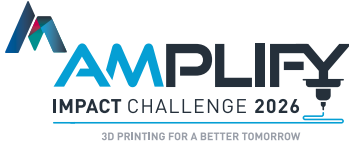


AMplify Impact Challenge 2026

Evaluation Report for MTA





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Prepared by Tim Wilson, Universities and Partners Lead, Engineers Without Borders UK
| May 2026 Delivered in partnership with Additive Manufacturing UK (AMUK)

Executive Summary

The AMplify Impact Challenge 2026 was the first edition of the student engineering design challenge, delivered by Engineers Without Borders UK (EWB UK) in partnership with Additive Manufacturing UK (AMUK).

The national 3D design competition invited UK-based university students to design solutions to shape the future of Additive Manufacturing (AM). Over the course of the programme, 52 active teams from 21 universities engaged with the challenge, with 28 teams submitting final entries for review.

52 Active Teams <i>From 21 universities</i>	209 Students <i>Final confirmed participants</i>	21 Universities <i>UK & Ireland</i>	28 Final Submissions <i>Reviewed by 22 experts</i>
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The Grand Final, held at [MACH 2026](#) on 24 April, showcased the top 10 teams before a panel of industry judges and an audience of sector leaders, with Jacqui Smith, Minister for Skills, opening the event.

Participant survey results demonstrate a strong impact across all measures, with all three core competencies reaching 90%+ confidence after the challenge. This report presents the full picture for MTA, covering reach, participation, impact, and recommendations for the partnership going forward.

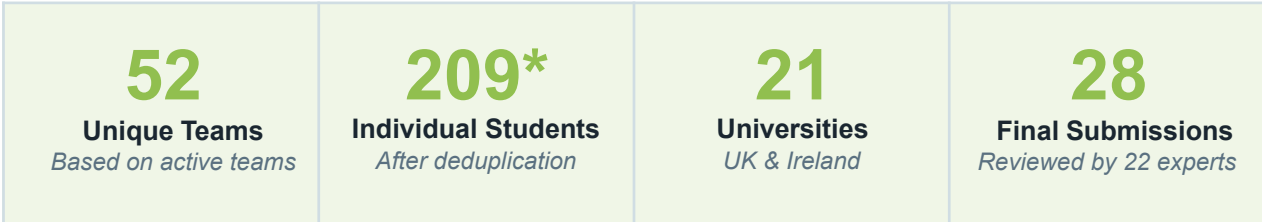
“We are most grateful to AMUK for partnering with us to deliver the AMplify Impact Challenge. The numbers speak for themselves and surpassed even our expectations for an extra-curricular programme. We are delighted to have attracted interest across the country, with many participants coming from our network of established university chapters. Through this programme we have shown the power of partnerships to develop technical ability alongside wider employability skills, while inspiring young engineers to engage with the advanced manufacturing sector.”

John Kraus, CEO Engineers Without Borders UK

1. Reach & Registration

1.1 Registration Overview

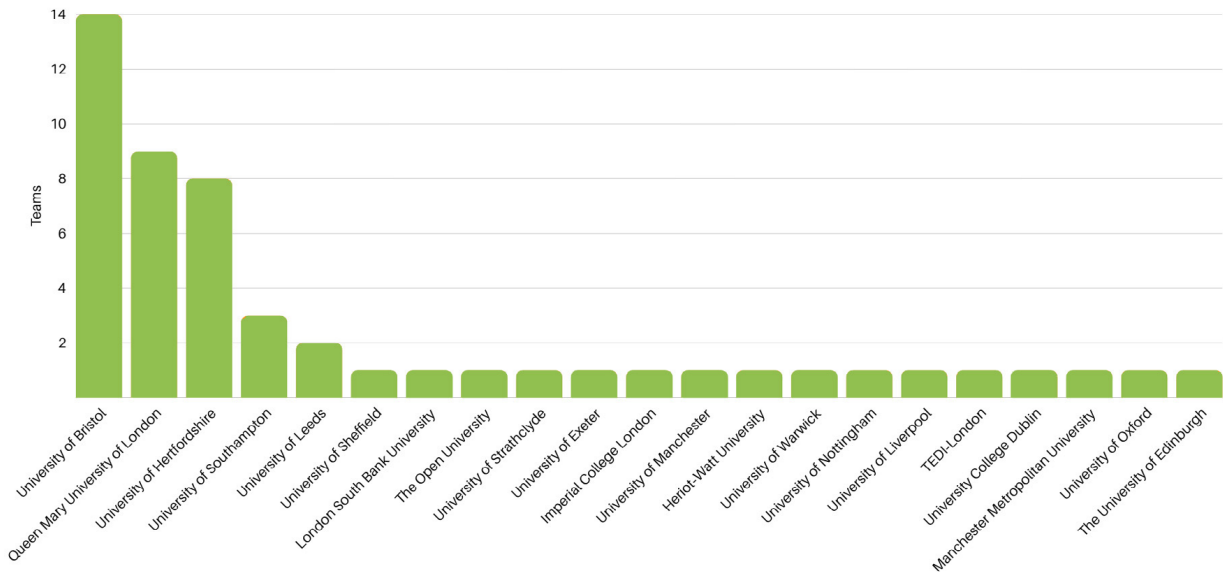
Registration for the 2026 challenge was strong, with 52 active teams confirmed after duplicate submissions were removed. Teams came from 21 universities across the UK and Ireland, representing a broad geographic spread.



* Final confirmed participants after removing duplicates and non-attending students.

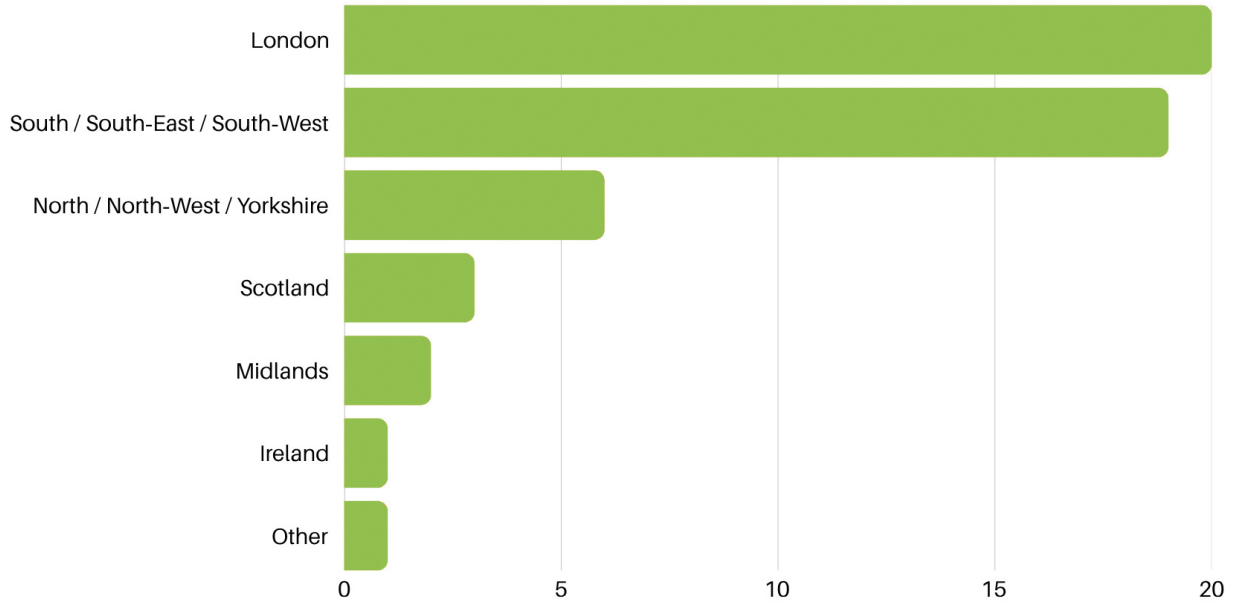
1.2 University Participation

The top three institutions – University of Bristol (14 teams), Queen Mary University of London (9 teams), and University of Hertfordshire (8 teams) – collectively represented approximately 60% of all entries. This concentration presents both a strength (depth of engagement at anchor institutions) and a strategic growth opportunity for 2028.



1.3 Geographic Distribution

Entries came from across the UK and Ireland. London institutions dominated, contributing approximately 20 teams, followed closely by South / South-East / South-West England (~19 teams). North / North-West / Yorkshire contributed 6 teams, Scotland 3, with smaller contributions from the Midlands, Ireland, and other regions.



This geographic spread demonstrates the challenge's national reach, while also highlighting the potential to grow further in underrepresented regions – particularly the Midlands and the North of England – in 2028.



2. Challenge Delivery

2.1 Concept Note Stage

At the concept note stage, 35 teams received individual expert feedback from a panel of 13 reviewers drawn from across the additive manufacturing and engineering community. Crucially, all 13 reviewers confirmed availability for follow-up conversations with teams – reflecting the depth of industry engagement secured.



2.2 Final Submission Stage

28 teams reached the final submission stage, each receiving two independent expert reviews. 22 expert reviewers were engaged in total: 19 external reviewers recruited via MTA and the wider industry network, plus 3 internal reviewers from EWB UK.

MTA's contribution to reviewer recruitment was therefore significant – 86% of final-stage reviewers came through the MTA network and beyond. This is a strong indicator of the value the partnership brings to the challenge's delivery infrastructure.



2.3 Grand Final at MACH 2026

The Grand Final took place at MACH 2026 on 24 April – a deliberate decision to embed the challenge within a major industry event, giving students and judges a richer, more connected experience.

The event was opened by Jacqui Smith, Minister for Skills, who recognised the role initiatives like AMplify play in developing essential skills for 21st-century engineers. The top 10 teams presented to pitching judges in the morning, before four shortlisted teams competed in the afternoon Grand Final for the top prize – including a tour of the Alpine F1 factory.

Finalists

Team number	University
AM2026-52	Queen Mary University of London
AM2026-37	University of Southampton
AM2026-31	University of Nottingham
AM2026-28	University of Leeds
AM2026-26	University of Bristol
AM2026-16	University College Dublin
AM2026-10	University of Southampton
AM2026-8	The Open University
AM2026-6	Queen Mary University of London
AM2026-1	University of Sheffield

Judges

Top 3 Judging Panel	Pitching Judges
Dan Brooks, AMPI	Pat Warner, BWT Alpine
Bradley Hughes, GKN Aerospace	Loxley Graham, Alexander Daniels Global
Lauren Grundy, Stratasys	Paul Bullock, 3D 360



3. Winning Teams

1st Place + People's Prize

Team AM2026-52 – Queen Mary University of London

A three-stage PVA waste recovery system – dissolution, evaporation/filtration, and extrusion – capable of returning up to 60% of discarded 3D printing material back into usable filament. A technically rigorous and practically viable solution that also won the public vote.

2nd Place

Team AM2026-1 – University of Sheffield

A biodegradable filament combining PLA with locally sourced wheat husk fibres, enabling faster natural degradation while maintaining comparable performance to standard PLA. A compelling materials innovation with clear commercialisation potential.

Joint 3rd Place

Team AM2026-8 – The Open University

A 'Regenerative AM Knowledge Hub' designed to close the gap between idealised learning about additive manufacturing and the realities of manufacturing practice – addressing a genuine skills and knowledge transfer challenge in the sector.

Team AM2026-31 – University of Nottingham

A concept connecting Repair Cafés with AM providers, utilising spare printing capacity to produce hard-to-source replacement parts – a circular economy solution that innovatively leverages existing infrastructure.

Student Quote

“AMplify gave me the opportunity to take an idea I believed could make a difference and develop it into something real. The experience of refining the concept, receiving expert feedback, and presenting to such a knowledgeable panel has been invaluable. Winning is something I still can't quite believe, but more than anything it has given me the confidence and motivation to keep pushing this idea forward.”

Russell McDonnell, winning participant, Team 52

4. Participant Survey Results

64 students completed the **end-of-challenge survey (April–May 2026)**, providing a robust evidence base for the challenge's educational and attitudinal impact.

4.1 Who Participated

The survey cohort was majority female and ethnically diverse — a positive signal of its reach beyond traditional engineering demographics.

<p>64 Total Respondents <i>100% completion</i></p>	<p>59.4% Female <i>38 participants</i></p>	<p>40.6% Male <i>26 participants</i></p>
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4.2 Ethnic Diversity

Based on the detailed participant data (n=53 who provided ethnicity), the breakdown was as follows:

Ethnic Group	Count	%
Asian or Asian British	28	52.8%
White	9	17.0%
Black or Black British	7	13.2%
Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	4	7.5%
Other ethnic group	4	7.5%

Note: based on 53 of 64 respondents who provided ethnicity data.

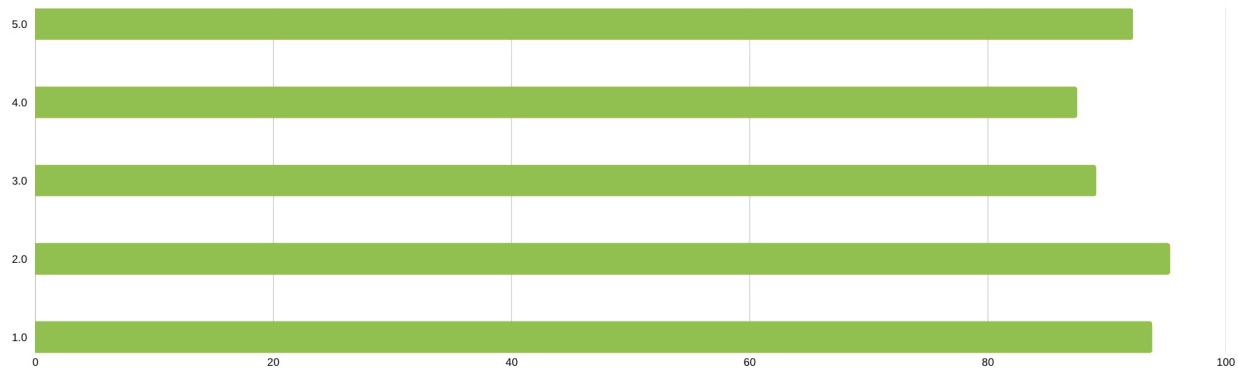
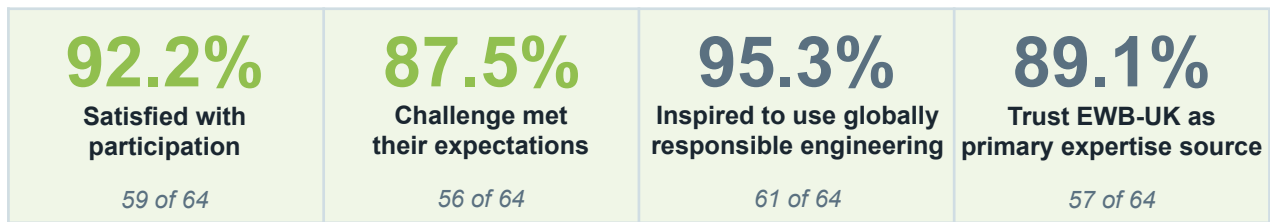
4.3 Satisfaction & Expectations

Satisfaction scores were exceptionally high across all four measures, with over 87% of participants responding positively on a 7-point scale.

Measure	Positive	of 64
Satisfied with participation	92.2%	59 of 64
Challenge met their expectations	87.5%	56 of 64
Inspired to use globally responsible engineering	95.3%	61 of 64
Trust EWB UK as primary expertise source	89.1%	57 of 64

Participants left satisfied

Positive response = somewhat agree or above (5-7 On 7-point scale)

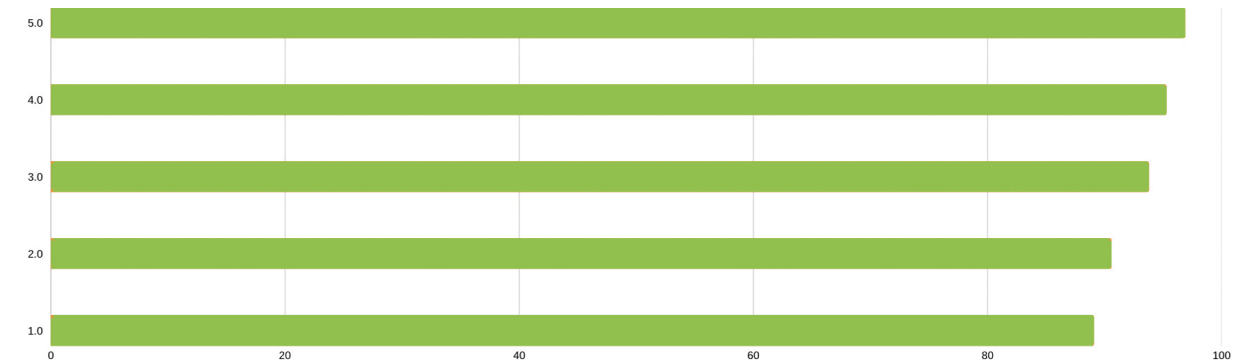
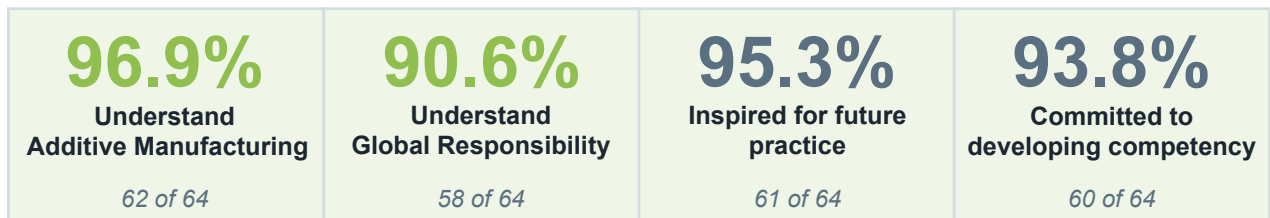


4.4 Understanding Significantly Improved

97% improved their understanding of Additive Manufacturing, 90.6% deepened their grasp of Global Responsibility, 95% feel inspired to apply these principles, and 94% are committed to building their competency – clear evidence the challenge is shifting how students think about engineering practice.

Understanding significantly improved

% who agreed or strongly agreed (5-7 on 7-point scale) as a result of AMplify



4.5 Distance Travelled – Competency Growth

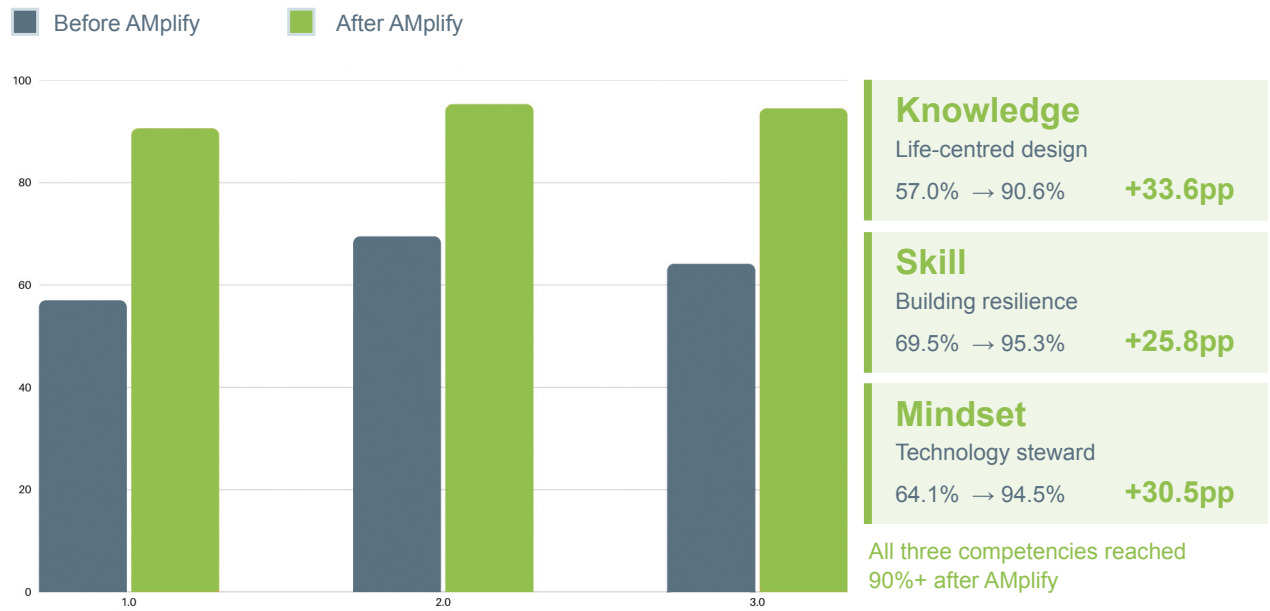
The most compelling evidence of impact comes from the before-and-after competency data. Across all three EWB UK competency areas, confidence levels increased significantly as a direct result of AMplify participation – with all three reaching 90%+ after the challenge.

Competency	Before	After	Change
Knowledge — Life-centred design	57.0%	90.6%	+33.6pp
Skill — Building resilience	69.5%	95.3%	+25.8pp
Mindset — Technology steward	64.1%	94.5%	+30.5pp

All three competencies reached 90%+ after AMplify participation – a clear indicator of educational impact.

Growth across all three competencies

Confidence % (somewhat agree or above) before and after AMplify



5. What Worked Well

The 2026 challenge delivered strongly across reach, quality, and delivery. Key highlights included:

- Strong industry engagement, including new students reached beyond the existing EWB-UK Chapter network
- High number of motivated entries, with particularly strong engagement from finalists
- Excellent quality of submissions – videos, prototypes, and a well-received public vote
- Smooth organisation throughout; communications were more manageable than in previous years
- Combining the Grand Final with MACH gave the challenge a bigger stage and stronger sector visibility

Proud Moments

- An impactful Grand Final event, opened by the Minister for Skills
- Strong and consistent positive feedback from sponsors
- AMUK providing commitment to AMplify for 2028
- Lots of happy students and judges – and a genuinely competitive top 10



6. Key Lessons & Areas for Improvement

Students

- Some confusion around what to include in the brief – clarity of student-facing communications is a priority for 2028
- Many registered teams did not submit a final entry, understanding the drop-off is important for conversion planning
- Strong student satisfaction and engagement with the public vote – formats that create visible participation resonate

Partners & Sponsors

- Some of the reviewers were not able to deliver – ensuring expectations and touchpoints are clearly defined upfront
- Some internship opportunities are beginning to emerge from partner conversations
- Earlier sponsor engagement will boost comms reach and aid team recruitment – this is a clear action for 2027 planning

Internal Delivery

- Need clearer internal alignment on the brief to ensure consistent communications across the team
- A few operational friction points, including expenses management and prototype logistics, need earlier planning
- Reviewer quality varied – a larger and better-curated reviewer pool is a priority
- Airtable and Make automation worked, but took time to bed in – earlier setup and testing needed



7. Judge & Sponsor Perspectives

Feedback

Feedback from the Grand Final judging panel was overwhelmingly positive, with three themes emerging consistently: the quality and real-world relevance of student ideas; the exceptional standard of the top ten entries; and the value of initiatives like AMplify for building the engineering talent pipeline.

Loxley Graham (Alexander Daniels Global) highlighted the creativity and industry applicability of the entries. Pat Warner (Alpine F1) noted the difficulty of separating the top ten, with the standard extremely high across the board. Dan Brooks (AMPI) described being struck by the level of student innovation and intuition, and reflected on the pipeline development value of the challenge.

These perspectives reinforce the case for continued and deepened MTA involvement – the challenge is demonstrably delivering on its promise to industry.

What the judges said:

Loxley Graham, Alexander Daniel Global	Pat Warner, Alpine F1	Dan Brooks, AMPI
<p><i>"I thoroughly enjoyed supporting the AMplify Impact Challenge and was genuinely impressed by the energy, commitment and quality demonstrated by all participants. The ideas presented were not only creative but also grounded in real-world applicability, with clear potential to make a meaningful impact within the industry."</i></p>	<p><i>"The final ten teams were selected, we met at MACH, where each team presented their project to the judges and the final four were selected. This proved to be the tough part – the standard of the top ten entries was extremely high, and I'd like to congratulate all of the teams for their efforts."</i></p>	<p><i>"I was blown away by the level of innovation, the intuition of the students, and the general quality of the projects and presentations. Initiatives like this go a long way to developing that pipeline of talent and raising awareness of how wonderful a career at the cutting edge of engineering can be."</i></p>



8. Looking Ahead — 2027 & 2028

2027 — The Interim Year

With the next full challenge scheduled for 2028, 2027 represents a valuable in-between year. Key opportunities include:

- Developing thought-leadership content drawing on the finalist entries from 2026
- Alumni engagement — connecting 2026 participants with industry opportunities
- Early outreach to EfP educators and university Chapters to build the 2028 pipeline
- Exploring cross-sector opportunities and how challenge outputs can support wider industry comms
- Podcast and media development to maintain sector visibility between challenges
- Aligning with MTA on partnership priorities and shared objectives for the interim year

2028 — The Second AMplify Impact Challenge

Building on the strong foundations of 2026, the priorities for 2028 are:

Do again

- Early outreach to EfP educators and Chapters
- Simplified and consistent participant communications campaign
- Stronger communications between student teams and mentors throughout the challenge
- Maintain the overall delivery approach –it worked

Improve or avoid

- Ensure clear scope and timeline agreements are in place for volunteer reviewers and judges
- Connecting students with mentors earlier on in the timeline
- Address reviewer quality variation — recruit a larger, more experienced reviewer pool
- Resolve operational friction points (expenses, prototype management) earlier in the planning cycle

Invest more in

- Potentially bringing in more finalist teams (subject to space) and a broader prize structure
- Greater communications coverage of the challenge throughout the year
- Encouraging more students in grand final teams to create physical prototypes for display at the Grand Final
- Providing explicit guidance on AI use for student participants

9. Priorities & Next Steps

The following priorities have been identified coming out of the 2026 challenge and the EWB UK internal review:

- Align with MTA on a shared view of the partnership and next steps for 2026 and 2027
- Follow up with partners on opportunities, including internships
- Generate thought-leadership content (including from finalist entries)
- Explore cross-sector opportunities and how Challenge outputs can support wider comms
- Engage with the top 10 teams for a follow-up focus group in October/November 2026
- Gather media to support follow-up communications (including exploring podcast/cross-channel opportunities)

We've built strong foundations for 2028 – and exciting avenues to explore with MTA in the in-between year (2027).



10. About

Engineers Without Borders UK (EWB-UK)

Engineers Without Borders UK are working to reach the tipping point where global responsibility becomes integral to the way all engineering is taught and practised - to ensure a safe and just future for all. Part of a global movement of 57 Engineers Without Borders organisations who work in over 90 countries, we inspire, upskill and drive change in the engineering community and together take action to put global responsibility at the heart of engineering.

Additive Manufacturing UK (AMUK)

Additive Manufacturing UK (AMUK) exists to establish the UK as a world leader in the development and adoption of Additive and 3D Printing technology.

Setup in 2014, AMUK was initially a government-supported collaboration to help drive the UK's Additive Manufacturing strategy. In 2020 AMUK became part of the wider Manufacturing Technologies Association (MTA) cluster. The MTA now oversees AMUK, and has positioned it to deliver the services to benefit and drive forward the AM and 3D Printing community in the UK.

Sponsors & Partners – 2026



Media

Photo reel see below.

Amplify Grand Final video round-up [link](#)

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