

CIPD

The CIPD in Ireland HR Awards 2027

Recognising and celebrating
outstanding people practices



Entry pack 2027

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The CIPD in Ireland HR Awards celebrate the organisations, teams and individuals shaping better workplaces through outstanding people practice. They recognise evidence-based initiatives, strategies and leadership that are making a measurable difference to people, organisations and the future of work across Ireland.

Supported by a rigorous and independent judging process, being named a finalist or winner is recognised as a mark of excellence among peers and across the wider profession.

Use this entry pack to identify the category that best reflects your most impactful work and to guide you in preparing a strong submission. We encourage you to focus on the challenge, your approach and the impact achieved, while demonstrating how your work reflects the CIPD professional values and principles.

Entries close at **23:59 on Wednesday 21 October 2026**.

If you have any questions, please contact the CIPD in Ireland Awards team at awards@cipd.ie.

We look forward to receiving your entry and celebrating the outstanding impact of the people profession across Ireland.

Best of luck with your submission,
The CIPD in Ireland team



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Why enter?

Whether you're leading transformation, delivering innovative people solutions, developing future talent, strengthening workplace culture or achieving outstanding results in your area of practice, the CIPD in Ireland HR Awards are an opportunity to demonstrate the real difference your work is making.

Entering can help you:

- ✓ Gain recognition for outstanding people practice.
- ✓ Celebrate the achievements of your team and organisation.
- ✓ Benchmark your work against leading employers and practitioners.
- ✓ Raise the profile of your organisation and people function.
- ✓ Share successful approaches and inspire the wider profession.
- ✓ Extend your recognition beyond Ireland. Winners will have the opportunity to progress to the CIPD People Management Awards 2027.

Preparing your entry

As you prepare your entry, please consider the guidance below.
We recommend reviewing this information before starting your online application.

CIPD professional values and principles

- The [Profession Map](#) sits at the heart of the people profession and provides a framework for demonstrating the CIPD professional values of being [evidence-based](#) and [outcomes-driven](#).
- We encourage entrants to demonstrate how their work embodies one or more of the [CIPD professional principles](#): work matters, people matter, and professionalism matters.
- Judges will look for clear, credible examples that demonstrate these principles in practice

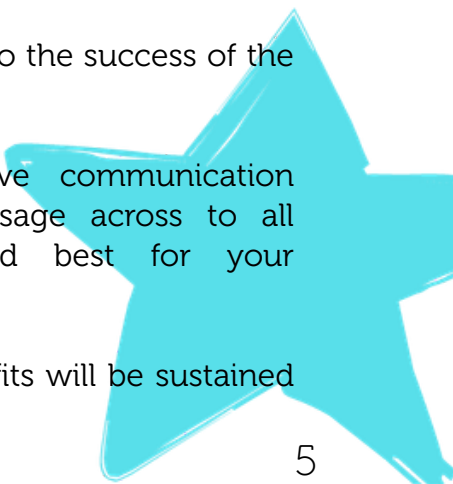
Clearly describe the business need

- Explain the business challenge, opportunity or transformation that prompted the initiative, outlining the role of the people function and the need being addressed.
- Consider asking yourself the following:
 - What was the intended outcome and how was HR central to achieving that?
 - What was the rationale driving the HR effort and approach taken?
 - How did that approach contribute to a positive outcome?
- Remember, even the strongest initiative may struggle to stand out if it is not clear how the initiative was embedded in and responded to an organisational need, the approach taken and the impact achieved.

Show evidence of delivery and achievement

- Judges will be looking for clear evidence of measurable outcomes resulting from the actions taken, and the contribution made by people professionals and their stakeholders. Wherever possible, support your outcomes with relevant business and people metrics.
- Clearly demonstrate your starting point, the actions taken and the outcomes that resulted from taking a decisive and distinctive approach.
- Initiatives at an early stage may find it difficult to demonstrate measurable impact. Additional time may be needed to build a stronger evidence base before entering.

Explain the people aspects of the project or initiative

- Set out the specific people practices and actions that were taken to support the change or transformation delivered.
 - Outline how you gained support for the project / initiative among employees, leaders and other stakeholders.
 - Highlight any cross-functional collaboration that contributed to the success of the initiative.
 - Strong entries often demonstrate interesting / innovative communication strategies that were effective in clearly getting the message across to all stakeholders. Which communication approaches worked best for your organisation and why?
 - Explain how the approach was embedded and how the benefits will be sustained over time.
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Show the distinctiveness of your approach

- Explain what sets your approach apart – what is unique or innovative about your entry?
- What was the scale and complexity of the challenge(s) that had to be overcome?
- Make sure to tell us how your approach is sustainable and will continue to deliver value to the organisation in the future.
- Identify how the approach evolved and strengthened the culture of the organisation and contributed to sustainable competitive advantage, engagement and people development.
- AI tools can be useful for helping to plan, structure or refine your submission. However, entrants remain responsible for ensuring that all information provided is accurate, authentic and reflects the work undertaken and outcomes achieved. Judges assess entries on the quality of the evidence presented, the impact achieved and how effectively this is demonstrated. Entries that are generic, unsupported or lack specific examples are unlikely to score highly.

The application process

- Entries must be completed using our online application platform, Submit: <https://cipd.submit.com/>
- While [Submit](#) is supported by other browsers, Google Chrome is the recommended browser for the best user experience.
- You'll be asked to register and create your unique login on [Submit](#) before you begin to enter a category.
- You can start your application, save your progress and return to complete at a later stage. You'll be able to download and print your application as you go and will receive a copy with your submission confirmation email.
- The name of the entering organisation as submitted will be used in all announcements and marketing communications, unless otherwise requested.
- Entry responses must not exceed the maximum combined word count of 3,000 words. Each question also has an individual word limit and Submit will not allow this limit to be exceeded.

- A separate entry form (Form B) is used for the Most inspirational and impactful leader and Rising star of the people profession categories. All other categories use the organisational initiative entry form (Form A).
- Supporting documents may be uploaded to provide additional context, such as tables, graphics or charts. These materials will not be scored but may be valuable in bringing your application to life.
- At the end of the submission process, you will be asked to confirm your entry and permission for the CIPD in Ireland to use the information submitted and for it to be shared with the judging panel. Entries that have not been formally submitted and confirmed will be incomplete and cannot be accessed by the judges.

Entry timelines

- All entries must be completed and fully submitted by 23:59, Wednesday 21 October 2026.
- Finalists in each category will be announced online and communicated on Tuesday, 1 December 2026.
- An online briefing for finalists will take place on Thursday 3 December 2026.
- Finalists will attend a virtual interview with the judging panel on either 3 or 4 February 2027. Finalists will be required to use their own computer to present to the virtual judging panel. Presentations and supporting videos are optional, but recommended, and should be submitted to the CIPD in Ireland in advance of the interview.
- Winners will be announced at the CIPD in Ireland HR Awards ceremony on the afternoon of 5 March 2027 in the Round Room of the Mansion House.

2027 Timeline



Communications and marketing

- The organisation or nominee name provided will always be the name used in all announcements, CIPD websites and marketing communications, unless otherwise requested.
- Entrants agree to cooperate with the CIPD in Ireland in promoting finalists and winners through appropriate channels, including social media, case studies, media activity and events. Commercially sensitive information will always be respected.
- The CIPD in Ireland and sponsoring organisations may use photographs and video footage from the awards ceremony, including images of finalists and winners, as appropriate. Delegates attending the ceremony may contact us in advance if they do not wish to be included in photography or video content.
- Previous [winning entries](#) are available to view. While these don't provide the full scope of each initiative, they may inspire you as you prepare your entry.

Judging

The CIPD in Ireland HR Awards are recognised for their rigorous, independent and transparent judging process. Being shortlisted as a finalist is a significant achievement in itself and reflects the quality and impact of the work submitted.

Our judges

Our thanks to Professor Bill Roche, Full Professor of Industrial Relations and Human Resources at UCD Smurfit Graduate Business School, who has overseen the judging process for several years. His oversight helps ensure that judges are supported by clear criteria, robust guidelines and a consistent approach to assessing and scoring entries.

A panel of head judges also oversees the process and supports the final judging decisions.

Our judges include senior HR and people leaders, subject matter experts and previous award winners at a Chartered member or Chartered fellow level from a broad range of sectors and organisations. All judges are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest and commit to maintaining the confidentiality of entries throughout the judging process.

The judging process

Entries are assessed through a two-stage judging process against the published category criteria, helping to ensure finalists and winners represent the highest standards of people practice.

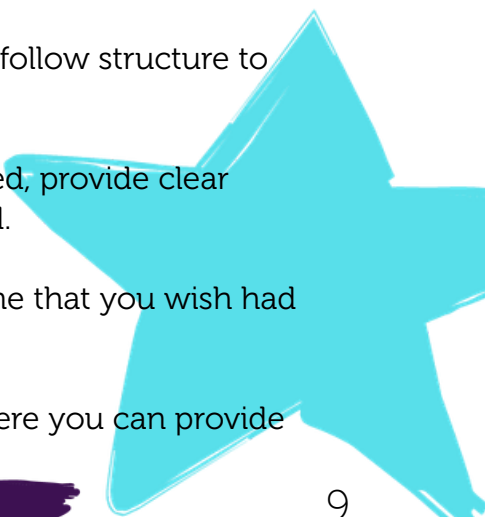
Stage one: Initial review:

- Entries are judged by a panel of expert judges who assess them against the entry questions asked and the individual category criteria.
- The highest-scoring entries in each category are shortlisted as finalists. (Where both the volume and standard of entries are high, a category may be divided into separate groups.)

Stage two: Finalist interviews

- The shortlisted entries are announced as finalists on Tuesday, 1 December 2026.
- Finalists are invited to attend an online briefing session on Thursday 3 December 2026 and guidance on planning and preparing to meet the judges is provided.
- Finalists meet a panel of judges for a virtual interview on 3 or 4 February 2027. This provides an opportunity to bring the story, approach and impact of the initiative to life. Presentations and supporting videos are optional, but recommended.
- The judges will determine the category winners.

Feedback from previous judges

- Keep the responses clear, concise and jargon light. Avoid using internal acronyms unless they are essential and clearly explained.
 - Strong entries have a clear format, with a logical and easy to follow structure to their answers.
 - The judges are looking for evidence of the outcomes achieved, provide clear evidence of the outcomes achieved and the impact delivered.
 - Make sure to answer the question that's asked and not the one that you wish had been asked!
 - Choose the category that best reflects your initiative and where you can provide the strongest evidence of impact.
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- Ensure your submission reflects the specific criteria for the category and that these themes are reinforced throughout both the written entry and finalist presentation, where applicable.
- Avoid focusing solely on metrics that are not directly linked to the business, focus on metrics that demonstrate meaningful business, workforce or people outcomes.
- Clearly demonstrate your starting point, the actions taken and the results achieved. Judges are particularly interested in understanding your journey and the difference that taking a decisive and distinctive approach has made on the organisation and its people.
- Initiatives at an early stage may find it more difficult to demonstrate measurable impact. Consider whether sufficient evidence is available to show the impact on your organisation before entering.
- Successful entries demonstrated how their approach would continue to sustainably support the organisation in the future, while strengthening a culture of performance, engagement and people development.

2027 Award categories

The CIPD in Ireland HR Awards categories reflect the core areas of people practice, as well as emerging trends shaping the profession. The categories are reviewed annually, and for 2027, we are introducing a new category to recognise an area of growing importance and impact: Excellence in collective bargaining.

Categories 2027

1. AI, technology and workforce transformation
 2. Consultancy or strategic partnership
 3. Equality, diversity and inclusion initiative
 4. Excellence in collective bargaining (new)
 5. Future workforce strategy
 6. HR Excellence in a small business (SME)
 7. Learning and development initiative
 8. Most inspirational and impactful leader
 9. Organisational change and transformation initiative
 10. People and culture initiative
 11. People team of the year
 12. Reward and recognition strategy
 13. Rising star of the people profession
 14. Talent management strategy
- 



Choosing the right category

The category criteria are designed to help you decide which category best reflects your work and understand what the judges will be looking for. Entries may relate to a single initiative, programme, project or broader strategy, provided you can demonstrate the need, approach and impact achieved.

If your initiative could fit more than one category, choose the one that best reflects the primary challenge addressed and where you can provide the strongest evidence of impact. You may submit entries for multiple categories, provided each entry is unique and relevant to the specific category criteria. Entrants may be shortlisted as a finalist in a maximum of three categories. If you are unsure which category is the best fit, please contact awards@cipd.ie.

We encourage entrants to reflect the CIPD professional values of being evidence-based and outcomes-driven, and to demonstrate the principles that work matters, people matter and professionalism matters where relevant to their submission.

What makes a strong entry?

Regardless of category, judges are typically looking for entries that:

- ✓ Clearly explain the challenge, opportunity or organisational need.
- ✓ Demonstrate how decisions were informed by evidence, insight or data.
- ✓ Describe the actions taken and how they were implemented.
- ✓ Show measurable outcomes and meaningful impact.
- ✓ Demonstrate how the work was embedded within the organisation.
- ✓ Highlight longer-term value, sustainability or learning.
- ✓ Bring the initiative to life through a clear narrative that explains the starting point, the journey and the results achieved.



Category criteria

AI, technology and workforce transformation

This category recognises people-led initiatives that use AI, automation, technology, data or digital transformation to improve organisational performance, workforce effectiveness and employee experience.

It celebrates the role of HR, and the people function in ensuring technology is implemented responsibly, adopted successfully and delivers measurable value for the organisation and its people. This could include the introduction of AI tools, HR technology platforms, workforce analytics, automation, digital learning solutions, employee self-service technologies or broader workforce transformation programmes.

This category may be right for you if:

- You introduced AI, automation or technology to solve a workforce or business challenge.
- You implemented a new HRIS, people analytics platform or digital people solution.
- You used workforce data and insight to improve decision-making.
- You redesigned work, jobs or workforce processes through technology.
- You led an organisation-wide technology adoption or workforce transformation programme.

What judges will be looking for:

- A clearly defined business challenge, opportunity or strategic objective.
- Alignment with organisational and workforce priorities.
- Meaningful involvement of HR and people professionals throughout the initiative.
- Effective stakeholder engagement, communication and change management.
- Responsible and ethical use of AI, technology and workforce data.
- Evidence that employees were supported to adopt new ways of working.
- Clear, measurable outcomes for the organisation, workforce and employee experience.

Consultancy or strategic partnership

This category recognises consultants, suppliers, advisers and strategic partners who have worked collaboratively with a client organisation to solve a significant people or business challenge.

The award celebrates partnerships that move beyond service delivery to create measurable organisational value through people expertise, innovation and collaboration.

This category may be right for you if:

- You partnered with a client to deliver a significant HR, L&D, OD, talent, reward, wellbeing or workforce initiative.
- The solution was co-designed and implemented collaboratively.
- The work addressed a clearly defined business challenge or opportunity.
- You can demonstrate measurable outcomes for the client organisation.

What judges will be looking for:

- A strong understanding of the client's challenge and business needs.
- Genuine collaboration and partnership working.
- Clear roles, responsibilities and accountability.
- Innovative or evidence-based solutions.
- Measurable organisational, workforce or business outcomes.
- Sustainable impact beyond the initial engagement.

Equality, diversity and inclusion initiative

This category recognises initiatives that improve equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging while supporting organisational performance and a sustainable workplace culture.

It celebrates action that goes beyond intent to deliver measurable and lasting change.

This category may be right for you if:

- You have improved workforce representation or inclusion.
- You have addressed barriers to progression or opportunity.
- You have created more equitable policies, practices or workplace experiences.
- You can demonstrate measurable progress and sustainable impact.

What judges will be looking for:

- A clearly identified inclusion challenge or opportunity.
- Leadership commitment and accountability.
- Evidence-based decision-making.
- Meaningful employee involvement and engagement.
- Sustainable behavioural, cultural or structural change.
- Measurable outcomes linked to organisational goals.

Excellence in collective bargaining (new)

This category recognises organisations, employer representatives and trade union partners who have successfully used collective bargaining to address workplace challenges and achieve positive outcomes.

The focus is on constructive engagement, sustainable agreements and organisational success.

This category may be right for you if:

- You negotiated a significant collective agreement.
- You resolved a complex workplace issue through collective bargaining.
- You strengthened employee relations, partnership working or trust.
- You can demonstrate measurable outcomes for employees and the organisation.

What judges will be looking for:

- Constructive and good-faith engagement between the parties.
 - Effective partnership working and relationship building.
 - A clear workplace challenge or opportunity.
 - Innovation in collective bargaining approaches where appropriate.
 - Employee voice, engagement and inclusivity.
 - Positive outcomes for employees and the organisation.
 - Sustainable agreements that support long-term organisational success.
-

Future workforce strategy

This category recognises workforce strategies that prepare organisations for future challenges and opportunities through workforce planning, capability building, organisational design and skills development.

This category may be right for you if:

- You redesigned your workforce strategy.
- You addressed critical skills or capability gaps.
- You improved workforce planning and organisational agility.
- You took action to prepare for future workforce needs.

What judges will be looking for:

- Alignment with organisational strategy and future priorities.
 - Effective use of workforce planning, insight and forecasting.
 - Actions taken to address future capability or skills requirements.
 - Collaboration across functions and stakeholders.
 - Evidence of organisational resilience and future readiness.
 - Measurable progress against strategic objectives.
-

HR Excellence in a small business (SME)

This category recognises small and medium-sized organisations that demonstrate outstanding people practice and clear organisational impact. Eligible organisations must employ fewer than 150 employees.

This category may be right for you if:

- You are an SME with a strong people strategy.
- You have achieved significant outcomes with limited resources.
- HR plays an important role in business success.
- You can demonstrate measurable impact.

What judges will be looking for:

- Strategic contribution of people practices to business success.
- Creativity, agility and innovation.
- Effective use of resources.
- Strong people practices and leadership.
- Measurable organisational and workforce outcomes.
- Sustainable impact.

Learning and development initiative

This category recognises learning and development initiatives that build capability, close skills gaps and support organisational performance.

This category may be right for you if:

- You introduced a significant learning initiative or programme.
- You addressed critical capability or skills challenges.
- You improved organisational performance through learning and development.
- You can demonstrate measurable outcomes for learners and the organisation.

What judges will be looking for:

- A clearly identified capability, skills or performance need.
 - Strong alignment between learning activity and organisational priorities.
 - Evidence-based design and delivery.
 - Learner engagement, participation and adoption.
 - Measurable improvements in capability, performance or organisational outcomes.
 - Evidence that learning has been applied in practice and delivered lasting value.
-

Most inspirational and impactful leader

This category recognises an experienced people professional whose leadership has delivered measurable impact and advanced the people profession.

This category may be right if your nominee:

- is a senior people leader.
- has influenced organisational culture, strategy or performance.
- has actively develop and support others.
- has made a contribution to the wider profession.

What judges will be looking for:

- Values-led leadership and professionalism.
 - Strategic influence and organisational impact.
 - The ability to inspire, develop and empower others.
 - Evidence of measurable people and business outcomes.
 - Contribution to the development of the people profession.
 - Lasting influence on organisational culture, capability or performance.
-

Organisational change and transformation initiative

This category recognises people-led transformation programmes that have fundamentally improved organisational performance, capability, culture or ways of working.

This category may be right if your nominee:

- You led a major transformation programme.
- You redesigned structures, processes or operating models.
- You implemented large-scale organisational change.
- You can demonstrate measurable and sustainable outcomes.

What judges will be looking for:

- A clear rationale and case for change.
 - Effective planning, governance and delivery.
 - Strong stakeholder engagement and communication.
 - Leadership commitment and alignment.
 - Successful adoption of new ways of working.
 - Measurable and sustainable organisational impact.
-

People and culture initiative

This category recognises initiatives that strengthen organisational culture, employee experience, engagement, wellbeing or Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance while supporting organisational success.

This category may be right for you if:

- You improved organisational culture or employee experience.
- You increased engagement, wellbeing or belonging.
- You strengthened organisational values or behaviours.
- You can demonstrate measurable outcomes.

What judges will be looking for:

- A clear link between the initiative and organisational priorities.
 - Meaningful employee and leadership involvement.
 - Evidence of positive behavioural or cultural change.
 - Improvements in employee experience, engagement or wellbeing.
 - Measurable organisational outcomes.
 - Sustainable impact over time.
-

People team of the year

This category recognises an HR, L&D, OD or people team that has delivered exceptional results and created significant value for its organisation.

This category may be right for you if:

- Your team has delivered significant organisational impact.
- You have led high-profile people initiatives or programmes.
- You have strengthened the contribution of the people function.
- You can demonstrate collective achievement and results.

What judges will be looking for:

- The strategic contribution of the people team.
- Effective collaboration within the team and across the organisation.
- Innovation and problem-solving.
- Delivery against organisational priorities.
- Measurable people and business outcomes.
- Evidence of sustained performance and organisational value.

Reward and recognition strategy

This category recognises reward and recognition strategies that drive performance, engagement, retention and fairness.

This category may be right for you if:

- You redesigned reward frameworks or recognition programmes.
- You improved pay transparency, fairness or employee value propositions.
- You introduced innovative approaches to reward and recognition.
- You can demonstrate measurable impact.

What judges will be looking for:

- Clear alignment between reward strategy and organisational objectives.
 - Fairness, inclusivity and accessibility.
 - Evidence-based design and decision-making.
 - Employee understanding, engagement and uptake.
 - Measurable improvements in attraction, retention, engagement or performance.
 - Sustainable organisational impact.
-

Rising star of the people profession

This category recognises an outstanding early-career people professional who has already demonstrated significant potential and impact.

Applicants should typically be within their first five years in HR, L&D, recruitment or organisational development.

This category may be right if your nominee:

- is in the early stages of their people profession career.
- has delivered meaningful outcomes or improvements.
- demonstrates initiative, curiosity and leadership potential.
- has positively influenced people or organisational outcomes.

What judges will be looking for:

- Evidence of achievement relative to career stage.
 - Initiative, innovation and problem-solving.
 - The ability to build relationships and influence others.
 - Commitment to learning and professional development.
 - Measurable contribution to people or organisational outcomes.
 - Potential to become a future leader of the profession.
-

Talent management strategy

This category recognises talent strategies that strengthen organisational capability through the effective attraction, development, engagement and retention of talent.

This category may be right for you if:

- You redesigned talent management practices.
- You improved succession planning, development or retention.
- You addressed critical talent challenges.
- You can demonstrate measurable workforce outcomes.

What judges will be looking for:

- A clearly identified talent or capability challenge.
- Strong alignment with organisational strategy and workforce needs.
- Effective approaches to attraction, development, progression or retention.
- Inclusive and accessible talent practices.
- Measurable improvements in capability, retention or organisational performance.
- Long-term value for the organisation and its workforce.

Requirements and conditions of entry

- At the end of the submission process, entrants will be asked to confirm their acceptance of these conditions and certify that all information provided is accurate and truthful.
- All entries must be fully completed and made via the [Submit](#) platform by the published closing date. Entrants must confirm their submission and consent to the information provided being shared with the judging panel. Incomplete, draft or unconfirmed submissions, and any entries received after the deadline, will not be accepted or included in the judging process.
- The CIPD in Ireland and the judging panel reserve the right to confirm the accuracy of the information provided. The judges' decisions are final.
- You may submit entries for multiple categories, provided each entry is unique and relevant to the specific category criteria. Similar or identical submissions cannot be used across multiple categories. Entrants may be shortlisted as a finalist in a maximum of three categories. Where appropriate, the CIPD in Ireland will contact entrants to discuss this.

- Previous category winners may not resubmit the same winning entry as the basis of a future application.
- Entry responses must not exceed the maximum combined word count of 3,000 words. Each question also has an individual word limit which the submission platform will not allow to be exceeded.
- Links to additional information on company websites are included in the word count. While supporting information may be referenced, judges are not required to review material accessed through external links and the content will not be scored.
- Consultants and other service providers may jointly enter with client organisations. All such entries must be signed off by an authorised representative of the client organisation.
- Entrants agree to cooperate with the CIPD in Ireland in promoting finalists and winners through appropriate channels, including social media, case studies, events and media activity. Commercially sensitive information will always be respected.
- Where a potential conflict of interest exists involving suppliers or contractors to the CIPD in Ireland, entries may be subject to additional review before being progressed through the judging process.
- AI tools may be used to help plan, structure or refine a submission. However, entrants remain responsible for ensuring that all information provided is accurate, authentic and reflects the work undertaken and outcomes achieved. Judges will assess submissions on the quality of the evidence presented and the impact demonstrated. Generic, unsupported or unsubstantiated claims are unlikely to score highly.

Entry questions

On [Submit](#) you will find two forms from which to choose.

Each form asks for administrative information alongside the scored questions. There is a word count limit on each of the scored questions and an overall word count limit of 2,000 words.

At the end of the application process, you will be required to confirm your acceptance of the rules of entry and certify that the information provided on this entry form is true and accurate.

Form A: Organisational initiative entry form

Form A is for the organisational initiatives categories.

This form is designed to help judges understand the challenge faced, the approach taken and the impact achieved.

Scored questions

1. Overview of the organisation and initiative (10% - maximum 300 words)
2. Rationale, insight and strategic alignment (20% - maximum 600 words)
3. Design, governance and delivery (30% - maximum 900 words)
4. Measurable impact and success (30% - maximum 900 words)
5. Challenges, learning and future development (10% - maximum 500 words)

Don't forget to demonstrate how your entry embodies the [CIPD professional principles](#) that work matters, people matter, and professionalism matters.

Form B: Individual nomination entry form

Form B is to be used for the Most inspirational and impactful leader and Rising star of the people profession categories.

This form is designed to help judges understand the nominee's career journey, achievements and impact.

Scored questions

1. Overview of the nominee and career to date (10% - maximum 300 words)
2. Values, innovation and contribution to the profession (20% - maximum 600 words)
3. Influencing others and delivering outcomes (30% - maximum 900 words)
4. Measurable impact and recognition (30% - maximum 900 words)
5. Challenges, development and future contribution (10% - maximum 500 words)

Don't forget to demonstrate how your entry embodies the [CIPD professional principles](#) that work matters, people matter, and professionalism matters.

