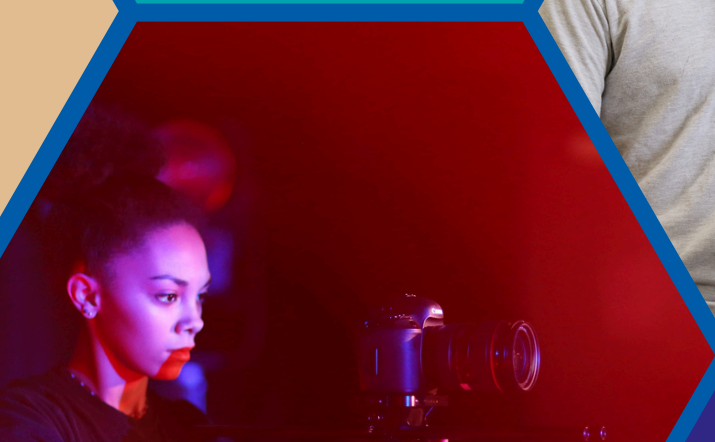


Baker Dearing
Educational Trust

Support for UTCs

2026-2027



Contents

→	<u>Who we are</u>	4
→	<u>Support for UTCs</u>	5
→	<u>Impact</u>	12
→	<u>Tailored support for 2026-27</u>	15
→	<u>Baker Award</u>	26
→	<u>Discounted services and free activities</u>	27
→	<u>Events</u>	28



“Talent is everywhere, but opportunity isn’t. Having witnessed the transformative power of work experience, T Levels, and apprenticeships at Amazon, I know how important it is that young people are given opportunities to develop their skills and build confidence for the workplace. We have seen the benefits of institutions offering technical qualifications alongside real-life project-based learning, developing the skills that employers are looking for. That is why we are so proud to work with Baker Dearing and the UTC network.”

– John Boumphrey, Vice President, UK & Ireland Country Manager, Amazon



Who we are



The UTC programme is now fast approaching its 20th year. Yet I remain impressed by the astonishing achievements of UTC students, staff, governors and supporters. Our young people continue to achieve incredible destinations such as sought-after degree apprenticeships, top technical university courses, and employment, despite the appalling youth unemployment situation.

That is not to mention the incredible success that students achieve while they are still in class, with the support of staff. The UTC workforce continues to excel in preparing young people with a high-quality, employer-led technical education. And their work is getting noticed. Several of our UTC principals and CEOs have won or been shortlisted for prestigious regional and national awards. These, and the student achievements, are testament to a UTC programme that reaches ever greater heights.

Lord Baker, Life President

With the Prime Minister announcing new school-level technical pathways, and the opening of a new UTC Sleeve in Barrow-in-Furness – with another on the way in Manchester, on top of the existing sleeve in Bristol – this is the UTC programme's moment in the sun.

As our CEO, Kate, highlighted at the summer conference, UTCs have captured a zeitgeist that is focused on youth employment, a broader curriculum, and technological change. UTCs and UTC Sleeves, with Baker Dearing's support, are the answer to all of that. That the government's new pathways are based on the MBacc, which is supported by a Baker Dearing-designed award and follows similar lines to the UTC Sleeve, is further proof.

We would not be able to act on that without your support, through the UTC licence fee, and that of our funders, whose support helps us enhance staff CPD, student enrichment, and our lobbying of stakeholders. So Baker Dearing would like to thank you, the UTCs, and our funders for this vital support.

Stephen Phipson CBE, Chairman



Support for UTCs | Page 4

Support for UTCs

“Baker Dearing provides a level of support that is both practical and deeply valued. As a UTC leader, it is reassuring to know there is a team that truly understands our unique model and the opportunities and challenges that come with it. The access to expert advice, shared best practice and strong professional networks is invaluable, helping us to expand our provision so more young people may access transformative technical education. Baker Dearing creates a genuine sense of partnership, enabling UTC leaders to feel supported and confident.”

– Angela Murphy, Principal,
Silverstone UTC



Helping UTCs achieve high standards

Baker Dearing has a dedicated team of experienced professionals who provide direct support to UTCs and also engage specialists from across the UTC network and beyond when necessary. The help offered is tailored to the unique needs of UTCs, particularly in areas where such expertise is scarce within the broader education sector. The charity's focus is on improving technical education, increasing student recruitment, and fostering partnerships with employers and universities. Support also includes induction and mentoring for new principals, as well as advice on educational, leadership, and governance issues.

Most UTCs receive customised assistance from the Baker Dearing team or from experts brokered and quality-assured by them. This can involve internal reviews, training for new and potential principals, and support in preparing business cases for additional funding. The charity also offers and brokers tailored support and training to improve education standards, particularly within technical specialisms, and to prepare UTCs for Ofsted inspections.





To ensure UTC teachers are experts at the forefront of their specialisms, the Charity runs networks and programmes for professional development in engineering, health and science, digital skills, as well as creative media. Supported by employers and universities, each specialist network benefits from at least one in-person CPD event. The engineering network, in particular, last year benefited from multiple days of in-person training at leading engineering firms, supported by the Gene Haas Foundation. The programme is also receiving generous support from the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. These networks also have access to shared resources on the Baker Dearing website and training to enhance their T Level delivery, which is supported by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Support to deliver V Levels will be rolled out nearer the qualifications' first teaching dates.

Due to the specific needs of UTCs, we also operate networks for staff working on, for example, employer engagement, marketing and recruitment, and literacy. This year we will also launch a new 'Literacy for Engineering' qualification, in partnership with UTCs and EAL

These networks meet regularly online and face-to-face, facilitating expertise-sharing and valuable networking with employers, universities, and other supporting organisations. Baker Dearing has also established robust data analysis and reporting capabilities to meet the particular needs of UTCs. More information on how this data offer will be changed is included on page 19.

All these efforts are rooted in a commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration within the network. Regular dialogue with UTCs helps Baker Dearing stay responsive to emerging needs. By drawing on insights from trustees, partners, and specialist practitioners, the charity ensures its support remains relevant and impactful, adapting to new challenges as they arise. Its central team actively seeks feedback from all stakeholders, using this input to refine services and drive innovation in technical education.

Fostering a community across the UTC network

A central goal of Baker Dearing is to strengthen the UTC community. The charity organises a wide range of events for staff, governors, and students, and provides regular communication, advice, and guidance to all UTCs.

This year has also seen the emergence of new regions groups for neighbouring UTCs. There are groups for the south, midlands, and north, helping support one another and work on topics such as the roll-out of V Levels. If you are interested in finding about the groups, please contact their leader:

- South: James Doherty, Principal, UTC Portsmouth
- Midlands: Dan Locke-Wheaton, CEO and Executive Principal, Aston University Engineering Academy
- North: Hannah Wilson, Principal, UTC Leeds

Last year also saw the establishment of the UTC Alumni Board. This brings together former UTC students to help shape the future of the UTC movement by sharing their experiences, championing technical education and inspiring the next generation of learners.

Building on the successful establishment of the Alumni Board, Baker Dearing will continue to strengthen alumni engagement during 2026-27 by creating more opportunities for former students to reconnect, share their expertise and support the wider network.



"The regional groups are a fantastic innovation that will help UTCs better support one another. But it is only possible due to the positive, collegiate community that Baker Dearing has nurtured over the years."

– Hannah Wilson, Principal,
UTC Leeds

The Alumni Board will strengthen connections between former students, creating opportunities to engage with one another, employer partners and UTCs through networking, ambassador activity, employer engagement and strategic collaboration. This collaborative approach will ensure alumni voices continue to influence the development of technical education.

By creating a strong and connected alumni community, Baker Dearing is building a lasting network of advocates who will champion technical education, support UTCs, inspire future students and strengthen relationships between education and industry.

The WhatsApp groups we maintain for various groups within the UTC community have provided a reliable and useful platform for staff and chairs to network and receive information. This year, we created a new WhatsApp community to bring these groups together under one umbrella, so staff can explore other groups and we can improve information sharing across the network.

We have also created new groups to support growing areas of concern and provision for UTCs. This includes a group for UTC SENDCos and staff members concerned with specialist provision, that is being led by Baker Dearing and Waterfront UTC Principal Fiona McLean.



The full list of groups in the WhatsApp community is as follows:

- UTC Principals
- UTC Chairs
- UTC Vice/Asst Principals
- UTC Business Managers
- UTC Marketing Leads
- UTC Employer Engagement
- UTC Data Managers
- UTC T Level Coordinators
- UTC Engineering Network
- UTC Engineering Technicians
- UTC Careers Advisor
- UTC DSLs
- UTC SEND
- UTC Digital Skills Network
- UTC Health Care & Health Science Network
- UTC Science Network
- UTC Creative Media Network
- UTC Year 9 Network
- UTC English and Literacy Group
- Southern regional network
- Baker Award

Shaping the policy, regulatory, and media environment for UTCs



This has been another successful year for building Baker Dearing's profile and achieving on policy objectives. This culminated in the announcement over summer that 14-year-olds across the country will be given access to technical education and employer engagement opportunities at school – a replication and vindication of our successful UTC model. We await details on how this policy will be implemented, funded, and scheduled. But we intend for UTCs to be at the forefront of developing this new provision, as the programme has almost 20 years' experience delivering high-quality, employer-led technical education for young people

Another incredible high point this year was the second Doncaster UTC receiving approval from this government, having been originally approved under the previous Conservative one. Additionally, a new UTC Sleeve has been funded and approved for Barrow-in-Furness and will open this September. The UTC programme also continues to receive attention in the Houses of Parliament.





This is due to Baker Dearing's continued engagement with MPs and peers, partly through the policy group of UTC constituency MPs. Each of these achievements highlight the value of UTCs to young people and the economy.

Following the change in Prime Minister, from Keir Starmer MP to Andy Burnham MP, and various changes to ministerial appointments, Baker Dearing has moved quickly to engage and develop links with the new government. Given the ever-changing political landscape, continued advocacy is essential so that UTCs maintain a strong voice within government, the media, and among all stakeholders such as exam boards and Ofsted. This has been especially the case with the Young People and Work report, led by Alan Milburn and due out in autumn.

Frequent dialogue with the Regions Groups, termly meetings with the DfE team, and ongoing engagement with Ofsted ensure that UTCs will continue to thrive in a supportive environment.

Baker Dearing receives no direct funding from the DfE; activities are financed through the UTC Licence Fee, grants, and commercial work, with the aim to raise and spend at least 50% more than the Licence Fee income. Over 85% of funds are directed to services for UTC students, staff, and governors. A full summary of services is available on the following pages. Cost savings are also realised through remote working and negotiated service discounts, delivering excellent value to UTCs.

“Baker Dearing's support has been essential in expanding robotics provision from UTC Warrington to across the network. Its advocacy has also ensured we have made a strong start with the new Prime Minister and Education Secretary.”

– Jane Fletcher, Chief Executive, Aldridge Education



Impact



"Working with UTCs for the Health Tech Challenge was an inspiring experience. This was an excellent opportunity for students to develop products that relate to real life health challenges faced by children and young people. The drive, skill, and engagement that the students exhibited in response to this challenge gives us tremendous hope for the future. We are eager to work with Baker Dearing to deliver this hugely valuable experience again."

– Jude Stone, Programme Director -
National Centre Child Health
Technology, Sheffield Children's NHS
Foundation Trust

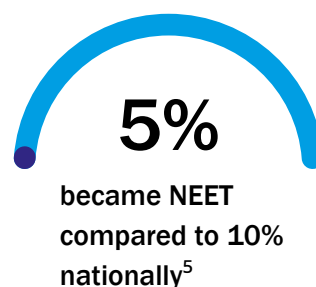
Impact on young people

The strongest measure of Baker Dearing's impact is the success of the UTC programme, and the best measure of their success is their destinations. UTC leavers consistently achieve stronger destinations than national averages. In 2025:



18% of UTC leavers progressed to apprenticeships, compared to 6% nationally⁵

50% of those apprenticeships are at a higher or degree level compared to a third nationally⁵



72% of leavers going to university started a STEM course, compared to 42% nationally⁵

UTCs also deliver particularly strong outcomes for students who may face additional barriers.



89% of leavers with SEND were in sustained destinations in 2025, compared to 79% nationally⁵



89% of leavers from a disadvantaged background were in sustained destinations in 2025, compared to 79% nationally⁵

These outcomes demonstrate the power of combining technical learning with employer engagement.

Student feedback also highlights the value of employer-guided learning:



88%
of Year 9/10 students want employer experiences such as projects, talks, and work experience⁶



66% of Year 9/10s said their attendance improved at the UTC compared to their old school⁶



85% of UTC students would recommend their UTC to a friend⁶

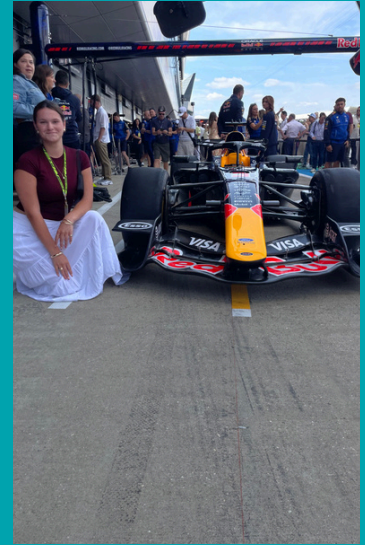
⁵ National average for Level 3 leavers from mainstream schools and colleges (summer 2023 - latest); ⁶ UTC student survey, 2025

Alumni stories

Sophie Collins this year progressed from Silverstone UTC to a materials science and engineering degree at the University of Sheffield after she says her interest in the area was “sparked” at the UTC.

The 18-year-old said: “My experience at UTC has been enlightening. So many new opportunities have been created that have helped me to explore engineering on a deeper level and have sparked my interest in the science of materials.”

During her two years at the UTC, she took advantage of its strong motorsport connections by engaging with Silverstone Circuit, which owns the racetrack on which the UTC is based.



UTC Portsmouth’s Miraaj Choudhury will be progressing to an engineering degree apprenticeship at the UTC’s long-time employer partner QinetiQ after completing his engineering T Level industry placement with the firm.

During the placement, Miraaj worked on a new toolbox design and a digitalised Battleships game. He also completed a placement with aerospace company Eaton and infrastructure firm Waterman Aspen.

“UTC Portsmouth has truly showed me a taste of STEM and has helped me build a close relationship to potential employers and has built my confidence with teachers with industry backgrounds,” Miraaj said.

Sam Freeman joined Greater Peterborough UTC as part of its first Year 7 cohort and has now progressed onto an apprenticeship with Caterpillar Perkins, after passing his GCSEs and achieving a Distinction Star in engineering.

During his time at the UTC, Sam, who has an education, health, and care plan, took part in business partner days and employer engagement activities which allowed him to grow increasingly comfortable speaking with industry professionals and exploring career pathways.

His journey demonstrates what can be achieved by starting technical education earlier in a young person’s life.



Tailored support for UTCs, 2026-27

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- A photograph of a man in a dark suit and light blue tie standing in front of a large digital screen. The screen displays a blue background with white text and graphics. The text on the screen includes 'Summer conference 2026', '14th July 2026, Nottingham', and 'Baker Dearing Educational Trust'. The man is holding a small white card. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders are visible, sitting at a table. The room has large windows with a view of a modern building and greenery outside. A blue hexagonal graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing a list of bullet points.
- Engineering CPD programme
 - Data package
 - Preparation for Ofsted inspection
 - Leadership development programmes
 - Teacher recruitment
 - Technical qualifications and curriculum development
 - Employer engagement
 - Policy and lobbying
 - The Baker Award for Employability



Engineering CPD programme

During 2025-26, the programme engaged 89% of UTCs and supported 95 engineering teachers and technicians through a comprehensive programme of professional development. Activities included four industry insight days, five engineering masterclasses, a national conference and participation in the Haas Technical Educators Conference (HTEC) in Alabama. The programme was delivered in partnership with leading employers and organisations committed to strengthening technical education. Alongside staff development, the programme also delivered a range of student-facing engineering events, helping to inspire the next generation of engineering talent. This included a higher engineering education experience day delivered in partnership with Nottingham Trent University.

Alongside these activities, the UTC Engineering Network WhatsApp community grew by 120%, and a new national network for engineering technicians was established, strengthening collaboration and the sharing of expertise across the UTC network.

Building on these achievements, the continued generous support of the Gene Haas Foundation and the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 will enable Baker Dearing to expand its engineering CPD offer during 2026-27 through a coordinated programme of employer engagement, professional learning and peer support.

Much of this will be delivered through Regional Hubs – in the north, midlands, and south – making it easier to access high-quality CPD, build local employer partnerships and collaborate with neighbouring UTCs.

The programme comprises four complementary strands: Excellence in Engineering and Manufacturing, Peer Mentoring, the Professional Learning Hub and Student Ignite.





The Excellence in Engineering and Manufacturing strand will provide engineering teachers and technicians with two national online sessions, five industry visits in each region, two regional pedagogy sessions and a national event.

The Peer Mentoring programme enables engineering teachers and technicians to share expertise, build professional networks, support colleagues at every stage of their careers and strengthen engineering teaching across the UTC movement. The mentoring scheme remains open for sign up until October, and staff can register using the registration form [here](#).

The Professional Learning Hub will extend professional learning beyond individual training events. The platform will provide access to the CPD event calendar, teaching resources, employer-generated content, recorded CPD sessions, webinars and examples of effective practice from across the UTC network. This flexible approach enables teachers to access professional learning at a time that suits them, while ensuring successful practice is shared quickly across the UTC community and professional development resources remain available long after live events have taken place.

The Student Ignite programme will provide UTCs with access to a coordinated programme of engineering competitions, employer-led projects and enrichment opportunities. Delivered in partnership with industry, these activities will enable students to apply their technical knowledge to real-world challenges, develop technical and employability skills, gain a deeper understanding of engineering career pathways and inspire the next generation of engineers.

By combining professional learning, collaboration, digital resources and student enrichment, Baker Dearing is creating a lasting professional learning ecosystem across the UTC network.

“Excellent organisation, lots of varied sessions. Really enjoyed the access we were given to the workshop floor. Great to meet so many people from different areas of the business.”

- Feedback on the Renishaw industry insight day



Data package

Following consultation with UTCs, Baker Dearing is making the following changes to the free data offer to UTCs. No radical change will be implemented in the near future. Baker Dearing will consult with the UTC community on any proposed larger scale changes:

Stage one: Summer term to October 2026

- The contract with Redborne has been terminated. However, Ian Belcher will continue to support Baker Dearing to ensure a smooth transition of data reporting.
- UTCs that wish to continue receiving termly reports will be able to do so throughout the 2026/27 academic year at no cost and through the usual process, supported by Belcher.
- All other data reports, including examination benchmarking, destinations analysis and the student survey, will continue as normal.
- Enhanced examination analyses will be provided once the provisional DfE performance data is released in early October. UTCs will also receive longitudinal analyses of examination outcomes and student destinations.

Stage 2: Post-October 2026

Baker Dearing is currently developing the next phase of our data provision offer and is forming a task and finish group to, over the next year, look at how to improve our data offer and develop a new data package next July. Our ambition is to:

1. Maintain the data package as a free benefit of the UTC and UTC Sleeve Licence.
2. Provide a more interactive and user-friendly reporting experience that reflects the direction of travel across the UTC network.
3. Utilise APIs to automate data collection and significantly reduce the reporting burden on UTCs.
4. Preserve and strengthen the unique evidence base generated through our data package, including timely insights, benchmarking against other UTCs and local contexts, and granular destination tracking (such as specific employers and universities) that is not available through other sources.
5. Enhance the offer further, including more frequent reporting on key indicators such as attendance.

“The Baker Dearing data offer is absolutely vital for demonstrating the value and success of the UTC model to trustees, the Department for Education, and our stakeholders.”

– Dan Locke-Wheaton, CEO & Executive Principal, Aston University STEM Education Academy Trust

Preparation for Ofsted inspection

UTCs have made an excellent start to inspections under the new framework, which awards individual grades for each report area. Of the six UTCs that have been inspected, half have received 'exceptional' judgements in at least one area and six achieved 'strong standard' in at least one area.

We want to continue this incredible performance in the 2026-27, when nearly half of the UTC programme is expected to undergo inspection. All will receive support from Marc Doyle, an experienced Ofsted inspector, UTC principal, and MAT CEO.

Bespoke support will be discussed with each UTC expecting Ofsted within the next academic year. In addition to Marc's expertise, support can be drawn from the Baker Dearing team or brokered from a wider pool of experts.

We request that the UTC principal advises Baker Dearing (via director@bakerdearing.org) as soon as possible following receipt of the Ofsted call announcing the inspection. We are uniquely placed to advise on any previous engagement within the programme with your inspectors and to provide live advice during the inspection process.



“Baker Dearing's support with our Ofsted inspection was absolutely essential. Along with the UTC model and my amazing team, it put us in the best position possible to achieve positive results in every area of the inspection.”

– Claire Plumb, Headteacher, South Devon UTC

Leadership development programme

Running a UTC requires a unique set of skills and knowledge. Each year, our leadership development programmes are tailored around the specific needs of newly appointed principals and senior leaders who have the potential to lead UTCs.



These programmes are bespoke to the needs of the individual, but also allow for group visits to successful UTCs and networking. Typical areas covered are:

- Working with Baker Dearing and the wider UTC community.
- The four distinctive characteristics of UTCs.
- Devising a specialist curriculum.
- Impactful employer engagement.
- Accountability measures in UTCs.
- Securing ambitious destinations for all students.
- Student recruitment: strategy and operation.
- Staff recruitment and retention.
- Financial management in a UTC.
- Good governance in a UTC context.



Teacher recruitment

The UTC SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training), endorsed by Baker Dearing, provides a structured and sustainable approach to attracting, training and retaining specialist teachers who can deliver an industry-aligned curriculum that meets the needs of modern specialist education such as engineering.

The programme recruits graduates with specialisms outside the normalised subjects and provides bespoke teacher training tailored specifically to the UTC model.

More than 60 applications have been received within the first few months of us opening on the Department for Education, with 75% of the 2026 cohort holding engineering degrees. Delivery was established within a matter of months, and nine trainee offers were accepted across the initial delivery hubs at The JCB Academy, UTC Derby Pride Park and Crewe Engineering and Design UTC.

The network continues to expand, with a second hub now developing across the West Midlands with the WMG Academy Trust.

Joining UTC SCITT offers significant benefits for UTCs, including access to engineering-specialist trainees, while also enabling leaders to shape training around their own curriculum and employer partnerships. Participating UTCs also benefit from collaboration with leading institutions across the network and gain the opportunity to contribute to the development of a future Engineering QTS pathway.

For UTCs interested in joining a future hub or hosting trainee teachers, the UTC SCITT team welcomes further discussion and collaboration. Please contact l.berrisford@jcbacademy.com or phone 01889 370041.

Technical qualifications and curriculum development

T Levels, V Levels and Future Technical Pathways

The UTC programme continues to lead the sector in the delivery of technical education. UTCs consistently achieve T Level retention, achievement and progression rates significantly above national averages, demonstrating the strength of the UTC model and its close partnership with employers.

As technical education continues to evolve, Baker Dearing will support UTCs in successfully implementing both T Levels and the emerging V Levels, ensuring that every programme remains employer led, aligned to local and national skills priorities, and prepares young people for sustainable careers, higher education and apprenticeships.

Baker Dearing supports UTCs by:

- Providing strategic advice to UTCs, MATs, employer partners and governing boards on the implementation and growth of T Levels and V Levels.
- Supporting curriculum planning to ensure technical qualifications align with the UTC specialism, employer demand and Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).
- Advising on specialist capital funding opportunities and equipment investment to create industry-standard learning environments.
- Supporting the development, sourcing and quality assurance of high-quality industry placements and employer projects.
- Working with awarding organisations, employers and national partners to improve qualification delivery, staff development and curriculum resources.





- Ensuring employer led projects align with qualification requirements and the Baker Award.
- Leading specialist networks for T Level and V Level leads to share practice, resources and innovation across the UTC programme.
- Keeping UTC leaders informed of policy developments, funding opportunities and curriculum reforms.
- Representing the interests of UTCs with the Department for Education, Skills England, Gatsby, awarding organisations and other national stakeholders.
- Sharing best practice, case studies and performance data to strengthen recruitment, retention and student outcomes.
- Supporting the planning and delivery of T Level Foundation Years and future transition programmes where appropriate.
- Working with higher education providers to strengthen recognition and progression routes from technical qualifications.
- Helping employers develop meaningful work placements, industry projects and progression opportunities.
- Advising on student destinations, ensuring progression to apprenticeships, higher education and skilled employment remains central to UTC success.

Furthermore, Baker Dearing will this year run a pilot programme with the ERA Foundation and The JCB Academy to create new apprenticeship opportunities for young people with local engineering SMEs. This pilot year will involve three UTCs, around 20 apprentices, and at least 14 SME partners.



Employer engagement

The work of the UTC programme and Baker Dearing could not happen without strong employer partnerships. These engage young people in technical education; leading to improved attendance and outcomes. They open doors for students to networking opportunities, work experience, and apprenticeships. They also help fashion young professionals who fill skills gaps and grow our economy.

We are immensely proud to have signed national partnerships with Amazon and Morgan Sindall Infrastructure to deliver coordinated support across the UTC programme and Baker Dearing's portfolio of projects. This has already led to, for example, Amazon leaders joining several UTC boards and to Morgan Sindall Infrastructure providing vital support to the development of the UTC Sleeve in Barrow-in-Furness. Activity which is happening on top of the two employers' existing support for individual UTCs.

Networking and learning opportunities with multiple major engineering and manufacturing employers has also been facilitated through industry insight days as part of our engineering CPD programme (see page 20). The CPD programme, set to expand next year, is possible due to the generous support of the Gene Haas Foundation and Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851.

We will continue to grow and strengthen employer partnerships this year.

“The network of UTCs that span the country creates a wealth of opportunities for our future workforce and provides pupils with important insights into sectors they wouldn't have ordinarily experienced at that point in their education.

“Now working closely with the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, we have been able make sure that important disciplines such as civil engineering, engineering, and infrastructure are included in UTCs' curriculum. We look forward to opportunities provided by the Walney School UTC Sleeve in Barrow-in-Furness.”

– Simon Smith, Managing Director,
Morgan Sindall Infrastructure



Policy and lobbying

Building on a highly successful 2025-26, Baker Dearing enters the new academic year with unprecedented momentum. The year was marked by a significant breakthrough for technical education: the Government's announcement of new technical education pathways for 14-year-olds, a policy development that reflects principles championed by Lord Baker, Lord Dearing and the UTC movement for more than a decade. Alongside this landmark achievement, Baker Dearing secured extensive national media coverage, strengthened relationships across government, and ensured that UTCs remained at the centre of education and skills policy discussions.

During 2025-26, Baker Dearing successfully increased the profile of UTCs through a sustained programme of political engagement. Ministerial visits from senior figures including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Work and Pensions Secretary, Skills Minister, Children's Minister, and a DWP minister showcased the impact of the UTC model. Engagement was further strengthened through the UTC MP Policy Group, parliamentary debates, participation at the Labour Party Conference, Select Committees, and APPGs.

In 2026-27, Baker Dearing's policy and lobbying strategy will focus on ensuring that UTCs and UTC Sleeves are recognised as a key solution to the challenges identified by the Milburn Review and the best means of delivering new school technical pathways. A major programme of communications, public affairs and media activity will position the UTC model as the proven answer to stronger employer engagement, better destinations for young people, and high-quality technical pathways from age 14.

To that end, Baker Dearing has contracted the support of Public First, a high-profile policy, research, opinion and strategy consultancy, to build on our lobbying and media work and help meet the above objectives.

Baker Dearing will maintain close engagement with ministers, parliamentarians, metro mayors and policymakers as education reforms develop under the new government. Baker Dearing CEO Kate Ambrosi and Public Affairs Adviser Nicolas Heslop will be attending the Labour Party Conference. Through thought leadership, stakeholder events and a UTC MP Group roundtable, Baker Dearing will continue making the case for expanded technical education pathways, greater parity between academic and technical learning, and wider adoption of UTC Sleeves.

"I always enjoy my visits to UTCs. UTCs are doing a very good job in providing technical education which then leads on to apprenticeships."

**– Baroness Jacqui Smith,
Minister for Skills, December
2025**



The Baker Award for Employability



The Baker Award celebrates the unique strengths of UTCs by rewarding students who demonstrate the key skills, knowledge and attributes employers are looking for. It highlights the very best of technical education and helps young people stand out in a competitive jobs market.

UTCs and UTC Sleeves are encouraged to sign up, as participation is a free benefit included in the licence fee.

For 2026/27, the Baker Award moves to a simpler, three-tier structure: Bronze, Silver and Gold Award. Each tier builds on the last, giving students a clear, progressive journey from exploration to excellence.

Bronze

- Technical qualification (L1/L2) or STEM pathway OR additional 1 x 5-hour employer-led project OR an additional 5-hour work experience placement.
- Employer-led projects: 2 x 5 hrs (10 hrs total).
- Work experience: 5 days (100% virtual).
- Encounters: minimum 2.
- Assessment: teacher / subject lead interview, held internally at the UTC.

Silver

- Technical qualification: L2+.
- Employer-led projects: 2 x 9 hrs (18 hrs total).
- Work experience: 10 days (50% virtual).
- Encounters: minimum 3, plus 1 employer visit.
- Assessment: CIAG reflective conversation, held internally with an employer partner at the UTC.

Gold

- Technical qualification: L3 / A Level STEM.
- Employer-led projects: 3 x 9 hrs (27 hrs total).
- Work experience: 10 days (20% virtual, in-person focus).
- Encounters: minimum 4, plus 1 employer visit.
- Assessment: regional assessment centre, run externally by Baker Dearing.

All three levels are assessed as achieved or not achieved, and retakes are permitted at every level.

Phase 3 (2026/27) of the award launches in September 2026, bringing in the new tier structure and the Grofar digital platform.

Please register for the award through [here](#). Please email any questions to Aysen Giritli, the Baker Award Coordinator, via agiritli@bakerdearing.org.



Discounted services and free activities

As part of our commitment to supporting UTCs, Baker Dearing negotiates access to a range of discounted services and free activities that streamline operations, enhance insight and provide valuable opportunities for students.

Pro16 Plus

- Pro16 Plus is offering UTCs a rate of £1,000+VAT, versus a rate of £1,200+VAT.

Vex Robotics

- An exclusive 20% discount on VEX AIM Bundles and VEX CTE products.
- All UTCs can get a VEX V5 Competition Kit and introductory CPD for the teachers free of charge, worth over £1,500, simply by registering a student team. Limited to one per UTC.

FIRST UK

- FIRST UK guarantees every UTC a full bursary to deliver robotics provision next academic year. This includes a reusable robotics kit (worth c.£1,500) along with content, free events, access to travel awards and industry mentors. Each UTC will need to pay the £399 commitment fee to access the bursary and fully-funded provision.

Applicaa

- Online admissions software Applicaa is offering a 20% discount for new joining UTCs.

Grofar

- Software platform Grofar will continue to offer UTC's a 50% subscription discount on the basis that their placement count is under 100 per annum.

GL Assessment

- GL Assessment is offering UTCs a price of £16.40 per learner, versus an RRP of £23.20 for their complete digital solution, including their most popular assessments.
- The discount applies to the whole pupil roll and cannot be split down into individual year groups.

Baker Award

- Participation is free for UTCs.



Events

Baker Dearing runs a varied programme of events across the year for UTCs, including regular industry specialism networks and to support key functions (e.g. marketing and employer engagement). We bring UTC principals and governors together twice a year to share best practice at our UTC winter and summer conferences. This is in addition to more frequent virtual catch-ups on matters of interest arising throughout the year. We also run student-facing events, bringing together multiple UTCs for projects, visits, and activity days with employers.

Autumn term

24-Sep	26-27 Engineering CPD launch
28-Sep	Baker Award programme registration
12-Oct	Governors briefing
13-Oct	Principals briefing
19-30 Oct	HALF TERM
04-Nov	Core principals meeting
06-Nov	Walney UTC Sleeve launch
16-20 Nov	#thinkUTC week
16-Nov	Baker Award term 1 check-in
23-27 Nov	Regional group meetings
27-28 Nov	Haas CPD event
30-Nov	Literacy in engineering pilot
09-Dec	Autodesk training at Midlands hub
10-Dec	Winter conference

Spring term

26-Jan	Baker Award ceremony
01-Feb	Baker Award term 2 check-in
08-Feb	Governors briefing
09-Feb	Principals briefing
15-19 Feb	HALF TERM
22-Feb	Employer engagement conference
04-Mar	Core principals meeting
08-12 Mar	Regional group meetings
22-Mar	Governors briefing

Summer term

06-Apr	Baker Award term 3 check-in
12-May	Marketing lead CPD conference
24-May	Governors briefing
25-May	Principals briefing
31 May-04 Jun	HALF TERM
03-Jun	Core principals meeting
14-Jun	Regional group meetings
23-Jun	AI hackathon
01-Jul	Baker Award 2027/28 launch webinar
01-02 Jul	UK HTEC (Haas Technical Educators Conference)
05-Jul	Baker Award Bronze and Silver assessment deadline
05-09 Jul	Data managers update and briefing
14-Jul	Summer conference

Baker Dearing Educational Trust

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