THE INDEPENDENT AWARDS STANDARDS COUNCIL TRUST MARK - APPLICATION FORM

The Awards Trust Mark is a not-for-profit accreditation programme run by The Independent Awards Standards Council with the goal of, as the name suggests, enhancing trust between those entering awards programmes, and the organisations running them.

It is based around a voluntary code of conduct that awards organisers commit to. All levels of the Trust Mark require a director to sign up to this code of conduct. The highest levels (Advanced and Outstanding) not only have the most extensive list of elements within the code of conduct, but are also validated\* by calling a randomly selected awards judge and awards entrant.

The initiative is not-for-profit. All individuals on the Council, and organisations supporting the accreditation, monitor their investments and the fees charged to award organisers are purely to cover these costs. Any surplus is reinvested back into the initiative.
The initiative is already raising standards in the industry, and we would encourage everyone entering awards to encourage the organisers to commit to the code of conduct and thus earn an Awards Trust Mark.

## Single award Programme applications

In order to apply for the Trust Mark, please complete each section of the form relevant to the level of accreditation ([Standard](#_Awards_trust_mark:), [Advanced](#_Awards_Trust_Mark:_1) or [Outstanding](#_Awards_trust_mark:_2)), answering yes (y) or no (n) to each question. Please then provide a short summary to qualify how you meet the standard. Where possible, please provide any supporting evidence referenced in your summaries in the form of a single DOC or PDF to help with the assessment process. For example, images or feedback reports, screenshots of website pages.

\*Please note: The validation exercise can only validate based on the most recent awards, but **your application is based on the elements of the code of conduct you commit to for the current/next iteration of your programme.** This possible disconnect will be factored into any validation call. Failure to implement changes that you propose will happen in future awards may result in the Awards Trust Mark being withdrawn at a future date.

Please ensure you also complete the [Authorisation section](#_Authorisation_(please_complete) at the end of the form. Completing and signing this section confirms that the practices and processes of all awards named adhere to the high standards that the Awards Trust Mark requires.

If you are applying for an Advanced or Outstanding Trust Mark, please provide contact names and details of 5 judge and 5 entrant references so that we can obtain feedback on judging and entering your awards in the [Verification section](#_Verification). For Standard Accreditations, we do not require references.

## Multiple award programme applications

If you are applying to accredit multiple awards with the Awards Trust Mark Initiative, please list the award names and call to entry dates in the [Multiple Awards Accreditation table](#_Multiple_award_scheme) below.

Please then complete each section of the form relevant to the level of accreditation ([Standard](#_Awards_trust_mark:), [Advanced](#_Awards_Trust_Mark:_1) or [Outstanding](#_Awards_trust_mark:_2)), answering yes (y) or no (n) to each question, providing a short summary to qualify how you meet the standard. Where possible, please provide any supporting evidence referenced in your summaries in the form of a single DOC or PDF to help with the assessment process. For example, images or feedback reports, screenshots of website pages.

Please ensure you also complete the [Authorisation section](#_Authorisation_(please_complete) at the end of the form. Completing and signing this section confirms that the practices and processes of all awards named adhere to the high standards that the Awards Trust Mark requires. You must also declare that the same practices and processes will be in place for the next year of your awards. Failure to implement changes that you propose will happen in future awards may result in the Trust Mark being withdrawn at a future date.

If you are applying for an Advanced or Outstanding Trust Mark, please provide contact names and details of 5 judge and 5 entrant references so that we can obtain feedback on judging and entering your awards in the [Verification section](#_Verification). For Standard Accreditations, we do not require references.

## What you get for applying

Any awards programme that earns an accreditation:

* Can use the Trust Mark logo corresponding to the level of accreditation that they have earned in any marketing for one iteration of your awards programme coinciding with, or after accreditation has been earned. When in digital form, the logo must link to the appropriate page of the [www.awardstrustmark.org](http://www.awardstrustmark.org) website which explains what the level you earned means.
* Will have their awards marked with a correspondingly coloured logo on the **Awards Trust Mark** website. This site is the agreed location where the accreditation level is published and can be verified.
* Will receive a PDF certificate for the accreditation. A printed certificate is available for £10 extra and a framed certificate is an additional £20 (to cover materials and postage).

## Before you submit

**Please complete the application form fully. If you cannot answer ‘yes’ to all the criteria points, do not submit an application.** Accreditations will be reviewed only after payment is received and **accreditation is not guaranteed**. If you do not qualify for accreditation, you will be provided with one round of feedback only. You may re-submit your application (with no additional cost), however if you do not qualify at this point, you cannot re-apply until your next award’s cycle. Re-applying for the next award’s cycle will incur a new charge.

## Your details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Award name |  |
| Awards URL (for previous year if relevant) |  |
| Awards URL (for current programme) |  |
| Company Name (if different) |  |
| Accreditation level sought  | ⃝ Accredited ⃝ Advanced ⃝ Outstanding  |
| Accreditation start date | {Completed when accreditation is passed} |
| Contact for accreditation (full name) |  |
| Contact email address |  |
| Contact phone number |  |
| Full Company Address for invoice purposes |  |
| What is the main/extended deadline and awarding date of your awards? |  |
| Would you like us to list your awards on the [www.awards-list.co.uk](http://www.awards-list.co.uk) website? |  |

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## Multiple award Programme applications only

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| Award name | Call to entry launch date | I confirm that the criteria in the accreditation sections below apply to the following award programmes, and will apply the next time we run the awards too. |
| Yes | No | If ‘Yes’ then please detail here |
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| --- | --- |
| Awards trust mark: Standard accreditationPlease indicate below which criteria apply to your award programme and give a brief clarification and/or supporting evidence to show you meet the criteria. The form must be signed by a director in the section at the end, and is your confirmation that standards are being adhered to. We will check your responses where we can. Clearly, should it turn out that your application was not factually correct, then the accreditation cannot be issued. **All criteria below must be met in order to receive a Standard accreditation.** **Application fee: £195+VAT for one programme. This is discounted by 15% for additional awards accredited by the same body at the same time AND for awards re-accrediting for consecutive years.**  | A picture containing logo  Description automatically generated |
| Criteria to be met. | Did this apply to the **last** time you ran your awards? (Y or N) | Will this apply to the **next** time you run your awards? (Y or N) | Please briefly explain how and to what extent you apply this process. Please include a direct URL as evidence or screenshots of pages in your supporting document where necessary. |
| 1. Awards should be open to all within the specified region and sectors stated on the website, with no unwritten filtering (e.g. it is ok to be restricted to clients or association members – but only if clearly stated. Any filtering of applicants by brand name, company size, perceived reputation etc. is not allowed).
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Judging must be strictly in accordance with the process stated on the website for both the shortlisting stage, and the final selection of a winner.
 |  |  |  |
| 1. All judges must be independent and not employed by companies that have a commercial interest in table sales, advertising etc. or a conflict of interest with the nominees. If a judge is employed by the awards organiser or sponsor then there has to be a very clear rationale for this (e.g. they are an industry expert).
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| 1. No compulsion that finalists must attend the presentation event.
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| 1. The whole programme should be well organised, with full availability of dates, rules and other important information.
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| 1. Not charging for use of logo or promotion of a win.
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| 1. Providing winners with quotes for press releases for free whenever they ask.
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| 1. Winners being publicly declared (website etc.) within 7 days of any awards event.
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| 1. Fee transparency – all fees and costs declared on the website. Including entry fee, event attendance fees, any membership fees, and optional costs like duplicate trophies (if applicable).
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Clear website in terms of dates and processes – e.g. having the deadline date clearly visible on the homepage (a date not just a countdown timer), and rules/ eligibility/ how to enter page easy to find.
 |  |  |   |
| 1. Allowing entry forms to be viewable prior to having to pay an entry fee to gain access.
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| 1. A contact email and phone number is provided on the website for those wishing to enter the awards to ask questions, with responses within 24 hours.
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| Awards Trust Mark: Advanced accreditationIf you are applying for the Advanced Level accreditation you will need to complete this section in addition to the above. Please indicate below which criteria apply to your award programme and give a brief clarification and/or supporting evidence to show you meet the criteria. The form must be signed by a director in the section at the end, and is your confirmation that standards are being adhered to. **All criteria below must be met in order to receive an Advanced accreditation. New awards are unable to apply for this level.**The form and your website will be validated and verified by a member of the Council. A member of the Council will also contact an applicant and a judge, chosen at random from a list of at least three (ideally five) of each, to seek references as part of the validation process. **Application fee: £335+VAT. This is discounted by 15% for additional awards accredited by the same body at the same time AND for awards re-accrediting for consecutive years.** | Text  Description automatically generated |
| Criteria to be met. | Did this apply to the **last** time you ran your awards? (Y or N) | Will this apply to the **next** time you run your awards? (Y or N) | Please briefly explain how and to what extent you apply this process. Please include a direct URL as evidence or screenshots of pages/sample emails in a supporting document where necessary. |
| 1. Giving feedback to entrants on why they did not win, when asked.
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| 1. Non-disclosure agreements signed by judges (digital acceptance is acceptable if legally binding).
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| 1. Clear scoring systems used by all judges, that remove bias and inconsistency.
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| 1. All decisions on shortlisting and winning to be made by at least two independent judges.
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| Awards trust mark: Outstanding accreditation If you are applying for the Outstanding Level accreditation you will need to complete this section in addition to the Standard and Advanced sections above. Please indicate below which criteria apply to your award programme and give a brief clarification and/or supporting evidence to show you meet the criteria. The form must be signed by a director in the section at the end, and is your confirmation that standards are being adhered to. **All criteria below must be met in order to receive an Outstanding accreditation. New awards are unable to apply for this level.**The form and your website will be validated and verified by a member of the Council. A member of the Council will also contact an applicant and a judge, chosen at random from a list of at least three (ideally five) of each, to seek references as part of the validation process. **Application fee: £395+VAT. This is discounted by 15% for additional awards accredited by the same body at the same time AND for awards re-accrediting for consecutive years.** | Logo  Description automatically generated |
| Criteria to be met. | Did this apply to the **last** time you ran your awards? (Y or N) | Will this apply to the **next** time you run your awards? (Y or N) | Please briefly explain how and to what extent you apply this process. Please include a direct URL as evidence or screenshots of pages/sample emails in a supporting document where necessary. |
| 1. Pay to enter awards: entrants must either receive automatic feedback and/or scores via an online portal. Alternatively, they must receive an email, within 2 weeks of the winners being announced, telling the entrant that feedback is available on request and how to request it. If the latter, please supply a copy of that communication. Free to enter awards: automatic feedback is not compulsory, but feedback and/or scores must be made available to entrants upon request, and a fee may be charged for written feedback, but not scores. (free to enter applications only)
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| 1. Some form of training given to judges. This can be a briefing pack, webinar, pre-judging briefing. But judges cannot undertake judging without some form of thorough briefing.
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## Verification

In order to verify **Advanced** and **Outstanding** ratings, a member of The Independent Awards Standards Council will interview one randomly-selected judge and one randomly-selected entrant to seek feedback as part of the validation process. Please provide any contact details that may help us in this process (we may also contact others based on publicly-displayed information on websites etc.)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name  | Company/Organisation | Judge/Entrant | Telephone (if known) | Email Contact Details |
|  |  | **Judge** |  |  |
|  |  | **Judge** |  |  |
|  |  | **Judge** |  |  |
|  |  | **Judge** |  |  |
|  |  | **Judge** |  |  |
|  |  | **Entrant** |  |  |
|  |  | **Entrant** |  |  |
|  |  | **Entrant** |  |  |
|  |  | **Entrant** |  |  |
|  |  | **Entrant** |  |  |

(Add more tables for more awards being accredited)

## Authorisation (please complete for all applications)

I confirm that the form and information is entirely accurate, and I consent to a member of the Independent Awards Standards Council contacting judges/entrants for verification purposes (Advanced/Outstanding only).

I accept that, if, at a later date, compelling evidence comes to light that we are not acting as stated in this application form, then our processes will need to change to meet the criteria, or the Trust Mark will be withdrawn. In this circumstance, we will not be able to use the Trust Mark logos in any capacity until the concerns have been resolved.

Signature:

Name:

Job title (must be a director or equivalent):

Organisation:

Date:

## Next steps:

### Processing your application

* Once you’ve completed your application, please send it via email to: info@awardstrustmark.org. You can also reach us on this email if you have any questions about your application.

### Payment

* Costs: As listed depending on which Trust Mark you are applying for.
* How to pay: If payment is being made directly to the Independent Awards Standards Council an Invoice will be generated and sent to you. There is a link in the invoice to pay securely online (Visa, Mastercard and American Express are accepted).
* Payment must be received in order to complete your application.
* For any questions please call: +44(0)1273 258703

### Use of the Trust Mark logo

You are welcome to use the Awards Trust Mark logo in any of your publicity. Use of the logo is subject to the Trust Mark Logo usage guidelines PDF which you will receive as well as the logo files. We ask that the Trust Mark logo is not altered in any way, and when used online links back to the page on the Awards Trust Mark website associated with the level you have earned <https://awardstrustmark.org> . Accreditation is for one iteration of your awards programme, up to a maximum of one year from the date that it is awarded so use of the logo is for this period only. Continued use will require re-applying. There is a 28 day grace period, in which time you must either have started the re-accreditation process or removed the Trust Mark logo from all your publicity materials, including your website.

### Changes to your awards programme.

Please inform the Awards Standards Council of any significant changes to your awards programme that mean it is substantially different from the when the application was made. Examples include (but are not limited to) changes to the judging process, rebranding, entry format requirements etc.

The Awards Standards Council reserve the right to withdraw the Trust Mark accreditation from a particular award if information comes to light that is contrary to the information submitted in the application, or if significant changes have occurred to the awards programme that means it is no longer eligible.

Should your award fail to meet the standard accreditation level upon application you will not be charged.

The Independent Awards Standards Council and the Awards Trust Mark are a non-profit making exercise with the sole aim of promoting trust in the award industry as a whole for the benefit of all stakeholders. By applying for an Awards Trust Mark we hope that you will be contributing to this aim and keep within the spirit of its intentions. Please contact the Independent Awards Standards Council directly should you wish to become a member.