



Employer Audit 2026

Introduction

The **5% Club Employer Audit** is the major employer benchmarking programme that recognises the UK's leading employers of apprentices, graduates & degree course placement students, with **accredited membership** of **The 5% Club**.

It provides invaluable benchmarking information for apprenticeship managers, graduate recruiters and senior management – and includes exclusive invitations for **The 5% Club Skills Summit**, the Club's flagship one-day employer conference.

The Employer Audit is produced annually, in partnership with **High Fliers Research**.



Questionnaire for Participating Employers

Employers taking part in **The 5% Club Employer Audit** in 2026 will use an **on-line entry form** to answer the following **10 questions** about their employment of graduates, apprentices and degree placement students, and their future recruitment plans.

Unless stated otherwise, the 'census point' for the questions is taken to be 31st July 2026.

1. What is the total number of full-time equivalent employees currently employed by your organisation in the UK?

2. a) How many of the following does your organisation currently employ in the UK?

Graduates (on formal training & development programmes)

England

Level 2 Intermediate Apprentices Level 3 Advanced Apprentices Level 4-7 Higher or Degree Apprentices

Scotland

Modern Apprentices Foundation Apprentices Graduate Level Apprentices

Wales

Foundation Apprentices Apprentices Higher or Degree Apprentices

Northern Ireland

Level 2 Apprentices Level 3 Apprentices Higher Level Apprenticeships

Degree course placement students (paid roles usually lasting 6 or 12 months)



Please give the total number currently employed in each category. For example, if you have a two-year graduate development scheme, include the combined number of graduates in both years of the scheme.

Please note that 'graduates' refers to those recruited onto a formal graduate training & development programme, not general direct-entry employees who have a university qualification.

b) How many of the following does your organisation currently employ (or has over the last 12 months)?

Summer internship or work placement undergraduates (paid roles, usually lasting 8-12 weeks)

HND work placement students

Cadetships (paid roles, usually lasting 6 months or longer)

T-Level work placement students

Apprentices on apprenticeship units (introduced in April 2026)

c) How many other 'earn and learn' employees (if any) does your organisation currently employ?

Other 'earn and learn' programmes (typically lasting 6 months or longer and including at least 4 hours of formal training per week) *Please give details*

3. a) Which of these other employment schemes and programmes do you support or provide?

- Work experience for schools or sixth form colleges
- Traineeships
- Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)
- Higher Vocational Qualifications (HVQs)
- Skills Bootcamps
- Introductory 'taster' courses for first-year university students

b) Which of the following types of outreach does your organisation do for its recruitment and employment (eg. presentations, talks, careers fairs, emails, targeted promotions, sponsoring activities etc)?

- Schools & sixth form colleges
- Universities
- Further education (FE) colleges
- Armed Forces veterans

4. a) How many graduates started work at your organisation over the last 12 months (between 1st August 2025 and 31st July 2026)?

b) How many graduates do you think will start work at your organisation in the next 12 months (between 1st August 2026 and 31st July 2027)?

c) What do you think the outlook is for graduates for the following year (1st August 2027 to 31st July 2028)?

- we are likely to have more graduates join our organisation than in 2026-2027
- it is likely to be similar to 2026-2027
- we are likely to have fewer graduates join our organisation than in 2026-2027
- don't know

d) Are you planning to introduce any new graduate programmes in 2026-2027 or beyond, if so what will they be?

5. a) How many apprentices started apprenticeships at your organisation in the last 12 months (between 1st August 2025 and 31st July 2026)?

England

Level 2 Intermediate Apprentices Level 3 Advanced Apprentices Level 4-7 Higher or Degree Apprentices

Scotland

Modern Apprenticeships Foundation Apprenticeships Graduate Level Apprenticeships

Wales

Foundation Apprenticeship Apprenticeship Higher or Degree Apprenticeship

Northern Ireland

Level 2 Apprenticeship NI Level 3 Apprenticeship NI Higher Level Apprenticeships

b) How many apprentices do you think will start apprenticeships at your organisation in the next 12 months (between 1st August 2026 and 31st July 2027)?

England

Level 2 Intermediate Apprentices Level 3 Advanced Apprentices Level 4-7 Higher or Degree Apprentices

Scotland

Modern Apprenticeships Foundation Apprenticeships Graduate Level Apprenticeships

Wales

Foundation Apprenticeship Apprenticeship Higher or Degree Apprenticeship

Northern Ireland

Level 2 Apprenticeship NI Level 3 Apprenticeship NI Higher Level Apprenticeships

c) What do you think the outlook is for apprenticeships for the following year (from 1st August 2027 to 31st July 2028)?

- we are likely to have more new apprentices than in 2026-2027
- it is likely to be similar to 2026-2027
- we are likely to have fewer new apprentices than in 2026-2027
- don't know

d) Are you planning to introduce any new apprenticeships in 2026-2027 or beyond, if so what will they be?

6. a) What proportion of the graduates currently employed by your organisation are the following?

Gender – Men, Women, Non-binary

Ethnic Background – Black, Asian and minority ethnic

Sexuality – LGBTQ+

Age – 19-24, 25+

Disabilities – Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD)

Social Mobility – From low income family, care-leavers

b) What proportion of the apprentices currently employed by your organisation are the following?

Gender – Men, Women, Non-binary

Ethnic Background – Black, Asian and minority ethnic

Sexuality – LGBTQ+

Age – 16-18, 19-24, 25+

Disabilities – Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD)

Social Mobility – From low income family, care-leavers



Low-income families are usually defined as those where school-age children receive free school meals or the family has received Income Support.

- 7. How does your organisation assure the quality of its graduate training & development programmes, apprenticeships and degree course student placements?**
- 8. a) What proportion of your graduates typically finish your graduate training & development programmes and progress into a permanent role with your organisation?**
- % of graduates who finish training & development programme
- % of graduates who progress into a permanent role
- b) What are the main reasons that your graduates don't finish their training & development?**
- 9. a) What proportion of your apprentices typically finish their apprenticeships and progress onto another apprenticeship or a permanent role with your organisation?**
- % of apprentices who finish apprenticeships
- % of apprentices who progress to further apprenticeships or a permanent role
- b) What are the main reasons that your apprentices don't finish their apprenticeships?**
- 10. Which of the following national awards or recognition has your organisation received or achieved as an employer of graduates, apprentices or degree course placement students in the last three years?**
- National Apprenticeship & Skills Awards
 - The Sunday Times Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers
 - The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers
 - Sunday Times Best Companies to Work For
 - UK's Best Workplaces
 - The 5% Club National Employer 'Earn & Learn' Awards
 - Investors in People
 - B Corp Certification
 - Youth Employment's Good Youth Employment Charter
 - The Times Top 50 Employers for Women
 - Social Mobility Employer Index
 - Stonewall Top 100 Employers
 - Inclusive Companies Awards
 - Armed Forces Covenant / Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (Gold, Silver or Bronze)
 - Care Leaver Covenant
 - other national awards or recognition that your organisation has received for its recruitment, employment and training & development of graduates, apprentices or degree course placement students *Please give details*