your application. Your answer to this question will not impact on the progression of your application.</p> <p>Please see the application guidance for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use of AI during the application process.</p>

Right to work in the UK	
Are you a current resident of the UK or UK citizen? *	Please confirm that you currently live in the UK to proceed with your application or are eligible under exceptional circumstances, such as if you are a refugee or asylum seeker and are residing in the UK.

SECTION 1: About you	
Title, Name, Home address and Current job title and organisation *	Review and complete your personal details accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application.
Email address *	<p>This field will be used to create your application submission and should be prepopulated from the email you use to register for the application portal.</p> <p>All correspondence pertaining to your application will be sent to this address throughout the course of the application process.</p>
Which sector would you place yourself in? *	<p>Select from the list which sector you most closely identify with in your primary role.</p> <p>Note, this question is for internal use only to support with the reviewing and evaluation process.</p> <p>Even if your sector is not listed, please try to indicate the most relevant option or put in 'Other'.</p> <p>If your work is multi-disciplinary, select your lead discipline or the most relevant option. The application form will give you plenty of opportunities throughout to demonstrate any interdisciplinarity in your role, if relevant.</p>

Career history *	<p>Provide job title, organisation, and the date from and to for each role you would like to document. You can create a new line on the table by clicking 'Add'. A pop up with the fields outlined above will appear. Please list by most recent position first.</p> <p>Note that your application may be reviewed by individuals from outside your field of work. Therefore, please avoid jargon and acronyms in your job title and, where appropriate, organisation.</p>
Please provide a narrative of your career history to date, focusing on key achievements, contributions and the impacts of your work. *	<p>Here we are looking for a narrative overview of your roles to date. Be specific about your contributions and the impact on your field, team or organisation, highlighting major accomplishments and any leadership, innovation or influence you've had.</p> <p>Note that your application may be reviewed by individuals from outside your field of work. Therefore, please avoid jargon, and use accessible language that is understandable for a non-specialist in your area of work.</p> <p>Things to keep in mind when completing this section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be specific about your individual contributions, the impact they had and why it mattered. • Highlight impact by explain tangible results, influence on projects/teams, or contributions to your field or community. • Focus on relevance to the UK Young Academy and prioritise experiences that demonstrate why you fit as an early-career individual and how your work has progressed. <p>Plain text only maximum of 500 words.</p>
Please describe how you meet the UK Young Academy's eligibility criteria of being early in your career? *	<p>Reviewers will use this section to support their assessment of whether you fit our core eligibility criteria of being in the early stages of a professional career and having approximately 3-12 years' experience in your field. This may include describing any career breaks or changes. Please note, this section will be used by reviewers to assess your eligibility as an 'early-career' applicant.</p> <p>Plain text only maximum of 200 words.</p>
Degree(s)	List any degrees you hold here.
Professional qualifications / Membership of professional bodies	List any professional qualifications you hold or memberships to professional bodies here.
Do you consider your primary role to sit within academia, private sector, charity or other? *	Select the sector which your primary role sits within.

SECTION 2: Personal statement

Personal statement *	<p>Please provide a personal statement about your motivations for wishing to join the UK Young Academy.</p> <p>Here we are looking for you to provide relevant evidence, experience or enthusiasm for how you meet the selection criteria.</p> <p>Plain text only maximum of 500 words.</p>
-----------------------------	--

<p>Please provide evidence of leadership, responsibility and recognition within your main area of work *</p>	<p>In this question, we are looking for you to demonstrate how you fit into the remit of an 'emerging leader'. This could be examples of leadership responsibility you have within your main role, or existing recognition within your main area of work.</p> <p>Please note that your application may be reviewed by individuals outside your field, and you should therefore provide context and explanation for any achievements that are niche to your field of expertise or work.</p> <p>Plain text only maximum of 500 words.</p>
<p>Please provide evidence of interest, contributions or recognition outside your main area of work *</p>	<p>Here we are looking for evidence of or interest in cross-disciplinary activities and this could include public and charitable service, outreach, public engagement or community-based project work.</p> <p>Examples should be from outside your main area of work.</p> <p>Plain text only maximum of 500 words.</p>
<p>SECTION 3: Your vision and commitment to the UK Young Academy</p>	
<p>Provide a web link to a short video outlining:</p> <p>A topic, issue or subject area that interests you, that could be an area for consideration for the UK Young Academy's work programme *</p>	<p>Here we ask you to submit a link to a short video.</p> <p>Videos should be <u>no longer</u> than 3 minutes in length. Applications containing videos over this time limit may be deemed ineligible.</p> <p>Submitted videos do not need to be a polished product and can simply be filmed using your smart phone or tablet. However, please ensure your image is clear and the sound is audible.</p> <p>Note, we do not want you to submit the raw video file. Videos should first be hosted on a video hosting site such as YouTube or Vimeo and the link provided in your application form. We would recommend uploading your video as unlisted (so it is not publicly accessible) and without a password, if possible – this will help the review process.</p> <p>Further guidance on submitting a video, including some useful tips for filming and suggestions for video hosting sites can be found in our guidance on how to make a good video, including on use of AI in the editing and creation of videos.</p> <p>Videos must be available for review until at least March 2027.</p> <p>Please double check your hosting site settings to ensure this access.</p> <p>If you are unable or uncomfortable to complete the video as part of your submission, we do offer alternatives for this part of the application process. Please get in touch with us at enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org to discuss how we can best support you in your application.</p>
<p>If your video link is password-protected, please state the password</p>	<p>If your video is password-protected, please provide the password here.</p>
<p>What do you think the UK Young Academy should prioritise as part of its programme of activities and why? *</p>	<p>We are interested to hear what you would prioritise if you were successful in applying for membership to the UK Young Academy.</p> <p>Our members determine our direction and work programmes, and this is your opportunity to highlight what you feel is important under</p>

	<p>the remit of the UK Young Academy, and for you to demonstrate your understanding of us as an organisation</p> <p>Plain text only maximum of 300 words.</p>
<p>We are looking for active UK Young Academy members. If selected, how will you prioritise your commitment to the UK Young Academy and its work programmes? *</p>	<p>Selecting committed individuals who will be active members is an integral part of ensuring the UK Young Academy's first few years are as productive as possible with valuable outputs.</p> <p>We would like to hear how, if selected, you will ensure you can commit to the UK Young Academy and its work programmes alongside your other commitments. For example, this could include securing support from your organisation to be involved.</p> <p>Plain text only maximum of 300 words.</p>
<p>Please indicate you can commit the minimum time commitment to the UK Young Academy *</p>	<p>Please tick to confirm you can accommodate the minimum time commitment required to engage in the UK Young Academy activities which is typically 4-5 hours per month.</p> <p>If you are successful in your membership application, there will be optional leadership opportunities available with the Young Academy which may require additional time commitment.</p>
<p>Note, successful applicants will be expected to attend a New Members Induction and All Members' Meeting on 22 - 23 March 2027 *</p>	<p>Please tick this box to confirm that you have noted the dates of the New Members' Induction and All Members' Meeting, and that you understand the expectation that you should attend this event should your application be successful.</p>

SECTION 4: Referees

SECTION 4: Referees	
<p>Referee 1 and 2 Name and Email address *</p>	<p>Please specify the names and email addresses of two referees who have agreed to support your application. Review and complete your referees' details accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application.</p> <p>Your referees should be professionals who are familiar with your area of activity and your achievements and can provide an unbiased insight into your ability to engage and deliver on commitments beyond your sole professional activity.</p> <p>Referees will be contacted automatically on submission of your application and will need to submit their supporting statements by 29 July 2026.</p> <p>For previous applicants: If you are a previous applicant, you have the opportunity to reuse one or both of your previous referees, and their supporting statements if you wish.</p> <p>Providing you have logged on to the application portal with the same log-in details you used to apply with in a previous round, the system should pick up your previous referee details and give you the option to reuse accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referees who are reused but asked to provide a new supporting statement will be emailed to request this information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referees who are reused with their previous supporting statement will be notified following submission of your application form to inform them that their supporting statement has been reused to support your new membership application. <p>Please note, referee statements that are not received by 29 July 2026 may result in your application being deemed incomplete and not progressed for review. Do factor this in when you are approaching your referees and we would strongly recommend you confirm with them in advance of submitting your application. Please also check their email mailboxes can receive emails from the @ukyoungacademy.org domain.</p> <p>Draft referee forms and additional guidance can be downloaded from the UK Young Academy website.</p>
--	---

SECTION 5: Marketing

How did you find out about the UK Young Academy?	Please indicate how you found out about the UK Young Academy. This is useful information for us to collect as it helps us to evaluate which marketing channels have been effective at reaching our target audience. It will also enable us to identify ways to improve for future membership rounds.
---	--

Diversity monitoring

At the end of the application form, you will be taken to a diversity monitoring questionnaire.

The UK Young Academy is working to create an inclusive environment for everyone involved in our work. With your help, we will be able to better understand the diversity of people who are applying for membership which will help us to identify areas of underrepresentation and address potential barriers.

Completing this short survey will help us achieve this. You can choose 'prefer not to say' for any of the questions.

Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. Responses will be pseudonymised for reporting and will not be used for any purpose other than for the monitoring and evaluation of the UK Young Academy's activities.

This information will be collected and stored separately from the rest of your application and will not be visible to those involved in the selection process, including referees.

Declaration for use of AI

Have you used artificial intelligence (AI) or any third-party software at any point in the preparation of your application? *	Please indicate whether you have used AI or any other third-party software to enhance your application.
If yes, please provide brief details of how you have used AI to complete your application *	<p>This information is collected for transparency and will not impact on the progression of your application.</p> <p>Plain text only maximum of 100 words.</p>

Confirmation

Confirmation*

Please agree to the confirmation to submit your application.