



Queen's Awards for Enterprise and for Voluntary Service

Queen's Awards for Enterprise

Why apply for an Award?

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise are

- a badge of recognition of an outstanding British brand: a "royal seal of approval" as an exceptional UK business, now including Social Enterprises (see below). Queen's Awards for Enterprise are the highest official awards for UK businesses
- a statement that what the business does is genuinely distinctive in its market-place, marking out the business above and beyond its competition. The Award is likely to increase sales and growth: for example the great majority of winners in the International Trade category have attributed increased sales directly to winning the Award
- a very good promotional tool, with strong media and broader PR potential. With the Awards a business has the right to fly the Queen's Award flag at its main office and to use the QA emblem on its marketing materials
- a boost to staff morale and a good reason to celebrate: the Awards are usually presented by the Lord Lieutenant at the premises of the winners, and representatives of the winning businesses are invited to a Royal reception
- a significant help in the recruitment of new staff: Award winners confirm that the prestige of the Award enhances the status of the business in the recruitment market at all levels.

Each Award category has additional entry criteria.

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise are valid for 5 years.

What are the categories of Queen's Awards for Enterprise?

The Queen's Awards for Enterprise have four categories, namely for

- innovation
- international Trade
- sustainable development (based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals)
- promoting opportunity through social mobility

Who can apply for a Queen's Award for Enterprise?

Any business, social enterprise or non-profit organisation can apply for any of the categories.

To be eligible for an Enterprise award the organisation must be based in the UK, have at least two full-time employees (or full-time equivalents), file its company tax returns with HMRC, be a self-contained organisation that markets its own products or services under its own management, and demonstrate a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility. Although some very large businesses have achieved high profile for having won a Queen's Award, most of the award winners are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

The applications process

An application form is available online. It is quite detailed and requires some investment of time to complete. Applications must be submitted between May and September each year. Shortlisted organisations are notified in October, and in November these shortlisted organisations must submit verified commercial figures. The winners are notified in March and are officially announced in April.



Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service

Why apply for a Voluntary Service Award?

The Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service are

- an acknowledgement of the excellence of the organisation in encouraging volunteer participation in the activities of the organisation, in training its volunteers and in managing its volunteer programme. They are the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK
- a useful statement of the organisation's focus on volunteers, thereby strengthening the organisation's attractiveness in its recruitment of volunteers
- a mark that the work of the organisation, through its volunteers, is distinctive in relation to other organisations active in the same or similar fields
- a boost to the morale of the whole organisation, including its volunteers but also those others who work in the organisation who may have developed the volunteering programme
- a helpful support in fundraising and in dealings with others: donors, charitable foundations and others recognise the Award as one signifying particular distinction and excellence.

The Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service are valid without time restriction.

Who can apply for a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service?

Applicants for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service are likely to be non-profit organisations, but any business or social enterprise can apply which has a strong volunteer component.

To be eligible for a Voluntary Service award the organisation must comprise a minimum of two people. It should have been operating with an exceptional group of volunteers for at least three years, and its volunteers should have taken the initiative to create, lead and drive forward the work of the organisation in a way that is truly distinctive and excellent. The Voluntary Service award is judged on the quality of the volunteers' contribution to the work of the organisation and on the quality of the volunteer support programme. The Award is not judged on the quality of the organisation itself or on what it actually does.

The applications process

A nomination form is available online. The "nominator" must be independent of the volunteer group being nominated but should have good knowledge of the volunteer group's work. The nomination must be submitted with two letters of support from people who are also independent of the organisation. The form must be submitted from April, with a closing date in September. Nominations are reviewed by local assessment panels: this is a detailed review of all aspects of the organisation's volunteer support, including its policies and processes for volunteers, and is normally carried out by two Deputy Lieutenants coordinated by the Lord Lieutenant. The assessment panels decide on the ones to be sent to the National Awards Committee. This Committee makes its recommendations to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which sends a final list to the Queen for approval. Winners are announced in early June.