

The Master Innholders

GM of the Future,

the Neil Bannister Scholarship

2027

You've built your experience. You've developed your skills. Now it's time to invest in your future.

The GM of the Future Award has been created for ambitious hoteliers who have the passion, drive and potential to become the next generation of General Managers.

Through a fully funded place on Cranfield University's Talent Development Programme, you'll gain the knowledge, confidence and leadership skills to challenge yourself, grow your impact and take the next step in your career.

► FAST FACTS

► What is the GM of the Future Award?

The GM of the Future, the Neil Bannister Scholarship, is an annual award from the Master Innholders that recognises and supports the next generation of hotel leaders. Each year, one exceptional hospitality professional receives a fully funded place on Cranfield University's Talent Development Programme, providing the skills, confidence and leadership capability needed to progress towards becoming a future General Manager.

► Who is the award aimed at?

The award is designed for ambitious hotel professionals who are already demonstrating leadership potential and are looking to take the next step in their career. Applicants may be preparing for their first General Manager role and currently hold a manager or head of department position.

► What does the winner receive?

The winner receives a fully funded place on Cranfield University's Talent Development Programme, worth £15,000. This 12-month executive development programme combines academic insight and practical application to strengthen leadership capability. The runner-up will also receive a development opportunity, including Cranfield's Impact and Influence Programme and executive coaching sessions.

► How do I apply?

Complete the application form and answer the questions within. Applicants must also provide an endorsement from their line manager – please see the application form for more information. Please email your completed application to secretary@masterinnholders.co.uk no later than 9 October 2026.

► What is the Talent Development Programme?

The programme is delivered by Cranfield University and is designed to help high-potential professionals become more effective leaders. Combining virtual learning, residential modules, coaching and workplace application, the programme helps participants develop the professional, leadership and personal capabilities needed to succeed in senior management roles.

► What will I learn?

The programme focuses on three key areas: professional development, leadership development and personal growth, covering key skills including strategic thinking, commercial awareness, decision-making, communication and influencing, all while reflecting and developing your own unique leadership style.

► How is the programme structured?

Over 12 months, participants take part in a combination of live virtual learning, residential modules, coaching and practical workplace application. The programme includes two five-day residential modules focused on business and interpersonal leadership skills, alongside several review sessions and a business project that allows participants to apply their learning directly in their own organisation.



Can I complete the programme while continuing to work?

The programme has been designed specifically for busy hospitality professionals, allowing participants to continue working while developing their leadership capability.

You'll continue working in your current role while applying what you've learned through a real business project, specially designed to challenge you, enhance your skills and bring value to your own place of work.

What happens after I submit my application?

All submissions are reviewed by a judging panel made up of Master Innholders and key industry figures.

A shortlist of candidates will be invited to attend an interview in London on 16 November.

The finalists will then be invited to attend the Hotel Leadership Conference, 11-12 January 2027, where they will receive a complimentary ticket for both days of the conference, including the black-tie dinner where the winner of the GM of the Future Award will be announced during a special ceremony.



**THE MASTER
INNOLDERS**