



Department for
Business & Trade

The King's Awards for Enterprise

Creating a Strong Application

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Assessment process – brief overview

- ❖ Each application is assessed independently by two assessors from highly experienced and diverse teams.
- ❖ For Innovation and Promoting Opportunity, assessors evaluate the quality of a programme, the extent to which it is embedded and its impact. E.g. on the market (innovation), or the people it has helped (promoting opportunity).
- ❖ Assessors can review applicants' published information, like websites and Companies House information, but cannot contact the company directly.
- ❖ Moderators check for anomalies and variance between assessors, ensuring a consensus outcome.
- ❖ Moderators can ask for clarifications through the King's Awards Office (KAO), who contacts the applicant.
- ❖ After shortlisting, due diligence checks are conducted by other government organisations (HMRC, HSE, DWP etc)
- ❖ The shortlist is presented to the Award panel for decision.
- ❖ Constructive feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants.
- ❖ There is a close liaison between the assessment teams and the KAO throughout the process.



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Tips for a strong application:

Overview

- ❖ Applicants must: meet the eligibility requirements (as per the King's Awards gov.uk site); be a viable business of any size with two or more employees; and have a good, continuous compliance record.
- ❖ Environmental, Social Governance practices – does the business act responsibly?
- ❖ Preparation - read through the whole form before starting to fill it in
- ❖ Assessors want to understand the journey. Tell your **story** clearly and passionately, and support it with 'evidence' - vision, implementation, facts, an inspirational individual, challenges overcome, and company ethos
- ❖ Answer the questions – each one has guidance notes.
- ❖ “Answer it well, answer it once” - refer to a previous answer if appropriate, to avoid repetition
- ❖ SMEs: don't be put off by questions you might feel are for larger organisations. Answer to the extent you can
- ❖ When shortlisting, Assessors look for reasons to 'recommend' or 'reserve' applications for the judging panel in January
- ❖ If, at first, you don't succeed, **please try again!**



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Tips for a strong application – Innovation

Tell the story of the innovation

- ❖ Be sure to explain what the innovation is, how it was developed, the challenges overcome, and why it is better than what went before.
- ❖ Be clear and descriptive - Use a reasonable level of technical detail, avoiding jargon, acronyms and marketing waffle
- ❖ Each question addresses a key element of the innovation process that helps write the story
- ❖ Explain the innovation's non-commercial value to the business and its benefits to customers, end users, etc.
- ❖ Support claims made: quantify, evidence, or provide testimonials
- ❖ Demonstrate commercial success
 - ❖ Make sure it is evident that the innovation has made an impact. (If the impact is not evident in the figures, explain in the narrative)
 - ❖ Greater flexibility - Applicants can submit between two and five years' commercial success
 - ❖ Almost half of innovation applications fail because the financial information provided does not demonstrate commercial success.
 - ❖ Sense check figures. If sales of the innovation are greater than total company sales – something is wrong



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Tips for a strong application – International Trade

Criteria that must be met for an application to proceed

- ❖ A good, clear and accurate description of the company's business
- ❖ Evidence of sustained substantial growth in international trade.
- ❖ There is no “pass mark” in terms of monetary value of international trade, the percentage of the business in international trade or the percentage growth in international trade.
- ❖ Each business is different, each sector is different and the size and nature of the business makes a difference

Your story:

- ❖ Why is penetration of a particular market an achievement? E.g. are you the first, leading, fastest growing UK exporter in this market?
- ❖ Why is your performance better than that of competitors?
- ❖ What challenges have affected your trade and how have you overcome them?



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Eligibility - Promoting Opportunity (through Social Mobility)

The Promoting Opportunity Award has been refocussed to recognise:

- ❖ Businesses with a social mobility programme or intervention
- ❖ Subsidiaries of business with a social mobility focus
- ❖ Training providers/"core activity" social mobility entities making a joint application with a business or making an application about a programme for their own workforce
- ❖ Not-for-profit businesses, social enterprises and charities are welcome to apply.
- ❖ The applicant must have supported people from disadvantaged backgrounds in improving their job skills and chances of finding work.
- ❖ The application should be clear about what type of business is applying and what programme is being delivered.



Tips for a strong application – Promoting Opportunity

Your story:

- ❖ Explain how and why the programme developed, the context and rationale
- ❖ Be clear and specific about the targeted groups being supported
- ❖ Describe precisely what the programme offers and how you have supported individuals or groups from disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their job skills and chances of finding work.

- ❖ This includes doing one or more of the following for at least two years:
 - ❖ Providing work experience or careers advice
 - ❖ Mentoring
 - ❖ Offering interview and job-related training
 - ❖ Ensuring your recruitment process is open to everyone

- ❖ Talk about KPIs
 - ❖ Explain clearly what the programme sets out to deliver
 - ❖ Evaluate and demonstrate the **impact** of your initiative
 - ❖ Show both hard numbers and soft indicators, strengths and developments

- ❖ Highlight the transformative impact of the programme on individuals and the organisation



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Tips for a strong application: Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development

- ❖ Links to UN SDGs help assessors and company frame responses
- ❖ Ideal situation is to have credible plans for Net Zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions.
 - ❖ COP26 accelerated this process, raising awareness, providing science-based targets.
- ❖ Big companies need to have tackled Scope 3 emissions and have genuine steps to be sustainable and reduce energy emissions
- ❖ 'Circular Economy' – can be challenging: what barriers have you found
- ❖ Awareness of the need to reduce plastics use – accept difficulty in finding acceptable and affordable substitutes.
- ❖ Benchmarking – we encourage benchmarking and to show how you do it
- ❖ 'B-Corp' status is nice but not essential – shows company is on right track.



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Feedback

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- ❖ Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be informed in late March 2025, and the announcement will be on 6 May
- ❖ The time between the application cut-off and notification feels long. During this time, there are numerous stages of assessment, shortlisting, due diligence by OGDs, judging panels, and review recommendations by the PM and HMTK
- ❖ This can be quite hard for unsuccessful applicants – unfortunately, we can't tell unsuccessful applicants earlier as it would be easy to identify successful applicants.
- ❖ Formative feedback is provided with results via the applicant dashboard and can be discussed
- ❖ Remember - If, at first, you don't succeed, **please try again!**

