



Call for Contributions

UVAC's 2026 National Conference: *Reimagining HE and Skills: Policy, Place, Innovation and Growth* – 19th November 2026

Deadline for Submissions – 31st July 2026

About the Conference

Join us on **Thursday 19th November 2026 for UVAC's National Conference**, where leaders, practitioners, employers and providers will come together to network and to explore one of the most pressing questions facing the sector: how do we reimagine higher education and skills amid rapid policy change and growing opportunity? This question has never been more relevant as we navigate the potential for further changes to policy following the anticipated appointment of a new Labour Prime Minister.

The higher technical and professional skills landscape is undergoing fundamental change. Shifts in apprenticeship funding policy, the withdrawal of support for some Level 6 and 7 apprenticeships, and the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), alongside the rising importance of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and the government's ambitions around growth, devolution and place, are creating both significant challenges and genuine opportunities for universities, colleges, employers and providers across England.

UVAC's 2026 National Conference is a must-attend event for those leading, delivering and shaping the future of higher skills. The conference brings together leaders, practitioners, employers and providers for a day of practical, outcomes-focused discussion, innovation and forward-looking action.

Invitation to Submit

We are seeking proposals for workshop and presentation sessions that go beyond diagnosis and move into action. What is working? What could change? What does the future look like for post-18 skills?

We particularly welcome contributions from a diverse range of voices, whether you are leading institutional transformation, employing a skilled workforce, delivering on the ground, conducting cutting-edge research, or developing commercial solutions to address challenges.

We are particularly interested in contributions that highlight how institutions, employers and providers are responding to the current policy environment and what practical, evidence-based

approaches are emerging across the sector. For example, how providers are adapting, what employers need, where innovation is developing, and what the data tells us about outcomes for learners and communities. Contributions may draw on research, practice, policy analysis or direct delivery experience.

We welcome contributions that align to the conference theme, including:

- Institutional responses to the withdrawal of some Level 6 and 7 apprenticeship funding: what providers are doing now?
- Alternative funding and delivery models: fee-funded, modular, employer co-investment and blended approaches
- Curriculum innovation: designing provision that meets emerging sector and labour market needs
- The Lifelong Learning Entitlement: early thinking, institutional planning and employer engagement
- Higher Technical Qualifications in practice: employer engagement, quality, take-up and lessons learned
- Skills England and local growth plans: implications for HE and FE providers
- Place-based approaches: how combined authorities and devolved bodies are shaping skills provision
- Research and evidence: measuring economic and social return from higher technical provision
- Employer voice: what businesses need from higher education and skills providers right now
- Supporting underrepresented groups: mature learners, career changers and those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Progression pathways: from T Levels and HTQs through to degree-level work-based learning
- Professional Solutions: how systems and professional solutions providers are supporting employers and providers to respond to challenges

Submission Guidance

What to Submit

Please provide the following as part of your expression of interest:

- Title of your proposed session
- Type of session (see below)
- A brief overview of your proposal with no more than 400 words summarising your subject, approach and key messages. You should clearly indicate what session format you are proposing to deliver (see below for more information).

- Name(s), role(s) and organisation(s) of all presenters
- A short biography for each presenter (up to 50 words each)

Session Types

Submissions can be for any of the following session formats:

Interactive Workshop – 50 minutes

These sessions are designed to be active. Whether you want to run a round-table discussion, host a debate, crowdsource ideas from the room or walk delegates through a practical 'how to', we want to hear from you. What matters is that delegates leave having done something, not just listened to something. We ask that at least half of your session is interactive.

Presentation – 25 minutes

These sessions will deliver a focused, maximum 25-minute overview of a specific area e.g. a project, piece of research, case study, system, process, problem etc. We're interested in the challenge or opportunity, how you are approaching it and what others can take away and use.

Two presentations will be paired in each breakout slot, with time built in for questions and discussion within the room.

Review and Selection

All submissions will be reviewed by the UVAC Conference Programme Committee. We will notify applicants of the outcome of their submission by w/c 10th August 2026. We are committed to building a programme that reflects the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

How to Submit

Please send your expression of interest (see what to submit above) by email to:
conference@uvac.ac.uk

Use the subject line: **Call for Contributions UVAC National Conference 2026**

The deadline for submissions is 31st July 2026.