

# Referee guidance notes

April 2026

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You have been nominated to provide a reference to support the application of a candidate for membership at the UK Young Academy. The following guidance provides an overview of the UK Young Academy and its membership selection process as well as some supporting notes for completing your referee form.

We would recommend you read through the entire document before proceeding with your supporting statement. Additional information about the UK Young Academy can be found on our [website](https://www.ukyoungacademy.org) ([ukyoungacademy.org](https://www.ukyoungacademy.org)).

If you have any questions about acting as a reference or the UK Young Academy in general, please contact [enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org](mailto:enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org).

**Completed referee forms must be submitted via the online application portal by no later than 3pm (BST) on Wednesday 29 July 2026.**

**Your personal link to access the portal will be emailed to you once we have received a completed application form. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept references by email.**

## 1. About the UK Young Academy

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.

Launched in June 2022, it is part of a [global initiative of Young Academies](#) who give a voice to individuals with ideas, initiative and drive who wish to work together to contribute to national and global decision-making. The UK Young Academy is a cross-academy partnership between the [seven senior](#) academies operating across the UK and Ireland (Academy of Medical Sciences, British Academy, Learned Society of Wales, Royal Academy of Engineering, Royal Irish Academy, Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the Royal Society).

The UK Young Academy has been established in line with the [Guiding Principles of Young Academies](#) published in 2019: Excellence, Interdisciplinarity, Impact, Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, Responsibility, Sustainability, Independence, Integrity, Transparency and Openness.

Members of the UK Young Academy decide on our work programmes, which spans across all areas of our members' expertise, finding innovative ways of working and sharing knowledge. While we are

independent in our approach, we collaborate with other Young Academies and partner organisations on projects to ensure our output is the best it can be. You can read more about what we have achieved as a Young Academy and our current work on our [activities](#) and [events](#) pages.

## **2. Membership application process**

The UK Young Academy is welcoming applications for its next membership cohort. We are looking for dedicated, driven and dynamic individuals who are committed to collaborating with others from a spectrum of different sectors. Our members are selected from across the UK, from a variety of diverse backgrounds and a range of experiences. They are at the forefront of their field, having demonstrated excellence and leadership skills and will be encouraged to help define the UK Young Academy's activities and contribute to its projects during its initial years.

The application for membership to the UK Young Academy covers an applicant's career (50% of score), a personal statement (25% of score) and how they feel they will contribute to the UK Young Academy (25% of score). 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. This includes involvement in or enthusiasm for innovation and entrepreneurial activity; interdisciplinary working; interest in both global and national professional and societal policy issues and interest or participation in international collaboration.

Alongside the evidence listed above, the selection committee are looking for broader skills and experience that demonstrate a passion for working with others; a capacity for leadership; interest in wider societal issues and a flair for innovative and creative thinking. Membership applications will be reviewed in Summer/Autumn 2026 with the next membership cohort finalised by Early Spring 2027.

## **3. Referees**

As part of the application process, applicants are asked to provide details of two references to support their application. Once they submit their application form via the online application portal, referees will be notified automatically and asked to fill out the online referee form to provide your supporting statement. A template of the referee form can be found on the [UK Young Academy's website](#).

If applicants have made previous applications for membership, they will be given the option to reuse referees and previous supporting statements to support their recent application. Referees will be informed of any action needed on their part during the referee process.

Please note, we require all references to be received by the closing date of Wednesday 29 July 2026, 3pm (BST).

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

## **4. 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 supporting statement may be shared with the UK Young Academy, the Royal Society, and relevant partner academies, and the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) for data monitoring and evaluation purposes.

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

## **5. Submitting your reference**

You can complete your referee form by visiting our online portal. You will receive a personalised link via email once the applicant has submitted their online form with your link to fill out the supporting

referee form. If you do not receive an email after an applicant has submitted their form, and you have checked your spam/junk folders, please get in touch with [enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org](mailto:enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org). It may also be necessary to ensure that emails from the ukyoungacademy.org domain are accepted and marked as trusted by your organisation or institution.

Note, you will not need to register first to access the portal.

We are unable to accept references by email.

## 6. Guide for use of AI in preparing your reference

Artificial intelligence (AI) 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 and reference processes.

That said, we are looking for active and enthusiastic people to join the UK Young Academy who resonate with [our mission and values](#). Your reference is key in helping our reviewers in their assessment of this. Therefore, all examples and statements provided as part of your reference must be truthful and provide an authentic representation of the applicant.

Before submitting your reference, we will ask you to declare whether you have used AI or third-party software at any point in the production of your reference. You will then have an opportunity to outline in what capacity you used it, for transparency (e.g. for language accessibility, to create an initial structure, etc). Your answer to this question will not be used to impact on the acceptance of your reference or the progression of the candidate's 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"><li>Refining thoughts and ideas.</li><li>Checking spelling, grammar and to support clarity of written English.</li><li>Creation of an initial structure or to format a collection of authentic examples.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To inflate or present fictionalised skills or experiences.</li><li>To create generic responses to bulk out a reference.</li></ul>

## 7. Contact information

If you have any questions about the referee process, please contact [enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org](mailto:enquiries@ukyoungacademy.org).

## 8. Question guidance

Please read the following guidance notes carefully as you complete the form. In the table below, each box represents a page of the referee 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.

Data protection	
<b>Data protection*</b>	Please agree to the data protection statement to proceed with your reference.

Use of artificial intelligence or third-party software	
<p>The UK Young Academy recognises that, where used appropriately, artificial intelligence (AI) and third-party software have the potential to enhance written language and can provide equitable access to opportunities.</p> <p>That said, we are looking for active and enthusiastic people to join the UK Young Academy, and all examples and statements provided in each reference should be truthful and an authentic representation of the candidate. Before submitting, 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 reference. Your answer to this question <b>will not</b> impact on the acceptance of your reference or progression of the candidate's application.</p> <p>Please see the <a href="#">referee guidance</a> for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use of AI as part of the referee process.</p>	

SECTION 1: Referee details	
<b>Referee name*</b>	This field should be prepopulated from the name that was submitted on the applicant's application form.
<b>Email address*</b>	<p>This field should be prepopulated from the email address that was submitted on the applicant's application form.</p> <p>All correspondence pertaining to your reference submission will be sent to this address throughout the course of the application process.</p>
<b>Current organisation and job title*</b>	<p>Provide details of your current job title and organisation.</p> <p>Review and complete your personal details accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your reference.</p>

SECTION 2: Your relationship with the Applicant	
<b>Applicant name*</b>	This field should be prepopulated with the name of the applicant who has requested a reference.
<b>In what capacity do you know the applicant?*</b>	Please select the relevant answer from the dropdown to indicate how you know the applicant.

How long have you known the applicant?*	Please state how long you have known the applicant in years and months.
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SECTION 3: Assessment of Applicant	
What is your assessment of the impact and creativity of contributions made by the applicant?*	<p>Please provide a statement on the impact and contributions of the applicant in respect to the selection criteria: i.e., outstanding professional achievement, involvement in or enthusiasm for innovation and entrepreneurial activity; interdisciplinary working; interest in both global and national professional and societal policy issues and interest or participation in international collaboration.</p> <p>Broader skills and experience that demonstrate a passion for working with others; a capacity for leadership; interest in wider societal issues and a flair for innovative and creative thinking.</p> <p>This may include their professional work and any activities beyond their immediate professional remit.</p> <p><b>Plain text only</b> maximum of 500 words.</p>
What is your assessment of the applicant's potential contribution to the UK Young Academy?*	<p>We are looking for members who are passionate and committed to contributing to the UK Young Academy and its work programmes.</p> <p>Please provide a statement on the applicant's potential to support the UK Young Academy in achieving this, should they be selected.</p> <p><b>Plain text only</b> maximum of 500 words.</p>
Declaration for use of AI	
Have you used artificial intelligence (AI) or any third-party software at any point in the preparation of your reference? *	<p>Please indicate whether you have used AI or any other third-party software to enhance your reference.</p> <p>This information is collected for transparency and <b>will not</b> impact on the progression of an application or acceptance of your reference.</p>
If yes, please provide brief details of how you have used AI to complete your application *	Word count 100
Confirmation	
Confirmation*	Please agree to the confirmations to submit your reference.