

THE NATIONAL  
**CYBER AWARDS**®

Nomination Guide

## **Entry Requirements**

Don't overlook the entry requirements. Even the most impressive nominations can be disqualified due to simple administrative oversights or a failure to follow the criteria.

- Individual entrants must be working in the UK
- Entrants for organisations must be working in or carrying out work in the UK. Their product or services must be available for purchase in the UK market
- Entrants can nominate themselves
- Entrants can nominate other individuals or organisations, however their relationship must be disclosed and evidence referenced.
- Entrants can enter multiple awards however must offer unique answers for each entry. **Please note that submitting identical answers across multiple nominations is a common mistake that leads to automatic disqualification. Each entry must be unique and tailored to its specific category.**

## **Choosing the Right Award**

Finding the right award category is a common challenge for many nominees. We suggest reviewing the descriptions and criteria below to determine where your entry fits best. If you find the technical language difficult to interpret or need advice on your nomination, please don't hesitate to email us at [info@thenationalcyberawards.com](mailto:info@thenationalcyberawards.com).

[Click Here](#) to view the categories, award descriptions and criteria.

Common misunderstandings of specific awards

- Financial Services Award - Eligibility for the Financial Services Award is restricted to those working directly within the sector. Vendors may act as the nominating party for a finance customer; however, the customer must be the primary nominee. To be considered for a joint entry, the nomination must explicitly feature the customer's name and a comprehensive case study as evidence.
- Security Team of the Year - This can be an in-house team, a consultancy team, or a specific project team. Vendors may act as the nominating party for a customer, however the business or public sector organisation must remain the primary focus of the submission. To be considered for a joint entry, the nomination must explicitly feature a comprehensive case study as evidence.
- Startup in Cyber Award - These nominations must have less than 50 people working at the organisation and less than £2 million turnover/raised less than £5 million. It must have been in business for less than 5 years.
- Not for Profit - Beyond charitable organisations, this category welcomes nominations from non-profits dedicated to social or community causes. Eligible entries must come from entities organised for a mission-driven purpose rather than for the financial gain of shareholders or owners.

## **Impact over Activity**

Writing a nomination is essentially building a business case for why someone deserves to win. The goal is to move beyond generic praise and provide concrete evidence of impact.

By following the STAR framework for your submission, provides the judging panel with concrete evidence rather than just adjectives.

1. Situation - set the stage. What was the specific challenge, project, or context?
  - Provide enough background so a stranger understands but keep it brief - 10-15% of your total word count.
2. Task - what was required of the organisation, team or individual?
  - Define the expectation, were they solving a crisis, filling a gap, or leading a new initiative?
3. Action (This is the most important part). What did the individual, organisation, team, product etc actually do?
  - Show, don't just tell. Use strong verbs, focus on the unique contribution and behaviours, did they go above and beyond?
4. Result - what was the outcome? This is where you prove the nomination is deserved.
  - Provide quantitative and qualitative proof - numbers catch a judges eye; stories and testimonials touch their heart.

## **Read the Criteria**

Taking the time to read the criteria is the single most important step in the nomination process. It often defines the scope and eligibility, looking for keywords like "evidence of" or "demonstrated" "X number of years in the industry" "a business smaller than 250 employees" etc.

The first round of judging is often a triage, an entry will be disqualified if it fails to meet a mandatory requirements

## **Using AI to Support and Not Write Your Nomination**

AI misuse is a professional and ethical failure, not a shortcut. Judges can identify AI-generated or plagiarised submissions. Applications relying on AI-generated narratives may be rejected, or subject to additional scrutiny if AI misuse is suspected.

## **What 'Bad' Looks Like**

Our judges can tell if you haven't spent enough time on your application, have used AI to plagiarise someone else's words, or you are relying on evidence that you can't back up.

- Providing insufficient evidence to support the award applied for.
- Giving generic, vague, or subjective statements without specific, viable examples.
- Missing detailed evidence.
- Providing a sparse application; we have found applications using less than 250 words per section are less likely to be finalist entries.
- Not using the STAR method; the lack of structured, outcome-driven evidence weakens your nominations and makes the judge's job harder.
- Over-reliance on subjective language (e.g. "I believe", "I feel") without measurable impact or verification.

## **Tips and Tricks**

To move a nomination from "good" to "winning" at a national level you need to think like a judge. Judges industry leaders, volunteering their time to read 30+ submissions. They are looking for reasons to say "yes", but they are also looking for reasons to filter people out.

Here are some tips and tricks to ensure your nomination stays in the "yes" pile.

- Don't wait until the end to reveal the achievement. Start your nomination with a power statement that summarises the impact.
- Use the three pillars of evidence, statistical proof, comparative proof and testimonial proof.
- Judges are not huge fans of walls of text. Use formatting tools such as bullet points, paragraphs, bold text for key achievements.
- Avoid acronyms, even if the judges are experts, too many acronyms make the text hard to read.
- Use active verbs.
- Would a stranger reading the nomination feel inspired by the individual, organisation, project team, product etc.
- Review your nomination thoroughly and seek a second opinion before submitting.
- When transferring text from a Word document, ensure your formatting, especially paragraph breaks, remains intact
- Judges evaluate only the provided content within the nomination, don't let a lazy submission undermine your entry.

We truly appreciate the effort you're putting into this nomination. Whether you're championing a peer, your project team, or your organisation, your submission helps us shine a light on the incredible work happening across the industry. We wish you the best in finalising your entry.

The National Cyber Awards Team