

## IR Society Best Practice Awards - FAQs

### What are the IR Society Awards?

The annual awards have run for two 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.

### What are the benefits and why should I enter?

The business environment is challenging, recognition is scarce, time is short and entering our awards is an opportunity to demonstrate what a major difference each one of us can make to the companies we represent. Benefits of entering include:

- Evidence excellence – to win or to be shortlisted, shows that you have reached the very highest standard, as judged by leading experts
- Raise your profile – with your peers, internal and external stakeholders, strengthening your corporate reputation
- Make your company proud - it's a great recognition for all the hard work, commitment and dedication that goes in every day
- Reflect on your work – the process of entering the awards often helps one to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation's communications strategies and provides a springboard of ideas on what to focus on for the future
- Incentive to improve - the competitive nature of the Awards provides an opportunity to challenge the internal 'status quo'

### How many different awards are there?

There are up to four *Self-entry* Award categories (see Appendix 1 for an overview of each Award):

- Best IR Communications and Engagement Programme
- Best Innovation in IR
- Best Communications of ESG
- Best Annual Report

There are up to four *Voted* Award categories with input from Institutional Investor 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 listed companies in the UK, continental Europe and Global ex Europe under the four main categories for the Self-entry Awards. This year we have simplified the categories of the companies into Small-cap, Mid-cap and Large-cap with all international companies integrated into company size rather than separately as has been done in the past. These companies must be quoted on a recognised stock exchange. Please note Small-cap, Mid-cap and Large-cap criteria will be comparable to FTSE 100, 250 and Small-cap/AIM market cap sizes as at March 30, 2021.

### How do I enter the Self-entry Awards and how long does it take?

Companies/agencies can enter as many awards as they wish. Just download and complete the self-entry form along with the relevant guidance notes for each award you wish to enter. The process for our self-entry awards is an easy-to-use Q&A entry form. This gives the company an opportunity to share their approach to the award and to highlight what works for them and their audience(s). Potentially, this should be an important opportunity to differentiate your company and investor communications for your target audience(s).

Once completed, your entry form can be submitted online along with any additional supporting information and payment. All in all, your submission, including the Q&A should take no more than a couple hours to complete.

### 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 Q&A entry form provided by the IR Society. This information can all be found online on the IR Society website: [www.irsociety.org.uk](http://www.irsociety.org.uk)

The Voted Awards, run in partnership with Institutional Investor (II), generally address a large buy- and sell-side audience who vote for their preferred companies/IROs under each category. Alongside the II Surveys voting process, nominations can be submitted by a company and/or anyone else in line for consideration. Any nominations will be combined into the II Surveys voting process, from which a short list (ranked by number of votes) of candidates will be drawn up. The winner for each category will be determined by the most number of votes.

### When do the award entries open for 2021?

The 2021 Best Practice Awards, both Self-entry Awards and nominations for the Voted Awards, will be launched on 28 April 2021.

### What is the deadline for award entries?

The 2021 Best Practice Voted awards nominations will close on 7 May 2021 and the Self-entry Awards entries will close on 31 July 2021.





### When will the short lists and winners be announced?

The short lists for both the Self-entry and Voted awards will be announced in October, at least a month before the IR Society Annual Awards dinner, in **late November**, when the winners are announced.

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

This year we have adapted the categories for companies across all regions to enter into the Small-cap, Mid-cap and Large-cap categories. All entries will be integrated into the relevant category depending on size. Please note Small-cap, Mid-cap and Large-cap criteria will be comparable to FTSE 100, 250 and Small-cap/AIM market cap sizes as at March 30, 2021.

### What does the judging process for the Self-entry entail? Who are the judges?

Entries for the Self-entry Awards are judged by a panel of esteemed investor relations and investment community professionals with significant expertise in the area they are judging.

In 2020 we introduced a new independent Chair of the judging panel, Paul Lee, and the judging panel included industry professionals, investors, 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.

In order to short-list each Award for submission to the judging panel, all entries are scored against criteria based on the Society's guidelines for best practice in investor communications, which can be found [here](#). The scoring of entries is completed on both a qualitative and quantitative basis.

We also receive expert input from independent third parties, including Alliance Manchester Business School and Lancaster Management School, for example.

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

All entries need to have been published before the entry deadline of 31 July 2021. Any entries for *Best Annual Report*, and *Best Communication of ESG*, should be accompanied by one printed or digital copy of the relevant annual report and any other supporting documentation by 31 July 2021. If you have delivered a digital-first report, you may also enter this for consideration – please highlight the URL for judges to consider. 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 31 July 2021.





### Have there been any changes to the Awards this year?

Through the work of the Best Practice committee we continually review and adapt our awards criteria in line with current best practice. This year we have refined and reviewed our Self-entry Awards to ensure they reflect any changes in regulation and current best practice. To reinforce the importance of a holistic IR engagement programme that meets the needs of shareholders, and wider stakeholders and increasingly broader communication we have combined the former *Best overall communication of company investment proposition* and *best digital communications awards* into a flagship award - *Best IR Communications and Engagement Programme*.

We have also introduced a new award, *Best Innovation in IR*. (See Appendix 1 for an overview of each Self-entry Award.)

### What should I consider for Best Innovation in IR award?

With this category, the Society is seeking examples of innovation, transformation, and modernisation which has taken place over the last 12-18 months. The objective of this Award is to recognise and encourage continuous development and improvement in our industry. This may be through a change in your communications and engagement strategy, internally and externally, development of new processes, improved insight and intelligence, or adoption of new technology.

### What is the Best Investor Engagement award?

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 IR 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, together with a review of the 2020 Best Practice Awards, including a summary of the entries, names of the judging panel, key highlights and comments from the judges on the 2020 award winners. We also included a summary of feedback from the judges as part of our coverage this year.

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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## Appendix 1: Overview of Self-entry Awards

### **Best IR Communications and Engagement Programme**

Effective and successful implementation of an investor relations engagement programme, that both reflects and supports the strategy and goals for the business.

The IR strategy should include and be supported by the following elements:

- An appropriate reporting calendar
- Presentation and statement to reflect strategy and performance
- Monitoring and management of company forecasts and analyst estimates
- Investor engagement through roadshows, site visits, divisional updates, product launches, etc.
- A website that gives a clear and concise picture of the company while also providing a forum for regulatory information.

### **Best Innovation in IR**

With this category, we are seeking examples of innovation, transformation, and modernisation which have taken place over the last 12-18 months. The objective is to recognise and encourage continuous development and improvement in the IR profession. Examples could include but are not limited to:

- External communications and engagement
- Internal development and processes
- Insight and intelligence
- Technology

### **Best Communication of ESG**

We recognise that this is a developing area for many companies and each will be at different stages of their journey. We would like to see businesses demonstrate that their internal approaches are changing and that the ownership of the ESG communication does not just rest with one department or team.

- Evidence of a year-round communication approach to investors and wider stakeholders
- Insight into how environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks and opportunities are identified, understood and proactively managed and measured to contribute to a business' competitive advantage

- A consistent and proactive point of view on material ESG issues and long-term value creation across all communications with investors

### **Best Annual Report**

Best practice annual reports clearly articulate how a business differentiates itself and provides a 'shop window' into the company and its culture.

Best practice considerations include:

- A forward looking, engaging, concise and entity-specific report
- Connectivity of information providing a holistic view of the business
- Clear links between strategy, KPIs, risk and remuneration
- An investment proposition that explains the growth drivers that promote long-term value
- The report should be fair, balanced and understandable
- The report should also highlight a clear road map for transitioning to a sustainable future and any risks associated with delays in doing so