



Terms of Reference (ToR)

Version: 1.1

Date: April 2026

Review Date: April 2027

1. Purpose

The Industry Skills Alliance (Skills Alliance) is a group established and operated by the Institute of Refrigeration to provide a forum for the industry to build strong connections between employers and education providers, and shape the future skills agenda to meet evolving workforce needs.

Established as a strategic forum, the Skills Alliance will work to ensure that education, training provision, and workforce development reflect the current and future needs of industry.

The Skills Alliance will act as a coordinated and authoritative voice to awarding bodies, education providers, government, and policy stakeholders for skills and talent within the sector.

2. Objectives

The Skills Alliance will

- Provide strategic oversight of sector skills priorities.
- Identify current and emerging workforce gaps.
- Influence curriculum design and qualification development.
- Inform local, regional, and national skills strategies.
- Promote investment in high-quality training and career pathways.
- Strengthen employer engagement with education providers and awarding bodies.
- Explore and shape apprenticeship pathways and levels, including technical, professional, and management streams.
- Support long-term workforce planning, succession development and sector competitiveness.

3. Governance

Chair / Co-Chairs are appointed by the Institute of Refrigeration to

- Provide independent strategic leadership.
- Set meeting direction and priorities.
- Ensure balanced and inclusive discussion.
- Represent the Skills Alliance externally where appropriate.

Secretariat Team (IOR Staff)

- Coordinate meetings, agendas, and communications.
- Circulate papers, record minutes, and track progress against agreed actions.
- Maintain documentation and membership records.

Members

- Contribute sector insight, intelligence, and workforce data.
- Act as ambassadors for the Skills Alliance within their networks.
- Participate actively and respectfully in discussions and task groups.
- Support the delivery of agreed actions and milestones.

Specialist Advisors / Ambassadors (*optional*)

- Provide perspective on specific workforce groups or emerging technologies.
- Champion inclusive pathways and apprenticeship initiatives.

4. Membership

Composition

- Individuals representing a wide range of SMEs and large organisations, employers, suppliers and manufacturers in the sector.
- Individuals from sector bodies and trade associations.
- Individuals from education and training providers.
- Individuals from awarding or assessment organisations.
- Individuals from policy and government bodies.

Commitment

- Desired minimum attendance: three quarterly meetings per year.
- Active participation in discussions, working groups and delivery of agreed priorities.

5. Meetings

- Frequency: Four meetings each year, face-to-face only
- Additional groups: Task and finish groups may be established as required and may meet online or in person, and must report back to the main meetings. Chairs of working groups to be appointed by agreement of the Co-chairs.
- Agendas: Papers circulated at least one week in advance
- Minutes: Distributed within two weeks of meetings

6. Key Deliverables

The Skills Alliance will produce or support the development of:

- Sector skills priority statements.
- Policy and strategic recommendations for government and awarding bodies.
- Workforce insight reports and analysis of emerging trends.
- Employer position papers on skills gaps and recruitment challenges.
- Frameworks and guidance for apprenticeship pathways and levels.
- Technical, professional, and management training pathway recommendations.
- Inclusion, diversity, and widening participation initiatives.
- Annual strategic impact summary highlighting achievements and milestones.

7. Communications and Information Sharing

The Skills Alliance will maintain clear, secure, and effective communication channels to support collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Communication Channels

- Primary platform: MS Teams (or alternative secure platform) for ongoing discussions, document sharing, and notifications.
- Email: Used for official meeting papers, agendas, and action tracking.
- Face-to-face discussions: Main forum for decision-making and in-depth strategic conversations, with minutes taken by the Institute of Refrigeration secretariat.
- Task & Finish Groups: May use separate virtual collaboration channels if needed, with clear reporting back to the main Skills Alliance.

Information Sharing

- Members may be invited to share general workforce data and commercial insight within the Skills Alliance context.
- All shared information should be relevant to agreed priorities and used responsibly, and maybe anonymised or credited depending on the requirements of the data owner.
- Discussions held on the platform or during meetings remain confidential unless explicitly agreed for wider distribution.
- Secretariat manages access to all digital workspaces, ensuring password protection and controlled membership.

Records and Tracking

- Meeting minutes, action logs, and key decisions are recorded by the Secretariat team.
- Updates and progress reports are shared with all members between meetings, as appropriate.

Public Communications, PR and Social Media

- All public communications, social media articles/comments about the work of the Skills Alliance shall meet the requirements of the IOR Social Media Policy and must be approved by the IOR PR Manager prior to being issued
<https://ior.org.uk/public/downloads/JN5Dw/Social-media-policy-Nov2020.pdf>.
- Individuals who are associated with the Skills Alliance may not use the IOR Industry Skills Alliance Logo in their communications or social media activity, or on their letterhead or in association with their businesses in any way unless gaining permission from the IOR.

8. Code of Conduct

All Industry Skills Alliance members agree to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and collaboration.

The following statement is the IOR Code of Meeting conduct, which must be read at the beginning of each Skills Alliance meeting or Action Group meeting and recorded in the minutes:

Statement of conduct read by the President: *In all IOR communications and meetings, we commit to conducting ourselves with integrity, fairness, courtesy and respect for others. We will avoid or declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest, whether business, personal or otherwise, in accordance with IOR policies on Conduct and Conflicts of Interest.*

IOR Policies on Anti-Bullying and Harassment, Equality and Diversity and Code of Professional Conduct for members apply.

These are available to download at <https://ior.org.uk/about/policies-and-practices>

Non-compliance with the Code of Meeting Conduct may result in review of membership and/or removal from the Alliance by the Chair in consultation with the Secretariat.

The Skills Alliance is an advisory forum and does not hold delegated decision-making authority. All formal decisions remain with the Institute of Refrigeration in accordance with its governance arrangements.

The Skills Alliance will not be used as a forum for commercial coordination, procurement discussions, or competitive positioning.

9. Data Protection and Privacy

The Skills Alliance operates in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Any personal data shared within the Skills Alliance will be limited to what is necessary for the purposes of collaboration, governance, and delivery of agreed objectives.

Personal data will be processed under the lawful basis of legitimate interests and/or consent, as appropriate, and handled in line with the Institute of Refrigeration's Data Protection and Privacy Policies.

Members must not share unnecessary personal data within meetings or collaboration platforms. Where possible, data should be anonymised or aggregated.

The Secretariat is responsible for managing access to digital platforms, retaining records appropriately, and ensuring that any data protection concerns or incidents are escalated in line with Institute procedures.