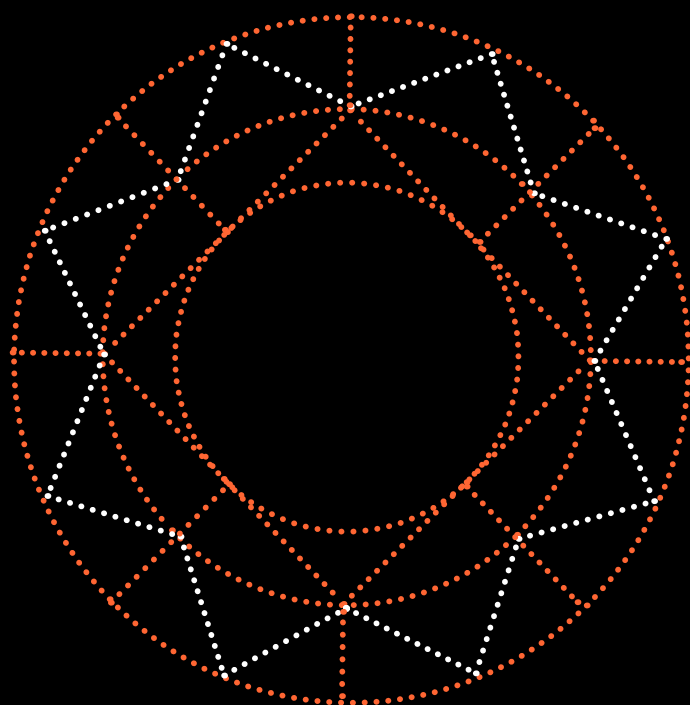


MRS
OPERATIONS
AWARDS
2026
ENTRY
TOOLKIT



Principal Sponsor

Potentia⁺



80 years of MRS
Evidence matters
more than ever

ENTRIES ARE OPEN



Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

MRS
OPERATIONS
AWARDS
2025



“Winning an Oppie was an incredibly proud and surreal moment for me. The recognition has been a huge confidence boost and a meaningful milestone in my career, shining a light on the brilliant, often unsung work of operations teams who make research happen every day. To be recognised alongside such talented people, and to celebrate with my Sense:lab and Blue Yonder family, meant everything.

Ellie Atack, Associate Director, Blue Yonder & Sense:lab – Winner of Operations Future Leader 2025

Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).

Everyone loves to win and these days winning or being runner up can have really small margins.

The prestigious MRS Oppies have gained Advanced accreditation from The Independent Awards Standards Council. Amongst other things this accreditation guarantees all entrants that the Awards are:

judged by independent judges

that all the judges have signed NDAs to guarantee your confidentiality

that our scoring systems are clear and consistent and our processes transparent

and that we supply feedback

The Oppies are the only Awards that recognise the best of the best in the operations of research. There is nothing like them in the world. With the all the authority of the MRS behind them, we know winning one of these awards helps you get noticed, win business, reward your teams.

Recognising that most winners in almost all walks of life cite preparation as the differentiating factor in beating the competition, I am really delighted to be able to launch a toolkit for the Oppies, designed for all of you who may want to try and ensure that competitive edge.

This may be our 80th anniversary, but we are all about giving other people presents, so the toolkit is free and available here.

We know, as the oldest professional body for market and social research analytics, a little bit about what a winner looks like.

Take advantage of our experience and the years of evidence from Oppies winners and I look forward to seeing you at the Oppies this year

Jane Frost CBE **CEO of MRS**



WHY ENTER

Entering the Oppies (as they are affectionately known) has lots of benefits.

Enhance your reputation and win new business. An MRS award is evidence of excellence.

Increase your profile. Winners receive publicity through Research Live, the MRS website and social media.

Reward your team and celebrate individual contributions.

Celebrate and attend our fabulous Oppies party and cheer on your colleagues and peers.

KEY DATES

Don't miss out on the recognition you deserve! Add these important dates to your diary.

Entries open **Wednesday 4 March 2026**

Entries close **Wednesday 27 May 2026**

Shortlist announced **Tuesday 28 July 2026**

Awards evening **Thursday 24 September 2026**

“Winning the Oppies Award means a great deal. It’s a real reflection of the care, flexibility and commitment our team brings to research operations every day, often behind the scenes. The award has strengthened our reputation and helped open new conversations with clients, while giving us a meaningful way to recognise and reward the brilliant people who make it all happen.”

Annie Tran, Client Communications Manager, Sense:lab – Winner of Best Research Services Partner 2025

Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).

CATEGORIES

These unique awards shine the spotlight on the people that make things happen in the research sector. There are a variety of categories, the full list is below.



Best Data Collection – Interviewer Enabled

This award recognises the business or team whose excellence at collecting data using interviewers, either by telephone, face-to-face or a combination of methods or modes, including recruitment to online, has delivered outstanding results for the research process. The majority of data collection must be human interviewer led.

Best Online Data Collection - Quantitative

Designed to recognise the business or team whose excellence at collecting data online or using a mixture of modes including online has delivered outstanding results for the research process. The majority of data collection must be online and been undertaken by the company submitting the entry. Entries incorporating AI or Machine Learning techniques, including synthetic data and participants can enter this category.

Best Data Solution

This award recognises the operational data solution that has best responded to the complexity of the research sector. Entries incorporating AI or Machine Learning techniques, including synthetic data and participants can enter this category.

Best Place to Work – Operations

Providing a great place to work helps ensure you recruit and retain the best operational staff. This award recognises operations businesses that put their staff at the heart of what they do.

Best Online Qual

The judges are looking for case studies of truly engaging top quality virtual qualitative research that shows the unique value it can add to a project. Entries incorporating AI or Machine Learning techniques, including synthetic data and participants can enter this category.

Best Research Services Partner

A successful research project can require a variety of support services along the way. This might include translation, transcription, product placement/fulfilment, mailing, data entry and preparation of any other specialist service without which researchers couldn't get the job done. Entries incorporating AI or Machine Learning techniques, including synthetic data and participants, can enter this category.

“Winning the MRS Operations Award for Operational Excellence has meant great exposure for us as a business. It’s validation and recognition for all the hard work that the team put in and is a great way for us to evidence to prospective clients the quality of what we stand for.”

**Chris Atkins, Managing Director,
Yonder Data Solutions – Winner of
Operational Excellence 2025**

Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).



Best Training & Development

This award is open to all types of operations businesses/teams and will go to the entry that can best demonstrate how training and development of operations staff (which can include, but is not restricted to, interviewers) have positively contributed towards business success and satisfaction results.

Best Viewing/Research Testing Facility

This award is open to any viewing/research testing facility which can demonstrate that their flexibility, commitment to improvement and value for money have led to business growth and kept existing customers coming back for more.

Innovation & Enterprise Award

This new award recognises operations businesses, teams or individuals who demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit by introducing innovations, new work methods or identify new business opportunities that improve operational performance and delivery.

Operations Future Leader

This award recognises individuals from the operations and support sector who are rising stars set for a bright future. Judges are looking for nominations from employers championing employees who are leading the path to future leadership with their inspiring, supportive and innovative approach to a project.

Premier Award – Operational Excellence

This award will be given to the operations business or operations department within an agency or client-side research department which best demonstrates their application of modern management techniques aimed at improving efficiencies, promoting excellent quality and guaranteeing consistency of delivery. Entries incorporating AI or Machine Learning techniques, including synthetic data and participants, can enter this category.

Recruitment Excellence

This award will be given to the Recruiter Accredited Company which best demonstrate their application of knowledge, skills and competence in the field of recruitment for a particular project. They must also demonstrate that they have delivered an outstanding recruitment service to their clients (either internal or external).

“Winning the Best Online Qual was a proud and meaningful moment for all of us at Bolt Insight. It reflected the work that has gone into building a platform focused on solving real challenges in qualitative research. More broadly, the award strengthened trust and supported conversations with partners who share our belief that AI should make research more human, not less.”

Hakan Yurdakul, CEO, Bolt Insight – Winner of Best Online Qual 2025

Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).

8 TOP TIPS TO WIN

Follow our judges' top tips to have the best chance of displaying a prestigious Oppie on your shelf!

- 1 Choose your category carefully** and address all the criteria in your entry, using clear, concise language.
- 2 If you worked with a partner or client** who played a vital role in your submission, name them and do a joint entry.
- 3 Evidence matters!** Back up every claim with evidence, use metrics to support your entry. If an award refers to any MRS Codes, standards, guidelines etc. include these in your entry.

“We were delighted that IFF Research won the MRS Oppie for Best Training & Development. Investing in our people is central to who we are. And this award recognises the culture of learning we’ve built and reinforces the link between great training and great research. Winning this award helps us attract great people and gives clients confidence that their work is in expert, ever-evolving hands.”

Sara Fernie-Jones, Marketing Director, IFF Research – Winner of Best Training & Development 2025

Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).



- 4 Include three attributed statements** from your clients, colleagues, or partners. The judges value the opinion of your customers and stakeholders.
- 5 Every word counts.** With only 500 words to make an impression, make every sentence meaningful and check it adds value.
- 6 Why should your entry win?** What is different and special about your entry and explain clearly.
- 7 Sense check.** Ask a colleague to read your entry before submitting it. A fresh pair of eyes can spot any mistakes.
- 8 Get a head start** and allow yourself plenty of time to craft a standout entry. Don't leave it to the last minute and ensure you meet the deadline!

HOW TO ENTER

Entries for all categories must be submitted via the online awards portal [here](#). Click on the relevant category and complete the entry form.

All categories require 500-words on how the criteria has been met and a maximum of three attributed statements (the number varies depending on the category).

If you are entering the Best Place to Work - Operations category you can also include one piece of supporting material. This can be a video or audio file no longer than 3 minutes, a Powerpoint presentation of no more than 10 slides or an infographic.'

ELIGIBILITY

Entrants for all categories must participate in a recognised framework regulating the services provided to the research sector (MRS Company Partner, employ at least one member of MRS or other equivalent association outside the UK).

The following categories have specific eligibility requirements.

Operations Future Leader – The employee must have worked in the sector for less than five years or will be aged under 30 as of the 27 May 2026.

Recruitment Excellence – Organisations must be a Recruiter Accredited Company including when any projects submitted as evidence for this award were undertaken. In addition, organisations must be a Recruiter Accredited Company at the time of entry and when the winners are announced on 24 September 2026.

ENTRY FEES

Entry fees apply to all categories. Each category costs £185 + VAT per entry.

Finalists will receive one free ticket per shortlisted entry to the Operations Awards on 24 September 2026, where the winners will be announced. Additional tickets can be purchased at the standard rate when sales open in July.

Payment for all fees **must be** received no later than 15 July 2026. Failure to pay by this date will invalidate your entry.

Invoices will be issued for all entries. If you wish to pay by credit card, you may contact our Finance Team by telephone on receipt of the invoice.

RULES OF ENTRY

If you are entering the Innovation & Enterprise Award all work referenced must have occurred in the 24 months up until May 2026.

All work referenced in the entries must have occurred in the last 12 months up until 1 May 2026.

You must nominate a primary contact who will take overall responsibility for the entry.

The primary contact must ensure that permission to enter the Awards is obtained from all parties involved.

MRS reserves the right to re-assign an entry to another category if deemed more appropriate.

The judges' decisions are final. The judges will not enter into correspondence about why an entry is not selected as a finalist.

Entries must be received by 4pm on 27 May 2026 to qualify.

Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).

FAQS

Got a query? Find your answer here. If you have any further questions, email chloe.ellison@mrs.org.uk

Q. Will the deadline be extended?

A. No, our judging process begins almost immediately, so all entrants are expected to make the official deadline which is 4pm on the 27 May 2026.

Q. Are the entries confidential?

A. The entry process is confidential, and all judges are required to sign confidentiality agreements. Entries are stored on an online portal requiring a password. Judges have access to the portal for a limited time.

Q. My clients want reassurance that their supporting statements will not be published.

A. The entries are not published. If we wish to publish any information for an article or case study, we will contact the submitter to discuss any confidential and sensitive information.

Q. We won/were finalists last year, can we enter again?

A. Yes, but the judges will know if your entry hasn't been updated so ensure you update your entry to refer to activities within the last 12 months.

Q. Can we enter more than one category?

A. Yes, but you should tailor your entry to address the criteria of each category specifically.

Q. How strict is the word limit?

A. Very. The submission system will cut you off at the limit for each section. If you submit more, the judges will not see it.

Equally, if you submit much less than the permitted word count, you probably haven't said enough.

Q. Can all the supporting statements come from the same person?

A. No. The supporting statements should act like references for your main submission. You must provide the number stated on the entry form of the category you are entering but can provide up to three. They must be attributed to an individual (full name and job title/company); if you only have one primary contact who can make a statement, the judges will also accept statements from other clients who you have done similar work for or who can also speak in support of the services you provide.

Q. Can we provide additional supporting documentation?

A. Only for the Best Place to Work – Operations category. The rest of the categories are judged on the written submission alone so no additional material will be considered. This allows all entries to be judged equally and controls the time it takes to judge each entry.

Q. Can we mention multiple projects in our entry?

A. In most cases, the judges prefer one clear case study that addresses the criteria. With only 500 words per entry, it is recommended that entrants follow this approach where relevant.

Q. Can you read the entry and give feedback before we submit?

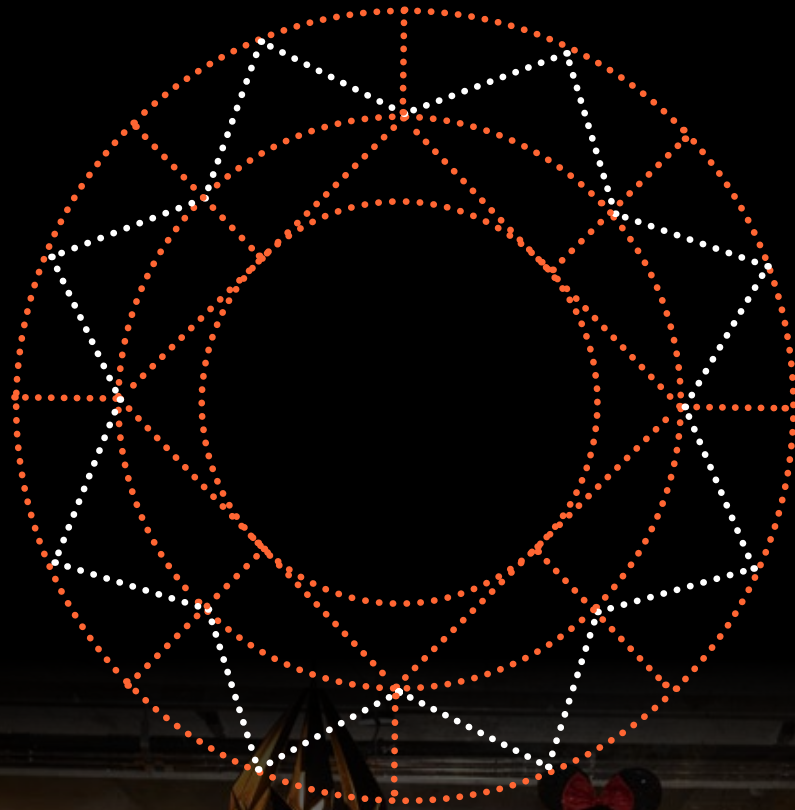
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Q. If we win how do we order additional trophies?

A. One trophy per category is presented at the awards ceremony. Additional trophies cost £85 plus VAT.

Q. Cards on the table, how do we win?

A. Telling people, they haven't been successful is not easy, especially when you know how close they've come. The standard of the entries we receive is generally excellent, so when the judges are choosing between them it sometimes comes down to the smallest things that set them apart. You only have a few words to tell your story – make every single one work for you: facts, figures, evidence. Think of the Just a Minute rules: no hesitation, repetition or deviation. Good luck!



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Entry forms and the full criteria for each category is available [here](#).