

10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



The  
**PIE**oneer  
Awards  
2026



ENTRY KIT

#PIEoneers26

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#PIEoneers26

# ABOUT THE PIEONEER AWARDS



The PIEoneer Awards 2026 will be held on Friday 4 September at [London's Guildhall](#).

The PIEoneer Awards honour innovation and achievement across the whole of the global education industry. With a distinguished judging panel representing geographical and professional diversity, The PIEoneer Awards recognise both individuals and organisations who are pushing professional standards, evolving their engagement or redefining the international student experience.



## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

We welcome entries from any organisation operating in the global education sector regardless of size. We invite submissions from small to medium sized organisations, including new enterprises, as well as large-scale established institutions and businesses.

### Important dates and timeline

12 January	Entries open
20 March	Entries close
30 March	Shortlisting starts
Week/c 4 May	Finalists announced
4 September	The PIEoneer Awards ceremony

# AWARD CATEGORIES FOR 2026

- Business school of the year
- Championing diversity, equity and inclusion award
- Digital innovation of the year – learning
- Digital innovation of the year – student recruitment
- Emerging leader of the year
- Employability international impact award
- Excellence in data and insight
- International alum of the year
- International student recruitment organisation of the year
- Language training provider of the year
- Marketing campaign of the year
- Membership organisation of the year
- Outstanding contribution to the industry\*
- Partnership of the year
- PIEoneer of the year
- Progressive education delivery award
- Secondary school international innovation award
- Student support award
- Study abroad and exchange experience of the year
- Sustainability international impact award
- The Charlene Allen award for inspirational leadership

\*there is no shortlist for this award.

# WHY YOU SHOULD GET INVOLVED



The PIEoneer Awards are now in their 10th year and have become a well-established fixture in the global education industry's annual schedule of events. They celebrate innovation and achievement across the whole of our sector.

Entering the awards is a fantastic opportunity for you and your team to gain global recognition of your work. There is significant coverage of finalists and winners on The PIE News, which reaches 2 million people each year, through our digital magazine and across our social media channels (over 80K followers).

The awards will take place on Friday 4 September 2026, and we will be back at the historic Guildhall in London.

Guests will include a unique cross-section of influencers, decision makers and thought leaders from higher education, commercial education, language teaching, education agencies, professional services and government bodies around the world.

So, get involved by entering the awards and attending in-person. Be inspired by the latest innovations taking place across our sector and make lots of valuable new connections!

## WHAT FINALISTS AND WINNERS GET

- Finalists, with the exception of the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry category, will be listed on our event website from early May through to the awards night.
- All finalists will receive social share assets and boiler plate panels to use on social networks, emails and web pages.
- Finalists will have the opportunity to create a short video highlighting their work which The PIE will share on its social media channels.
- Winners will receive a trophy and a digital photo of them collecting their award on stage.
- Winners receive social share assets and boiler plate panels to use on social networks, emails, and web pages.

# ENTRY GUIDELINES

- There is a £100+VAT (VAT only applies to entrants from the UK) fee per category to enter, you can enter up to three categories per organisation.
- You can nominate your own or another organisation, although the vast majority of entries we receive are self-nominations. The only exception to this is the Outstanding contribution to the industry award, which cannot be a self-nomination.
- The work/project/initiative being entered, or some part of the work/project/initiative, must have taken place between 1st January 2025 and 31st December 2025 (inclusive). Please note the following exceptions:
  - 1. The PIEioneer of the year and Outstanding contribution to the industry awards have no timeframe attached.
  - 2. In the International alum of the year category, the alum should have graduated from 2022 onwards.
  - 3. In the Emerging Leader of the year category, we accept nominations of individuals who have worked in the global education industry for 10 years or less.
  - 4. In The Charlene Allen award for inspirational leadership, we accept nominations of female leaders who have worked in the global education industry for 10 years or more.
- Each question is weighted the same, so give equal thought and attention to every question.
- Be specific when answering questions and don't repeat answers across different questions.
- If you wish to add video links to your entry, you can do so within the body of your answers but we cannot guarantee that they will be viewed in full by the shortlisting panel of judges. To add a video link, please include the full URL, not an embedded link.
- We recommend you provide different types of evidence to support your answers, give broader context to your work and demonstrate its impact - quantitative and qualitative, testimonials, and statistics, e.g. from Google analytics and social media platforms.
- We are looking for evidence of excellence and innovation, so consider both the content of your answers in terms of what you delivered, as well as how well it has been presented and evidenced. Scores will be equally weighted accordingly.
- Don't go over the word limit – anything over 250 words per question won't be read.
- When completing your entry form(s), please be aware that formatting from Word won't transfer onto the online form. This includes styled content, such as bold and underlining. If you prefer to prepare your entry offline and then copy and paste your answers into the online form, we suggest you do this using plain text from eitherTextEdit or Notepad.
- You can save your form and edit it as much as you like before the entry deadline by saving it on your online account – you don't have to complete it all at once.
- The full terms and conditions can be found at  
<https://pieoneerawards.com/2026/en/page/terms-and-conditions-the-pioneer-awards>



PLEASE NOTE: If you have won a PIEoneer award or been a Highly commended finalist in the same category in both 2024 and 2025 consecutively, you are not eligible to enter the same category in 2026. We do encourage you to enter another category though, and if in doubt, consider the PIEoneer of the year category for an innovation that has the potential to make a national or global impact.

# HOW TO ENTER

Registering and submitting your entries for The PIEoneer Awards is easy and quick.

Select the categories that fit you and proceed with the registration process via [this link](#).

If you need advice on which categories to choose, please contact [damla@thepienews.com](mailto:damla@thepienews.com). Provide some information about your entry/ies so our team can help you make the best choice.

Check your email inbox to activate your account.

Once registered, you are welcome to work on your entries at your convenience, as long as it's within the submission period. This entry kit has draft forms if you wish to prepare in advance.

You can edit your submission at any time up until the entry deadline by logging in to your account before the entry deadline of 20 March.

After you submit an entry you will receive an email letting you know that it has been received.

## Online entry form preview

**Basket** 1 item

**Awards Nomination** All 0

1	Item 1/1
<b>Employability international impact award</b>	
ITEM CLOSE DATE  27 March 2026	
PRICE £ 100.00	
0/18	Required
0/2	Optional
Save for later  Delete	
SPONSORSHIP AVAILABLE	
International study is often driven by an objective to enhance long-term career prospects. This award honours organisations that are actively improving the potential employability outcomes for their international students. Whether through innovative teaching, enhanced career support, or new initiatives that better prepare learners for the global job market, this category recognises those delivering a demonstrable impact on international graduates' ability to secure meaningful employment post-graduation.	
Name of organisation/project/initiative you are nominating. Please present this as you would like the entry to be listed if it is shortlisted as a finalist. (60 characters max) *	

# SAMPLE ENTRY FORM

## Employability international impact award

International study is often driven by an objective to enhance long-term career prospects. This award honours organisations that are actively improving the potential employability outcomes for their international students. Whether through innovative teaching, enhanced career support, or new initiatives that better prepare learners for the global job market, this category recognises those delivering a demonstrable impact on international graduates' ability to secure meaningful employment post-graduation.

**Entries will be judged according to the following questions. All questions are equally weighted:**

\*There is a word limit of maximum [250 words] for each question.

\*\*Formatting from Word won't transfer onto the online form. If you prefer to prepare your entry offline and then copy and paste your answers into the online form, we suggest you do this as plain text e.g.TextEdit or Notepad.

**1. What initiatives, programmes, programme developments, or new approaches have you implemented in 2025 to improve international students' employability? \***

This may include curriculum, career's support, employer engagement, or work-integrated learning, as examples.

[0/250]

**2. How do these initiatives prepare international students for the global job market? \***

Describe how global, cross-cultural, or international workforce needs are embedded.

[0/250]

1. Name of organisation/project/initiative you are nominating. Please present this as you would like the entry to be listed if it is shortlisted as a finalist. (60 characters max)

2. Country of nominated organisation/initiative.

3. Please provide a brief introduction to the organisation being nominated to give background context to the entry. This will not be scored.

4. Please provide a 50-word summary of your entry that can be used in our award promotions - this includes the awards booklet and spoken summary of your initiative on the night. We reserve the right to edit this.

5. Website (if applicable)

6. Reminder: please ensure you include a wide range of evidence to support your answers e.g. quantitative, qualitative, testimonials and statistics from e.g. Google analytics and social media platforms where appropriate. Please ensure you provide url links in your answers to support your claims.

7. Entries will be judged according to the following questions. All questions are equally weighted:

8.1. What initiatives, programmes, programme developments, or new approaches have you implemented in 2025 to improve international students' employability? This may include curriculum, careers support, employer engagement, or work-integrated learning, as examples.

9.2. How do these initiatives prepare international students for the global job market? Describe how global, cross-cultural, or international workforce needs are embedded.

10.3. What evidence demonstrates the impact of your work on international graduates' employability outcomes? Please include qualitative and/or quantitative results (e.g. employment outcomes, progression data, employer or student feedback).

11.4. How does your approach address the diverse needs and barriers faced by international students? Consider inclusion, accessibility, visa constraints, language, or cultural transition.

12.5. What makes your approach distinctive, sustainable, or scalable, and how could it inform best practice across the sector?

13. Please upload a high resolution image (500+ px wide) we can use to showcase your entry on the awards night and in our coverage of the awards if it is shortlisted. We recommend that this is not your logo for maximum impact.

14. Please upload a high resolution logo (500+ px wide) of the organisation being nominated that we can use if they are shortlisted.

15. X/Twitter handle (this will be used if the entry is shortlisted)

16. Type of nomination

17. Nominee's details:

18. First Name

19. Last Name

20. Position

21. Organisation

22. Country

23. Email

24. Once you have completed all the required fields, please process your entry by clicking on the CONTINUE button below.

## EVALUATION & SCORING

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### This is how the scoring works:

- A team of The PIE staff and industry experts will put together a shortlist of finalists for each category by reviewing and scoring the information provided on the entry forms. A maximum of nine shortlisted finalists for each award will be selected.
- Each question has an equal weighting and will be scored out of a maximum 10 points. The scores for each question are added together and the entries with the highest cumulative scores in each category will be selected as finalists.
- Our panel of expert judges, all of whom are independent of The PIE, will be split into groups according to their areas of expertise to score the finalists' entries in selected categories.
- They will score in the same way – by giving a score out of 10 to each question. The entry with the highest cumulative score across all the judges will be selected as the winner for that category. If there is more than one entry with the highest cumulative score, they will be selected as joint winner. The entries with the second and/or third highest cumulative scores will be selected as highly commended finalists.
- If there is a conflict of interest between entries and judges, judges will not score that entry/category, as appropriate.



# FAQs

## **Does it cost anything to enter an award category?**

Cost to submit an entry is £100+VAT (VAT only applies to entrants from the UK) per category. Each entrant can enter a maximum of three categories.

## **For what period does an entrant have to demonstrate relevant achievements for each category?**

We are looking for all or some of the achievements to have taken place between 1st January 2025 and 31st December 2025 (inclusive) for all categories apart from:

- International alum of the year - entrants must have graduated from 2022 onwards.
- Outstanding contribution to the industry, which has no timeframe attached to it.
- PIEioneer of the year - there is no timeframe to this award - it can be awarded to an organisation that has at a minimum, taken the project, business or idea beyond pilot phase and can evidence its success
- Emerging Leader of the year category, we accept nominations of individuals who have worked in the global education industry for 10 years or less. The Charlene Allen award for inspirational leadership, we accept nominations of female leaders who have worked in the global education industry for 10 years or more.

## **I work for a small organisation with limited budget, can I enter?**

Yes, absolutely. The PIEioneer Awards are designed to recognise innovation and achievement across the whole of the international education sector, not just big organisations with big budgets. There are many small to medium sized organisations, including new enterprises, who are achieving great things. If you are working with a limited budget/team and feel you have achieved significant impact, please make this clear in your entry.

## **How will the awards be judged?**

A team of The PIE staff and industry experts will put together a shortlist of finalists for each award category by reviewing and scoring the information provided on the entry forms. A maximum of nine shortlisted finalists for each award will be selected.

Each question has an equal weighting and will be scored out of a maximum 10 points. The scores for each question are added together, and the nine entries with the highest cumulative scores in each category will be selected as finalists.

The panel of judges, all of whom are independent of The PIE, will then judge the shortlisted finalists for each award category and select a winner in each. They will score in the same way - by giving a score out of 10 to each question. The entries with the highest cumulative score across all the judges will be selected as the winner for that category.

Please think carefully about the information you present in your answers. Don't repeat content across questions on the same entry form, and use numerical data wherever possible to illustrate your achievements and the impact your work has had.



## FAQs

If there is a conflict of interest between entrants and judges, judges will not score that entry/category.

### **How will we know you have received our submission?**

You will receive an email letting you know that it has been received. You can edit your submission at any time up until the entry deadline by logging in to your account before the entry deadline of 20 March.

### **When will the shortlist be announced?**

The shortlist with the exception of the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry category, which has no published shortlist, will be announced week commencing 4 May. Finalists will be notified by email and announcements will also be made on our social media channels.

### **Will I receive feedback on my entry?**

We will not systematically give feedback to all entrants because of the high volume of entries we receive, but we will endeavour to do so if you contact us directly via [damla@thepienews.com](mailto:damla@thepienews.com). For finalists, if requested, we will provide a selected highlight from the judges' comments that you can use publicly.

### **What is the hashtag for the event?**

Follow #PIEoneers26 on Instagram and X for updates prior to and during the awards ceremony.

### **How can I contact the event organiser with any questions?**

Please email [damla@thepienews.com](mailto:damla@thepienews.com) or [lauren@thepienews.com](mailto:lauren@thepienews.com) with any questions you may have. Alternatively, call Damla on +44 (0)7864031980.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

Rachel Donnellan - Events Director [rachel@thepienews.com](mailto:rachel@thepienews.com)

Damla Erciyes - Events Manager [damla@thepienews.com](mailto:damla@thepienews.com)

Lauren Nunan - Events Project Manager [lauren@thepienews.com](mailto:lauren@thepienews.com)

# TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ENTRANTS: THE PIEONEER AWARDS 2026

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The PIEoneer Awards T&Cs The PIEoneer Awards 2026 (the “Awards”) are open to businesses, public sector organisations, voluntary sector organisations, individuals (aged 18 years or over) and charities (“Qualifying Organisations”).

The Awards are not open to employees or agencies of The PIE Partnership Limited (“PIE”), its group companies or their family members, or anyone else connected with the Awards, excluding sponsors and judges of the Awards.

## Entering the Awards

The Awards consist of 21 categories (each an “Award Category”). For a description of each Award Category and further information on the criteria for each, please [click here](#).

The opening date for entries is Wednesday 12 January 2026. To enter any of the Award Categories, follow the instructions online. The deadline for entries to all Award Categories is 23:55 BST on Friday 20 March 2026. Entries received after this deadline will not be processed. For information on the entry requirements and the information you will need to provide in order to enter, please [click here](#).

Qualifying Organisations are able to enter into one or more Award Categories, but no more than 3 Award Categories and a separate entry form will be required for each entry. Qualifying Organisations may not submit multiple entries in the same category. In the event that a Qualifying Organisation is entered into more than 3 categories then the first 3 entries submitted by the Qualifying Organisation shall be accepted and the remaining entries will not be accepted. Notwithstanding the foregoing, PIE reserves the right to disqualify any Qualifying Organisation in the event that they enter into more than 3 categories.

The work/project/initiative being entered, or some part of the work/project/initiative, must have taken place between 1st January 2025 and 31st December 2025 (inclusive). The PIEoneer of the year award and Outstanding contribution to the industry have no timeframe attached. In the International alum of the year category, the alum should have graduated from 2022 onwards. If there is a conflict of interest between entrants and judges, judges will not score that entry/category.

Entries on behalf of another organisation (which must be a Qualifying Organisation) will be accepted in all Award Categories.

By submitting an entry or making a nomination, you confirm that: (a) you are entitled to enter and have obtained all and any consents, permissions and authorisations that may be required in order for you to enter; and (b) that the information contained in the submission is accurate and truthful.

Submissions and nominations must be your own work, must not be copied, must not contain any third-party materials and/or content that you do not have permission to use, and must not otherwise be obscene, defamatory or in breach of any applicable legislation or regulations. If we have reason to believe your entry is not your own work or otherwise breaches this paragraph, then we may not consider it.

Cost to submit an entry is £100+VAT (VAT only applies to entrants from the UK) per category. Each entrant can enter a maximum of three categories.

The winner in each Award Category shall be presented with a trophy at the Awards ceremony or be sent a trophy if the Awards ceremony is delivered online.

## **Picking the Winners**

PIE will produce a shortlist of entrants for each Award Category, by reviewing the information provided on the entry forms (the "Judging Criteria"). Award Category entries must take account of any word limits (if any) specified in the Judging Criteria. Any Award Category entry that exceeds a stated word limit (if any) may, at PIE's discretion, be disqualified and not considered.

A maximum of nine shortlisted entries (each a "Shortlisted Entrant") will be selected in each Award Category by PIE. PIE reserves the right to move entries into a different Award Category where PIE deems it appropriate to do so. Entries will not be moved into a different Award Category without the prior consent of the entrant.

A panel of judges, all of whom are independent of PIE, will judge the Shortlisted Entrants for each Award Category and will score each entry. Judges' scores will be combined and the entry with the highest score will be selected as the winner in that Award Category. In the event that two finalists have the same score, joint winners for that category will be selected. There is no obligation on the judging panel to select runners-up. For a full list of people acting as judges for the Awards [click here](#). If any judge has a business connection with a Shortlisted Entrant, they will declare their interest to PIE and not take part in judging that particular Award Category.

## Rules For Entrants

Any entrant to the Awards may be contacted by PIE for the purposes of verifying their identity and confirming their inclusion in the process.

The judges' decision is final and no negotiations or correspondence with entrants will be entered into SAVE FOR in respect of obtaining further information where necessary. Entrants to the Awards must not contact, or try to contact, the judges in any way in connection with the Awards, or otherwise try to influence the judges' selection.

Shortlisted Entrants will be contacted by email in the week commencing 4 May 2026. If a Shortlisted Entrant does not respond to PIE within 14 days of being notified, their place on the shortlist may be forfeited and PIE shall be entitled to select another entrant in accordance with the process described above (and that entrant will have to respond to notification within 14 days or else they may also forfeit their place on the shortlist).

Two discounted tickets to the Awards ceremony, being held in London and online on Friday 4 September 2026 will be available for each Shortlisted Entrant. Other representatives from each Shortlisted Entrant may purchase tickets (which may be at full price and subject to availability) if they also wish to attend the Awards ceremony. PIE accepts no responsibility for any costs associated with the Awards, including without limitation any costs associated with attendance at the Awards ceremony. The winner and runners-up (if applicable) in each Award Category will be announced at the Awards ceremony. Details of the winners and runners-up (if applicable) may be published by PIE or other parties in any format after that announcement. More complete details of the Awards ceremony will be provided to Shortlisted Entrants at the time PIE notifies them that they have been shortlisted.

Shortlisted Entrants might be contacted by PIE prior to the Awards ceremony to gather further detail on their entry. This is for the purposes of collecting and reviewing content to be provided on PIE's websites, newsletters, advertisements, articles and any other material that may be published by PIE before, during and after the Awards. PIE shall be under no obligation to publish or exhibit any Award Category entry.

The winners and runners-up (if applicable) of each Award Category will receive a marketing graphic from PIE reflecting their achievement. In order to use the logo, the winners and runners-up (if applicable) will be required to enter into a licence with PIE, the terms of which will be determined by PIE.

## Other Terms and Conditions

No responsibility is taken for entries that are lost, delayed, misdirected or incomplete or cannot be delivered or entered for any technical or other reason. Proof of submission of the entry is not proof of receipt.

PIE reserves the right to not process entries that are illegible or incomplete or those that do not meet the entry criteria.

Entrants may be required for promotional activity related to the Awards and shall participate in such activity on PIE's reasonable request. The winners and runners-up (if applicable) in the Awards consent to the use by PIE and its related companies, both before and after the closing date of the Awards for an unlimited time, of their voice, image, photograph, biography, logo, brand and name for publicity purposes (in any medium, including still photographs and films, and on the internet, including, without limitation, on any websites hosted by PIE and its related companies) and in advertising, marketing or promotional material without additional compensation or prior notice and in submitting an entry or consenting to a nomination, all entrants consent to the same.

The named entrant of each submission owns the copyright to that entry. If another person or organisation is the author/owner of your entry, you warrant that you have received an assignment or licence of all associated copyright to your entry from that person. PIE may ask to see evidence of that assignment or licence at any time.

In consideration of PIE agreeing to consider your Award Category entry, each entrant: (a) grants PIE a royalty-free licence to copy, edit, display, publish, broadcast and make available their entry in any format in connection with the Awards or promotion of the Awards; (b) agrees that PIE may publish their name in connection with PIE's use of the entry; (c) warrants that the work submitted with their entry is their own or the relevant organisation's original work, that it is not defamatory and that it does not infringe any third-party rights; and (d) agrees that PIE may grant to its partners and/or associated companies a sub-licence of the rights licensed to PIE under these Terms and Conditions on such terms as PIE shall agree in its sole discretion.

By entering the Awards or making a nomination, you acknowledge that PIE needs to process, use and distribute the information contained in your Awards entry for the purposes of: (a) processing and contacting you about such Awards entry; and (b) administering the Awards. Such entry is likely to include some personal data and PIE shall use and take care of any personal information you supply to it as described in its privacy policy, and in accordance with data protection legislation. PIE may also use your personal data to contact you about the following year's awards and/or in respect of PIE's other services and products if you have expressly consented to these uses. If you wish to withdraw these consents please email PIE at [damla@thepienews.com](mailto:damla@thepienews.com).

PIE reserves the right at any time and from time to time to cancel, modify or discontinue, temporarily or permanently, the Awards or any feature thereof (including without limitation these Terms and Conditions) with or without prior notice and without liability to any third party (save as may be set out herein).

PIE accepts no responsibility for any damage, loss, liabilities, injury or disappointment incurred or suffered by you as a result of entering the Awards or attending the Awards ceremony. Nothing in these Terms and Conditions shall exclude the liability of PIE under law for fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation, or for death or personal injury resulting from its negligence.

PIE shall not be liable for any failure to comply with its obligations relating to the Awards where the failure is caused by something outside its reasonable control. Such circumstances shall include, but not be limited to, weather conditions, fire, flood, hurricane, strike, industrial dispute, war, hostilities, political unrest, riots, civil commotion, inevitable accidents, terrorism, supervening legislation or any other circumstances amounting to force majeure.

If any provision of these Terms and Conditions shall be prohibited by or adjudged by a court to be unlawful void or unenforceable such provision shall to the extent required be severed from those Terms and Conditions and rendered ineffective as far as possible without modifying the remaining provisions of these Terms and Conditions and shall not in any way affect any other circumstances or the validity or enforcement of these Terms and Conditions.

A person who is not a party to these Terms and Conditions has no right under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 (the "Act") to rely upon or enforce any term of these Terms and Conditions but this does not affect any right or remedy of a third party which exists or is available apart from the Act.

The Awards and these Terms and Conditions shall be governed by English law and entrants submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts. PIE's address is Unit A, Azure House, Dragonfly Place, London SE4 2FP. Any complaints regarding the Awards should be sent to this address or emailed to Clare Gossage at [clare@thepienews.com](mailto:clare@thepienews.com).