

CIPD

The CIPD Awards in Northern Ireland 2025

Information pack



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Thanks for downloading the information pack for The CIPD Awards in Northern Ireland.

The awards are the most prestigious and highly regarded awards for the HR profession in Northern Ireland, and celebrate the contribution of people professionals to the success of public and private sector organisations in Northern Ireland.

Through an engaging judging process, the awards identify individuals, organisations and practices that are championing better work and working lives.

The judging panel consists of leading HR and business professionals and academics from a range of organisations across the UK, and the judging criteria ensures that only the best entries will make the shortlist for 2025.

Our entry pack includes category details, key dates, rules of entry and all-important hints and tips to support you in creating a winning entry.

All entries should be submitted via our online entry portal. You can start your entry and return to revise it at any time before you submit it.

Entries close on Friday 15 November.

Please contact the team if you have any questions. Email northernireland@cipd.co.uk.

Best of luck!

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General information

Key dates

- Entries open: Monday 2 September 2024
- Entries close: Friday 15 November 2024
- Shortlist announced: Friday 17 January 2025
- Category interviews: Tuesday 4 February 2025
- Awards ceremony: Thursday 6 March 2025

How to enter

All entries should be submitted online. Please use the below information to support you in completing your submission online at cipdniawards.awardsplatform.com or by [clicking here](#).

Entry fees

There is no charge to enter.

Gala tickets

Ticket details and pricing to be confirmed. Email northernireland@cipd.co.uk for any urgent queries.

Website

cipdniawards.co.uk

Categories

Best HR student

We're looking for an exceptional student who is either currently studying or has completed a recognised CIPD qualification at any level from May 2023 to November 2024. Successful applicants will clearly demonstrate how they have applied their studies, and how they have made an impactful contribution to an HRM or HRD initiative or project which is significantly important to their employer.

Please note the format of the entry form for this category is different to the rest of the categories to reflect the unique nature of the award.

Best health and wellbeing initiative

Prioritising health and wellbeing benefits individuals and organisations alike. This award celebrates organisations which have placed employee wellbeing centre stage, fostering a robust culture of workplace wellbeing. Successful entries will showcase a holistic approach to employee health and wellbeing, exemplified by leadership teams which actively role model wellbeing practices. The impact of a diverse range of initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of different employee groups will be a key criteria for success.

Best apprenticeship scheme

Are you committed to fostering talent and creating meaningful opportunities for apprentices? This category recognises outstanding apprenticeship programmes that align with your business and people strategies. Successful entrants will showcase high-quality programmes that are integrated into their wider workforce planning strategy, actively promoting inclusion and diversity. We'll also be looking for evidence of opportunities for apprentices to progress in the organisation.

Best employee experience programme

Creating a culture where employees are actively involved in decision-making is a great way of empowering your employees and making them feel valued. This award celebrates organisations that have implemented impactful, effective and sustainable programmes to promote employee participation in shaping the company's future. Successful entrants will demonstrate how their programmes have positively impacted engagement levels, enhanced labour relations and deepened insight and understanding of your employees and their working lives.

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Best resourcing and talent initiative

In today's competitive labour market, with increasing skills shortages, having robust strategies in place to attract and retain a diverse pool of employees is more important than ever. This award recognises employers who can showcase creative and impactful recruitment and talent management strategies and programmes to address their current and future resourcing and talent needs.

Best learning and development initiative

This award celebrates organisations that have developed a culture which promotes continuous development, coaching, performance management and innovative approaches to change and work design. Entrants will encourage feedback and openness on development needs and should demonstrate the impact of their culture on employee development and performance, and the positive impact on the organisation overall.

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Best digital and technology initiative in HR/L&D

In an era where technology has become a driving force and enabler of successful HR and L&D practice, this award celebrates organisations that have harnessed digital solutions to drive business benefits. Entrants will demonstrate a deep understanding of end users' needs, resulting in innovative solutions that align with business objectives.

Best equality, diversity and inclusion initiative (EDI)

This award celebrates employers that are genuinely committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. Successful entrants will showcase how they have championed equality, address under-representation and create fair opportunities for all. We'll be looking for evidence fairness in reward systems, flexibility, access to promotion and learning and development opportunities. Entrants will be able to demonstrate policies, practices and procedures based on principles of fairness and inclusion, regular bias checks and measurable outcomes.

Best flexible working strategy

While the benefits of home and hybrid working are well understood, more could be done to promote other types of flexible working to meet the needs of a diverse range of employees. This award celebrates organisations that are using all forms of flexible working to prioritise the needs of their workforce, organisation and stakeholders. Entrants will showcase their commitment to work-life balance and a flexible working culture with benefits for all.

Best HR/L&D and OD consultant/consultancy

This award recognises individual consultants or consultancies that have partnered a client on a people-related project to address a strategic issue. The entry will demonstrate how you worked collaboratively with the HR/L&D or OD team, and how both the consultants and employees of the organisation were involved and engaged.

Entrants must include written permission from the client on the entry form and for an impactful presentation, we recommend that the client attends the meeting with the judges if you get through to the second stage.

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Best people management in an SME

This award celebrates small or medium-sized businesses (with fewer than 250 employees) that have transformed the way they manage and develop their people in support of the workforce and wider business objectives. The judges will be looking for evidence of the impact of the new approach on business success, including benefits for employees, customers, suppliers and overall organisation performance. Entrants should demonstrate how people management initiative fits with the wider people management approach and the organisation's broader strategy.

Rising star of the people profession

This award is for early to mid-career people professionals with three to five years' experience in the profession. Our winner will embody a passion for the profession and will have already made a significant impact in their workplace. Nominations can come from the individual themselves, or from anyone who has experienced the impact of their work, whether it's a line manager, colleague or mentor. Entries will showcase creative and innovative approaches to designing, delivering and evaluating work. Nominees should also demonstrate a commitment to continued professional development, and how they apply their learning in their role.

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Best HR/OD/L&D team

We're looking for an exceptional HR, OD or L&D team that has made a significant impact across the organisation. The judges will be looking for a team that has played a pivotal role in helping their organisation to achieve business objectives and positively impacted their people. Judges will be looking for strategic alignment, measurable outcomes a people-centric approach, and evidence of organisational transformation.

Outstanding contribution in the field of people development in Northern Ireland

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This prestigious award is presented to a senior professional who has made an outstanding contribution to the people profession within Northern Ireland. They will be exceptional in their ability, commitment, knowledge and experience, and their impact will extend beyond their organisation, benefitting the wider business community and people profession.

Nominations can come from the individuals themselves, or be submitted by colleagues, senior management or by someone outside their organisation who wants to recognise their contribution. If you are nominating someone for this award, you should make them aware of the nomination.

The winner will be chosen by the judges based on the nomination forms without interviews.

Rules

- Entries will only be accepted using the online application process.
- Very similar or identical information cannot be used to enter multiple categories, i.e. each entry has to provide new information specific to that category.
- If the entry is not completed correctly or fully completed it may be deemed to be an invalid entry.
- For these awards, initiatives or strategies entered should include demonstrable results from May 2023 to November 2024. Initiatives or strategies developed and implemented prior to this period are eligible provided the impact was measured during the past year.
- Each question online has an individual word count and you will not be permitted to exceed this. This word count includes links to additional information on company websites. Judges may not view this additional information.
- Consultants and other service providers may jointly enter with client organisations. All entries must be signed off by an appropriate person within the client organisation.
- The CIPD in Northern Ireland and/or judging panel reserves the right to confirm the accuracy of the information provided online.
- The name of the entering organisation will always be used as the name referred to in all announcements and marketing communications unless instructed otherwise.
- Entrants agree to co-operate with the CIPD in Northern Ireland who may wish to publicise entries through the use of social media, case studies, specific media articles and events. Commercial sensitivity will always be respected.
- The CIPD in Northern Ireland and sponsoring organisations may use photographs and video of the awards ceremony and winners as appropriate.
- The decision of the judges is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.
- Finalists in each category will be announced Friday 17 January 2025.
- Finalists will be invited to meet the judging panel on Tuesday 4 February in Belfast, to expand on their entry.
- Winners will be announced at the awards gala at the Titanic, Belfast on Thursday 6 March 2025.

Hints and tips

Entering Online

- Make sure you read the info in this awards information pack before you start your application online.
- When you begin to enter a category you will be asked to register on cipdniawards.awardsplatform.com which will create your unique login.
- You can start your application and save and return to complete at a later stage.
- Consider the word count, each individual question has a word limit.
- You can download and print your application from the online platform

Tailor each entry

If you are entering multiple categories, do not copy and paste and be sure to pay attention to the specific category criteria and tailor accordingly. Any duplicate entries in multiple categories will be disqualified.

Clearly describe the business need

- Make sure that you clearly indicate the business transformation or change undertaken, setting out the role HR played and the business need that was being addressed. What was the intended outcome and how was HR central to that?
- What was the specific thinking driving the HR effort and how that effort led to a positive outcome?
- Remember, a great HR idea, initiative or project that isn't firmly embedded in the needs of the organisation or brought to life in your entry may not stand out amongst others, no matter how brilliant!

Show evidence of delivery and achievement

- The evaluation process is designed around being able to clearly see and identify measurable results and outcomes as a result of the specific actions taken by the HR team and those who collaborated with the activities.
- Entrants are asked to clearly indicate where their journey started and where they got to as a result of taking a decisive and distinctive approach. So quantify using appropriate metrics relevant to the business when and where possible!

How to enter

When you select your category you will have to register on the online entry platform at cipdniawards.awardsplatform.com, if you have not already done so.

Here are the core questions that you will be asked online for all categories except the Best HR student category and the Outstanding contribution award. Each of the questions (1 – 9) has a set number of words and you are required to keep within these limits. See the awards portal for information relating to the student category.

Each entry is permitted to have ONE piece of supporting information.

- Please do not upload any further written material as the judges will not consider these. The written component of your entry should be fully explained within the provided form fields.
- Upload JPEG or PDF files. Maximum file size is 5MB per piece. A maximum of one piece can be uploaded with your entry.
- Video attachments may be hosted on a video site such as YouTube or Vimeo and counts towards the additional attachment limit.

Entry Category

Select the relevant category from the drop down list

Entry Name

Title your entry

Organisation Name

This name will be used in all aspects of the competition

1. Brief organisation overview (100 word limit)
2. Briefly describe your entry (150 word limit)
3. Outline the aims and objectives that you set out to achieve. Please include relevant timeframes. (200 word limit)
4. Please show how the aims and objectives align with overall business objectives. (250 word limit)
5. Outline the specific actions that were taken. (300 word limit)
6. Outline any barriers that were experienced and indicate how they were overcome. (300 word limit)
7. Provide details of the relevant metrics and outcomes. (400 word limit)
8. Summarise the learning from what has been achieved as a result of this activity. How will this inform future HR activity within the organisation? (250 word limit)
9. Any final comments? (100 word limit)

Explain the people aspects of the project or initiative

- Set out the specific human resource and people management actions that were taken by HR throughout the change or transformation delivered.
- Outline how you achieved support for the project / initiative amongst employees and senior managers.
- Tell us about any cross functional collaboration that was required within the organisation.
- Good entries often have interesting / innovative communications strategies that clearly get the message across to all stakeholders. Which communications methods worked best for your organisation?
- How you intend to build on these efforts in the future?

Show the distinctiveness of your approach

- Explain 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 the sustainable approach taken will support the organisation in the future.
- Identify how the approach evolved the culture of the organisation to ensure sustainable competitive advantage, engagement and people development.

The CIPD's professional principles

We are keen to see entries that embody one or more of the CIPD professional principles (work matters, people matter, professionalism matters). Entries that clearly demonstrate this will receive extra credit from judges.

Best HR student

When you select your category you will have to register on the online entry platform at cipdniawards.awardsplatform.com, if you have not already done so. Each of the questions (1–14) has a set number of words and you are required to keep within these limits.

Each entry is permitted to have ONE piece of supporting information.

Entry Category

Select the relevant category from the drop down list.

Entry Name

Title your entry

Student Name

This name will be used in all aspects of the competition.

Organisation Name

This name will be used in all aspects of the competition.

1. CIPD Membership Number
2. Centre Name
3. Qualification
4. Qualification start date
5. Qualification completion date (if applicable)
6. Brief organisation overview (100 word limit)
7. Briefly describe your entry (150 word limit)
8. Give an overview of the project you worked on including the objectives and timescales, (350 word limit)
9. Describe how the knowledge and skills gained on your recognised CIPD qualification supported the successful implementation of your project. (400 word limit)
10. Outline any barriers that were experienced and indicate how they were overcome. (300 word limit)
11. Outline the impact made to your business since its introduction. (400 word limit)
12. Employer endorsement - to be completed by a senior representative or head of department from your organisation. (100 word limit)
13. Endorser's Name (optional)
14. Endorser's Job Title (optional)

Outstanding contribution

When you select your category you will have to register on the online entry platform at cipdniawards.awardsplatform.com, if you have not already done so.

Each entry is permitted to have ONE piece of supporting information.

Entry Category

Select the relevant category from the drop down list.

Entry Name

Title your entry

Your Name/Nominees' Name

This name will be used in all aspects of the competition.

Organisation Name

This name will be used in all aspects of the competition.

In 500 words or less, please tell us why you/the person you are nominating, should receive the award for Outstanding contribution in the field of people development in Northern Ireland.

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