

YORKSHIRE BLUE BADGE

Tourist Guide Training



Prospectus 2027/28

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A COURSE DESIGNED TO DEVELOP SKILLED, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND PROFESSIONAL **BLUE BADGE TOURIST GUIDES** 2

WELCOME

**CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a
Yorkshire Blue Badge Tourist Guide.

Blue Badge Tourist Guides are recognised as the gold standard in guiding, with a reputation built over more than 70 years. Today, the qualification represents a nationwide network of highly trained professionals who bring history, heritage and culture to life with insight, skill and a strong sense of place.

Training in Yorkshire offers both a challenge and a privilege. This is a richly diverse region. It is home to vibrant cities, dramatic coastlines, breathtaking landscapes and characterful market towns, each with powerful stories and a distinctive identity.

By joining this course, you will develop the knowledge and confidence to interpret Yorkshire for visitors from around the world, while becoming part of a professional and supportive guiding community. Blue Badge Guides are passionate, engaging communicators who combine expertise with warmth, humour and care.

The Yorkshire Blue Badge qualification is widely recognised, including by York Minster, and will fully accredit you to guide at many of the region's most important sites.

We look forward to welcoming you and supporting you on your journey to becoming one of Yorkshire's Best Guides.

Sarah Cowling
Course Director FITG



WHAT IS A BLUE BADGE GUIDE?

The Institute of Tourist Guiding says:

‘Blue Badge Tourist Guides are ambassadors for their regions, city or site, showcasing wonderful landmarks, hidden gems and breathtaking countryside in their historic and contemporary contexts, in an accessible, entertaining and culturally-aware way. It is also a flexible career option, fitting in and around other jobs and your personal lifestyle and responsibilities. Alternatively, professional tourist guiding can be a lucrative freelance career for those choosing to work full time.’



WORKING AS A GUIDE



Working as a Blue Badge Tourist Guide in Yorkshire is a varied and rewarding role, combining deep knowledge with warm, engaging communication. Guides welcome visitors from every corner of the world, organising their experience and leading families, groups, couples, student groups, corporate or international visitors. The guide's role is to welcome, inform, entertain and care for guests at all times.

No two days are the same. Work may include walking tours through historic streets, full-day coach tours across the Dales and Moors, driver-guiding experiences, or—on rare occasions—even guiding by helicopter. This variety is one of the profession's greatest strengths.

Most Yorkshire Blue Badge Tourist Guides are freelance and self-employed. Work is often seasonal and can involve unsociable hours. Bookings may come via tour operators and agencies or directly from travellers. Many newly qualified guides build their careers gradually, sometimes working part-time while developing relationships with tourism businesses and local organisations, concierges, or creating their own bookable tours.

WORKING AS A GUIDE

Guiding requires not only excellent presentation skills but also business awareness and marketing ability. Working as a Blue Badge Guide is an exciting opportunity to run your own business and develop a rewarding career where you can achieve a great work life balance. Guiding offers huge scope to hone your skills and promote yourself in the sectors that interest you.

In 2026/7 a freelance professional Yorkshire Blue Badge Tourist Guide working in English might charge from £220 for a half day or £350 for a full day, with higher rates for language specialists and Driver Guiding services.

ALREADY A BLUE BADGE TOURIST GUIDE?

We have a limited number of places to offer to candidates from other regions. Please see page 18/19 for details





THE COURSE

The place where you celebrate

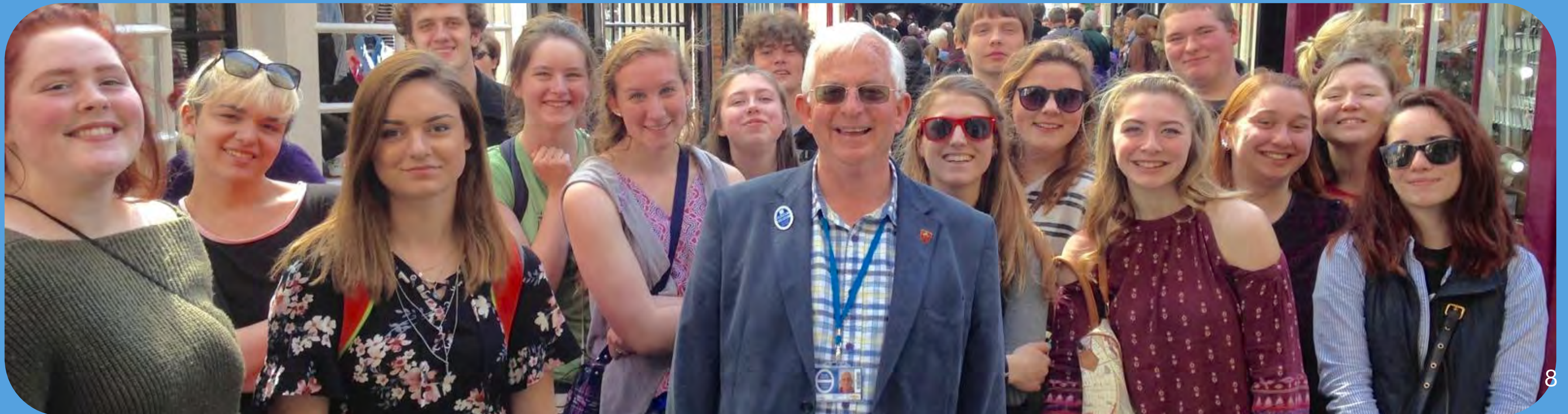
*The dream you embrace
A legacy we can be proud of*

COURSE STRUCTURE

The **Yorkshire Blue Badge Tourist Guide** course is a comprehensive, professional training programme designed to develop highly skilled, knowledgeable and engaging guides. It combines academic study with practical, real-world guiding experience across the region, with a strong emphasis on communication, interpretation, visitor care and the business skills required to operate as a freelance guide.

It is a part-time course, delivered over 15 months from January 2027 - March 2028. The course has been designed to ensure that candidates who pass the exams will be fully qualified to lead tours in York Minster and York Walking Tours during the summer of 2027.

The course will be delivered on selected weekdays, weekends, and evenings.



COURSE STRUCTURE

How you'll learn



Lectures

Expert-led sessions from specialists, site professionals and experienced guides



Site Visits

Learning in key locations across Yorkshire, building place-based interpretation



Online Learning

Flexible lectures and supporting resources



Discussion Groups

Facilitated sessions to deepen understanding and encourage critical thinking



Communications Training

Intensive 2-day seminar in presentation, storytelling and audience engagement



Business Lectures

Marketing, pricing, networking and working with clients and tour operators



What you'll be able to do

Guide in York Minster

Design and deliver a professional site tour



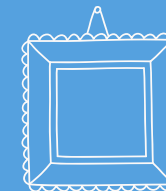
Lead a City Tour

Plan and guide a York walking tour with confidence



Guide from a Coach or Moving Vehicle

Microphone technique, timing and group management



Guide in a Museum or Gallery

Design and deliver flexible tours in any location



Create Itineraries

Design themed, market-ready tours



Think Like a Professional

Apply business awareness to create viable tours and bookable experiences

ELEMENTS AND ASSESSMENT



To be awarded the **Yorkshire Blue Badge**, candidates must successfully complete the full programme and pass all required elements, most of which are assessed by examination. Assessments take place at key stages throughout the course, ensuring the progressive development of knowledge and professional competence.

The first term (January 2027 – April 2027) culminates in the assessments required to achieve **York Green Badge** status. This qualification enables trainees to work professionally during summer 2027, including guiding within York Minster and leading walking tours in York.

On successful completion of the full course, candidates are awarded the **Yorkshire Blue Badge** and registered with the Institute of Tourist Guiding. Graduates receive the Institute's official photo identity card and certificate at a formal graduation ceremony, marking their entry into the profession as fully qualified Blue Badge Tourist Guides

The Institute of Tourist Guiding is responsible for setting the exams and the standards. Our course will consist of 10 elements. There are additional exams set by the Institute for anyone wishing to guide in a non-first language.

The fees for the exams are additional to the course fees and are paid directly to the Institute of Tourist Guiding (see page 17).

ELEMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Written Exams

Core Knowledge Exam

(Taken by all Blue Badge candidates across the country)
2 hours

York Knowledge Exam

2 hours 100 short answer questions
3 long answer questions

Regional Knowledge Exam Paper 1

2 hours 200 Questions

Regional Knowledge Exam Paper 2

2 hours 4 long answer questions

York ½ Day Tour Planning Project

Plan a ½ day on a given theme
Max 1500 words

Yorkshire Full Day Tour Planning Project

Plan a full day on a given theme
Max 3000 words

Practical Exams

York Walking Tour Exam

Practical Exam

York Minster Tour Exam

Practical Exam

Museum/Gallery Tour Exam

Practical Exam

Coach Guiding Exam

Practical Exam

Additional Compulsory Element

Communications Seminar

2 day seminar

WHAT TO EXPECT



COURSE DETAILS



GETTING STARTED

Induction & Support

- Induction weekend
- Summer study boot camp
- Mentor programme throughout
- Course Handbook



CORE KNOWLEDGE

Online Learning

- 30 expert-led lectures
- 30 guided discussion session



YORK TRAINING

York & Key Sites

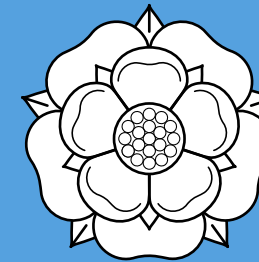
- 9 lectures & site visits across York
- 7 lectures & tours of York Minster
- 6 practical sessions at York Minster
- 7 York walking tour practicals
- Mock exams for all assessments



PRACTICAL COACH GUIDING SKILLS

Guiding in Practice

- 20 coach-based training sessions
- Mock exams for all assessments



REGIONAL EXPERIENCE

Across Yorkshire

- 9 regional weekend study visits
- Site visits, local lectures & presentations
- Additional site/gallery training:
 - 5 practical sessions
 - 4 lectures/visits



BUSINESS SKILLS

Working as a Professional Guide

- 7.5 hours of business lectures, online and in person

360 HOURS OF CONTACT TIME - 240 OF THOSE PRACTICAL LEARNING

PRACTICAL TRAINING AND FIELD TRIPS

You will take part in **10 two-day study visits** across the county, designed to immerse you in Yorkshire's landscapes, cities and heritage. Most sessions run at weekends, with the final two held on weekdays to mirror exam conditions.

Each visit combines coach route training with on-foot exploration, including guided visits to galleries, museums and major visitor attractions. These are supported by sessions to share knowledge, develop practical guiding skills, and participate in in-person lectures and workshops focused on building a deep understanding of the region.

The study visits will be based in:

Skipton, Bradford, Leeds, Doncaster, Ripon, Scarborough, Hull and York

Please note, accomodation is not included.



Key Information



COURSE DATES

January - April 2027

Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th Jan
Induction Weekend

York. Compulsory Element

This is the start of the course. From this date, you should set aside 10 hours per week for private study and research

Monday 11th Jan - Monday 15th April

Monday evenings online

Thursday full days practical/site visits/tours lectures

2-day Communications Seminar 24th /25th or 26th /27th Jan

York. Compulsory Element

Easter Break 19th March - 4th April

Exams end April

May - August 2027

Monday evenings online

1 day Business of Guiding Seminar early May

Saturday 13th June - Sunday 14th June planning summer study. Full days

August Summer Break

September - October 2027

Sunday AND Wednesday evenings online lectures

3 x weekends. Various centres in the region

Core Knowledge Exam end of October

November 2027 - February 2028

7 x selected weekends. Various centres in the region

7 x weekdays (actual day TBC) selected Wednesdays or Thursdays

6 x Wednesday evening online lectures

December Winter Break

Last 2 weeks of February: 4 x week days exam preparation TBC

March 2028

Beginning of March. Exams

1 day Business of Guiding Seminar March

End of Course

COURSE FEES

WHAT ARE THE FEES?

The course fee is £5,650. This includes all teaching, tutorial supervision, practical visits, entrance fees, online learning materials, coach travel as part of the training, venue hire costs and student registration with The Institute of Tourist Guides (who supply the Photo ID card for students to gain free access to a number of sites). You will also be student members of the British Guild of Tourist Guides.

Upon acceptance of a place on the course, half the course fees (£2,825) will become payable by 21st November 2026. The other half (£2,825) is payable by 21st December 2026

FAQ ON FEES:

Is the course fee refundable?

- All course fees are **non-refundable** once paid, even if a student withdraws. However, if the course is cancelled, all fees will be refunded. Applicants concerned about financial risk might consider insurance.

Why are fees paid upfront and non-refundable?

- The course is self-funded and can only run if fees are secured before it begins.

Is accommodation or food included?

- No, you must budget for overnight stays, travel expenses and meals or bring your own food. Sometimes, tea and coffee are provided.

EXAM FEES:

Are there additional exam fees?

- Yes. Estimated exam fees for 2025–2026 are about £1,900, payable directly to the Institute of Tourist Guiding. The Institute invoices candidates before each exam. Failed exams can be retaken (up to three attempts) with a fee for each retake. Details can be found at:

www.itg.org.uk/about/examinations

Foreign Language Guiding

Once qualified, guides can guide in their main language. To guide in another language, an additional language exam and fee apply. Language exams can be taken during or after the course. Details can be found at:

www.itg.org.uk/about/examinations

BLUE BADGE GUIDE CANDIDATES



A limited number of places will be available for holders of Blue Badges from other regions. Candidates should complete the application form as per the non-BBG candidates and will be required to attend an interview.

Applicants will be required to attend a minimum of 6 days which will be charged at £225 per day or part thereof. The days required to attend will be:

- 1 x York Minster (model tour)
- 1 x day coach practical (after exam route is announced)
- 1 x day site/gallery (model tour)
- 1 x mock Minster exam
- 1 x mock coach exam
- 1 x mock site/gallery

In addition, due to Blue Badge guiding privileges in the Minster, Blue Badge Guide Candidates will be required to attend 6 x half day lectures (in person classroom sessions and on site tours). These will be charged at £100 per lecture.

The total Blue Badge Tourist Guide fee is equal to £1950 plus ITG registration fee (£203) and exam fees.

Applicants may attend as many additional in-person days/sessions as they wish at the same fee: £225 per day or part thereof.

BLUE BADGE GUIDE CANDIDATES (cont.)

BBG Candidates will not be required to take examinations in York Walk or Tour Planning projects. BBG Candidates who have not attended a Communications Seminar in the past 5 years will be required to do so. A limited number of places will be available for a fee of £450 per course.

Access to online lectures will be available to BBG Candidates to attend for a fee of £20 per lecture. BBG Candidates will have access to all online lecture notes, aide memoire, printed material relating to the days/sessions they have booked to attend.

BBG Candidates may, of course, choose to apply for and attend the full course.



HOW TO APPLY

Apply online **HERE**, or through our website www.yorkshiresbestguides.co.uk

Applications will close **Friday 9th October 2026**

We **encourage applications from all backgrounds** and at all levels of experience. Fluency in another language is a bonus - we always need language speakers and there is a shortage in the Yorkshire Region.

Please consider the work load and the time commitment and whether the career of Blue Badge Tourist Guide is right for you before applying. If you have any further questions, please contact us on the details shown on page 22.

Applications will be reviewed and short-listed candidates will be invited for an interview. There will be a £30 administration fee for interview applicants payable prior to the interview. This is **not refundable**.

Interviews will be held week commencing **2nd November 2026**.

Successful applicants will be advised of their place on the course no later than **Friday 13th November 2026**.

Bursaries may be available to support applicants from a range of backgrounds, including those at an earlier stage in their careers, speakers of additional languages, or those who may benefit from financial assistance. Please contact us to discuss

The first instalment of course fees (**£2,825**) **will become payable by 21st November 2026**.
The second instalment (**£2,825**) **is payable by 21st December 2026**.

The course will start with the induction weekend on **Saturday 9th January 2027**.

THE TEAM

COURSE DIRECTOR: SARAH COWLING FITG

Blue Badge Guide for Yorkshire and London.



Sarah is an accredited ITG Trainer and in recent years has been course director on a number ITG White Badge Courses and assisted on Blue Badge courses. Sarah is also a qualified ITG Examiner

Prior to being a Blue Badge Tourist Guide, Sarah began her career as a Management Trainee at Harrods. and went on to manage the Customer Services and Training Department.

ADMINISTRATOR: MICHELE THOMPSON MITG

Blue Badge Guide for Yorkshire, the Northeast and Green Badge Guide for the Bridgewater Canal in Salford.



Michele is an accredited ITG Trainer and was assistant director for the Northeast Blue Badge Course 2019-2021. She has also assisted Sarah on ITG White Badge Courses.

Michele has a portfolio career covering all areas of travel including European tour managing. She is a German speaker and has a PGCE teaching degree.

THE TEAM AND PARTNERS



An extended team of tutors will include Blue Badge Tourist Guides with experience in guiding and training guides.

Guest lecturers will include experts from the various sites, guiding colleagues and experts in topics relevant to guiding content.



The institute of Tourist Guiding is the officially recognised body for setting standards and awarding qualifications for Tourist Guiding in England, Northern Island and Jersey. The Institute accredits guide training courses that meet its standards and it provides the examinations.

The Institute of Tourist Guiding owns and awards the Blue Badge, the UK's highest tourist guiding qualification

www.itg.org.uk



The British Guild of Tourist Guides is the training provider for this Yorkshire Blue Badge Tourist Guiding Course. It is the largest membership organisation for tourist guides in the UK and provider of Guide Training Courses in London and other areas of the country

www.britainsbestguides.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR APPLICATION!

If you have any questions at all, please get in touch

training@yorkshiresbestguides.co.uk

www.yorkshiresbestguides.co.uk



**CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026**

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Thompson , Sarah Cowling