

## BESA Academy wins digital transformation award

3 years ago



The [Building Engineering Services Association \(BESA\) Academy](#) has been awarded a prestigious [Association Excellence Award](#) (AEA).

The online technical training service came out top in the crowded Digital Transformation category and was recognised by the judging panel because of its rapid response to increased industry demands for digital services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Association completely transformed its training provision in just four months to support the sector during lockdowns.

The AEA judges recognised the importance of this work in supporting the building services sector through a critical period and congratulated BESA for its speed and breadth of response during a celebratory awards lunch at the Kia Oval, London last week.

The AEA Awards were set up to celebrate and encourage the vital work that trade bodies, professional organisations and chartered institutions do for their members to ensure their voices are heard and their causes are championed.

BESA had already planned to take more of its training provision online but accelerated the programme at the start of the Covid emergency and the [BESA Academy](#) was launched in August 2020 – it now has more than 9,300 users.

Rallying point

The Academy provides a single access point for apprenticeships, regulatory and short courses, and the

delivery of experienced worker training programmes across the UK, ensuring they are fit for purpose and that skills needs are being met.

Because it performs this role on behalf of the entire sector, not just BESA members, the Academy quickly became a popular rallying point during the pandemic, something that was of particular value to many while colleges and training centres were closed.

Building services contractors, as part of the construction sector, were required to keep working to support essential services such as hospitals, supermarkets, and vaccination centres, so keeping up with training and regulatory requirements was crucial.

The judges also noted the importance of health & safety (H&S) during the crisis. This needed to be supported by a digital service to keep the industry's SKILLcard system operating so key workers could continue to gain access to sites by demonstrating their technical competence and H&S training. With physical test centres closed, the BESA Academy quickly stepped up to plug the gap.

BESA also incorporated new mandatory 'Site Operating Procedures' for covid working, developed by the Construction Leadership Council (CLC), into their H&S course, updating it each of the six times it evolved. The association also made it available for free so employers could have confidence their workers were aware of the requirements.

"I am delighted that our hard-working team has received this recognition for their impressive efforts to modernise our training provision," said BESA's director of training and skills Helen Yeulet. "They put in hundreds of extra hours at the height of the crisis to make sure members and the wider building services community could access vital support.

"This proved crucial in keeping our vital sector operating but also continues to pay dividends. It accelerated the process of converting to online methods and adopting technologies that allow us to deliver education more flexibly and in a way that meets the expectations of today's users."