



IR Society Best Practice Awards - FAQs

What are the IR Society Awards?

The annual awards have run for nearly 2 decades and are a celebration of companies that wish to demonstrate their commitment to leading investor communications. This important Society initiative is regularly reviewed by the Best Practice Committee and represents an integral part of the Society's mandate to promote best practice in IR.

Why enter?

Awards generally test the process of IR teams in that they can bring teams together and make teams think critically about the process behind investor communications. Ultimately, the process of entering awards can provide a useful benchmark against peers as well as validate IR performance to management and the Board.

How many different awards are there?

There are up to 5 *Self-entry* Award categories:

- Grand Prix: Best overall communication of company investment proposition
- Best Annual Report (including digital reporting)
- Most effective integration of ESG
- Best use of digital communications (including digital reporting)
- Best IPO IR Communications

There are up to 4 *Voted* Award categories with input from Extel Surveys:

- Best newcomer to IR (individual)
- Best investor relations officer (individual)
- Best overall company IR (company)
- Best investor engagement (Buy-side firm)

Who can enter?

The awards are open to all companies under 5 main categories for the Self-entry Awards, including: FTSE 100; FTSE 250; Small cap & AIM; and International. These companies must be quoted on a recognised stock exchange.

How do I enter?

Companies/ agencies can enter as many awards as they wish. Just complete the online self-entry form and download the entry form and relevant guidance notes for each award you wish to enter. Return completed forms to Laura Hayter (laura.hayter@irsociety.org.uk) with any additional supporting

information and the correct *fee*. Any other materials, such as annual reports, to support your entry should be sent to Laura by post.

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What is required? / Where can I find the judging criteria?

Entries for the Self-entry Awards are scored against criteria based on the Society's guidelines for best practice in investor communications, which can be found [here](#). There are different judging criteria for each of the Self-entry Award categories, which can be found online. The criteria and scoring are based on a quantitative and qualitative element, both equally weighted. Do note that the qualitative supporting entry statement – worth 50% of the overall scoring – gives the company an opportunity to share their approach to the award and to highlight what works for them and their audience. Potentially, this should be an important opportunity to differentiate your company and investor communications for your target audience.

Having completed the scoring for all entries, with expert input from independent third parties, including Business Schools, the short lists are submitted to an independent panel of judges drawn from users of annual reports and accounts. The winners are chosen from the short lists and presented on the night of the IR Society Awards, on 20 November 2018.

What is the difference between the Self-entry awards and the Voted Awards?

The Self-entry Awards require a company and or its agency to submit an entry on the prescribed entry form provided by the IR Society. This information can all be found online under the IR Society website: www.irs.org.uk

The Voted Awards, run in partnership with Extel Surveys, generally address a large buy- and sell-side audience who vote for the nominations under each category. Nominations can be submitted by a company and or anyone else in line with the same timetable as the Self-entry awards. Once nominations close, Extel Surveys undertake a voting process from 1 August-28 September 2018 that results in a short list of the top nominees for the Voted Awards. If you are nominated, it makes sense to let your buy- and sell-side contacts know given they may wish to vote for you/your company!

When do the award entries open for 2018?

The 2018 Best Practice Awards, both Self-entry Awards and nominations for the Voted Awards, will be launched on 12 April 2018.

What is the deadline for award entries?

The 2018 Best Practice Awards entries and nominations will close on 30 June 2018.

When will the short lists and winners be announced?

The short lists will be announced in October, at least a month before the IR Society Annual Awards dinner, on **20 November**, when the winners are announced.

If my company is international, but listed on the UK Stock Exchange, which category should I enter for?

If your company is listed on the FTSE 100 or FTSE 250 index or AIM or any other UK index, then it will be entered under the relevant category for UK listed companies. If the company is not listed in the UK, then it will be entered in the international category (wherever the company is based).

What does the judging process entail? Who are the judges?

The scoring of Self-entry Award entries is completed on both a quantitative (50%) and qualitative (50%) basis (see judging criteria for breakdown), with expert input from independent third parties, including Alliance Manchester Business School, Edinburgh University Business School and Lancaster Management School, for example, who assess the entries. Short lists are submitted to a panel of judges drawn from users of annual reports and accounts – you can view highlights from the 2017 judging panel [here](#).

In 2017, the judging panel included industry professionals, academics, professional bodies, regulators and other interested parties who make up our IR community. We aim to add to the panel each year and a full list appears on the IR Society website.

What if my company's annual report isn't published until after the deadline – am I eligible to enter?

Any entries for *Best Overall Communication of Company Investment Proposition*, *Best Annual Report*, or *Most Effective Integration of ESG* should be accompanied by one printed copy of the relevant annual report and any other supporting documentation by 30 June 2018. You can still enter even if your company's report is inaccessible online. However, to assist with the judging process, please indicate in your entry the pages or sections of your annual report, website or investor presentations where key information is covered/ can be found, and you can specify the date when the report will go live, including, within reason, if this occurs after 30 June 2018.

Why did we drop the Digital Reporting Category?

This now forms part of both the Best Annual Report and Best Digital Communications given some overlap and the increasing use of digital by companies in both annual reports and more broadly, across their communications. In a MiFID II operating environment, there is an opportunity for IR to own more and do more. This should include making more effective use of digital communications. Part of this is to scan what your peers are doing and do even more yourself, while not forgetting that all companies are in a competition for capital. Further, the judges reward innovation to make communications more effective in engaging the audience and in getting the message across.

Why has the award name changed from Most Effective Integration of Sustainability to Most Effective Integration of ESG?

We are pleased to announce we are launching a new award for 'Most effective integration of ESG'. This is adapted from our previous prize of 'Most effective integration of sustainability' and greater reflects the evolving environment in investor engagement on environmental, social and governmental issues. Importantly, evidence of governance and overall stewardship is becoming a key factor to investors. Business is expected to adopt a more thoughtful approach to a wider societal purpose and we wish to see this addressed. Accordingly, what is needed is more of an understanding and appreciation of what the target audience is thinking and expects to see in company reporting and presentation.

Entries for the Society awards should demonstrate this by including both financial and material non-financial factors as part of the overall approach to best practice investor communications."

What is the award for Best Investor Engagement?

This is under the Voted Awards and addresses the importance of the target audience that IR seeks to engage. This award will be decided by the most number of votes by Company IROs for an investor/buy-side firm that the investment community believes represents the best in investor engagement with companies. The process for nominations follows the same timeline as other Voted Awards.

Where can I find out more information about the awards and past winners?

On the IR Society [website](#), members can access Best Practice Guidelines, and a review of the 2017 Best Practice Awards, including a summary of the entries, names of the judging panel, key highlights and comments from the judges on the 2017 award winners. We also included a summary of feedback from the judges as part of our coverage this year. See Informed publication issue 98, Spring 2018.

For more information on this year's Best Practice awards, please do not hesitate to contact the team at the IR Society, or the [Best Practice Committee](#).

Any other enquiries?

Do please get in touch with the team at the IR Society:

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