

Entry Guidelines

2026 ICAD Awards

Institute of Creative Advertising and Design

Key Dates

30.04.26	Call for entries launch
10.05.26	Earlybird rate ends
03.06.26	Deadline for entries
03–04.07.26	Judging
17.07.26	Results ratified
09.26	ICAD Awards

The ICAD Awards are the annual awards for the achievement of creative excellence in Irish advertising, design and production.

Each year the Institute assembles a series of juries comprising the finest creatives practising in Ireland, supported by carefully curated international jurors operating at the highest standards. We do this with the sole purpose of rewarding those who pursue, craft and execute creative excellence. Our awards categories span all of our members' disciplines, and our juries are selected to reflect the economic and creative diversity they represent.

The ICAD Bell is recognised as a benchmark for creative excellence in Ireland and internationally. We strive to uphold and maintain its founding principles, and the value it brings to the creative sector.



Contents

Award Levels 3

Fees & Eligibility 4

Entry Process 5

Entry Files 6

Categories 7

FAQ 15

Award Levels

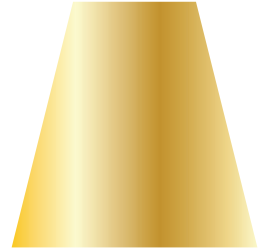
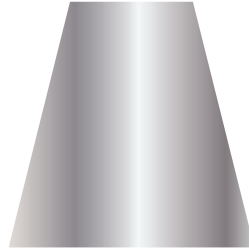
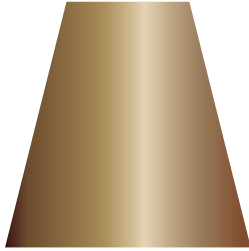
Criteria

Work submitted to the ICAD awards is judged based on three criteria to establish its creative merit.

Is it a good and original idea?

Is it well executed?

Is it relevant in its context?



Bronze

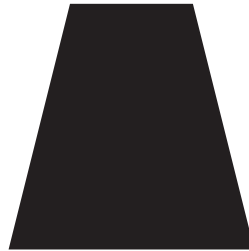
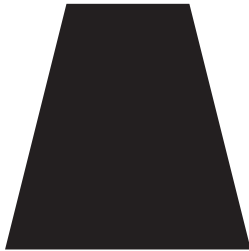
One of the finest works of the year; representing the best in Irish advertising and design.

Silver

Outstanding work that elevates the Irish standard both nationally and internationally.

Gold

Groundbreaking work that defines or redefines its field, earning international recognition for Irish creativity.



Student

Remarkable body of work by a student studying a creative discipline.

Greenhorn

Remarkable body of work by a creative with no more than three years of professional experience.

President's Award

Recognises and celebrates an individual who has made a significant impact on the Irish creative industry.

Highly Commended

An excellent piece of creative work.

Fees & Eligibility

Entry Fees

Earlybird rate	€100
Standard rate	€125
Student rate	€25

20% Discount — For freelancers, not-for-profits, charities and businesses with 3 or less employees. Contact us at info@icad.ie to claim this discount.

Fee Waiver — In certain instances, we may grant a fee waiver to applicants who can show significant financial hardship and for whom paying the application fee would be an insurmountable barrier to entry. For more details see the [Fee Waiver Policy on ICAD's website or email \[info@icad.ie\]\(mailto:info@icad.ie\)](#)

Eligibility

ICAD Membership — all key creatives for a given entry must be current ICAD members, or in the case of craft categories, the key craftsman e.g. the photographer for a Photography entry.

The person actually entering projects into the awards platform does not necessarily require ICAD membership. The creative on whose behalf the work is being entered does. Anyone you'd expect to go on stage to accept the award should be a member.

Membership is available for purchase via [ICAD.ie](https://www.icad.ie). To support emerging creatives, student membership is free of charge. Entries by non-members will not be eligible

Requirements

Entries that do not meet the criteria may be withdrawn.

Work must have been:

- Commercially released between 1st April 2025 and 31st May 2026.
- Produced in response to a genuine brief from a client or approved by a client.
- Made available to the public.

Do not include:

- Agency or studio credits.
- Individual credits.
- Agency or studio logos.
- Conceptual work, except in the case of student entries.
- Links to your website, unless it is a core component of the entry itself.

Entry Process

Entry Process

To ensure transparency and accountability, ICAD use Awards Force, which is regarded as the world's leading award management tool. Your account on this platform is separate to the ICAD website and is free to set up.

- If you have previously used the platform with your current email, you can simply sign in.
- If you have forgotten your password, you will have the option to reset it.
- If you have never used the site before with your current email address you can set up a new account [here](#).

Section 1

This section is for selecting and entering basic information under the following headings:

Award Section	Sections include advertising, design and other. Please note, Production is listed under 'Other'. Example — Film.
Parent Category	Example — Commercial up to 30 seconds.
Category	This is the name of the project.
Entry name	Enter your company or agency name. This
Agency/ Company	is exactly as it will be used in any mention of winning work. This should be your company (the company entering the work). The entity for whom the work was done.
Client	The product, service, or entity the work
Product (optional)	is promoting.

Section 2

Enter an optional brief description (no identifying info):

- This is optional, but a succinct description can make judging an entry much easier for the jury.
- Please don't include any identifying information about yourself or your company in your description.
- After reading the terms and conditions, tick 'I agree to the terms and conditions.' Available on [ICAD.ie](#).

Section 3

Upload attachments and/or links to your work.

- Make sure uploads don't include your company logo or any other identifying branding or text, except where it's an integral part of the entry.
- You may link to online videos, websites, landing pages relating to the entry. Please don't link to your own website.
- When linking to a video, please do so on a platform where it can be downloaded by ICAD, ideally Vimeo.
- Please don't link to social media posts. If the social media post is a key visual element of the campaign, include screenshots or a static images of it as an uploaded attachment.

Entry Files

File Type	Requirements
Images	300 dpi JPGs at 1920px wide (landscape)/1920px high (portrait). These may be used online and in print. Please do not provide pngs. Please upload a maximum of 12 images, except in the case of student or greenhorn entries. Greenhorn and student entries are not limited but we still ask that you be conscious of the judges time.
Video	Please only use links which are set to allow download, ideally Vimeo. For awarded projects, please note these links will also be used in the awards gallery on the ICAD website. Please only submit videos which are 1920x1080px or larger.
Audio	Audio can be uploaded as an mp3 or a wav file.
PDF	Pdfs can be uploaded to support entries; however, if awarded, these files will not be displayed in the awards gallery on the ICAD website.
URL	Urls to product websites can be included however, links to social media platforms, company or personal websites will be removed, except in the case of student or greenhorn entries, or where the company website itself is part of the entry.
Case Study	<p>Films that demonstrate your idea are accepted however; the jury will be judging the concept and/or execution of your entry and not the production of the case study.</p> <p>If you feel a case study film is required please keep it brief and to the point for the judges ease and for possible future use on the ICAD gallery.</p>
Project Image	All entries must be accompanied by at least one high resolution (300dpi) jpg which is suitable for use both in print and on screen.

Categories

Categories Sections

Advertising	Page 8
Production	Page 11
Design	Page 12
Other	Page 14

ADVERTISING CATEGORIES	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Display	Outdoor display	Outdoor posters including posters, billboards, digital screens, and special builds. Covers both static and dynamic outdoor executions.
	Online display	Paid digital advertising across websites and apps, including banners, rich media, programmatic, and interactive formats..
	Consumer display	Advertising in printed media, including newspapers, magazines, trade press, and large-format print executions such as wraps.
Radio	Radio Commercial up to 30"	A single audio advertisement up to 30 seconds, created for radio broadcast or digital streaming platforms.
	Radio Commercial over 30"	A single audio advertisement over 30 seconds, created for radio broadcast or digital streaming platforms.
	Radio Commercial Campaign	A series of two or more distinct audio advertisements developed as a campaign for radio or digital streaming platforms.
	Branded Podcast or Audio Series	Episodic audio content created by or for a brand, intended for distribution on podcast platforms or other audio channels.
Film	TV/VOD Commercial up to 30 seconds	A film advertisement up to 30 seconds, created for broadcast television or video-on-demand platforms.
	TV/VOD Commercial over 30 seconds	A film advertisement over 30 seconds, created for broadcast television or video-on-demand platforms.
	Cinema Commercial	A film advertising made with the intention to run in cinema.
	Web Film up to 60 seconds	Commercial content up to 60 seconds made to be shared online, with or without paid spend put behind it.
	Web Film over 60 seconds	Commercial content over 60 seconds made to be shared online, with or without paid spend put behind it.
	Film Campaign	Any film campaign of 2 or more executions (not edits) created with the original intention of running on TV, cinema, live or online
	Branded Film Content	Film content created by or for a brand that is not intended to run as a traditional advertisement, including work designed for live screening at events.
	Stings	Short-form sponsorship idents, typically 5-10 seconds, used at the beginning or end of broadcast or on-demand content.
	VOD/VOL	Film advertisements created specifically for video-on-demand or online video platforms.
	Branded Entertainment	Entertainment-led content created by or for a brand, where the brand plays an integral role in the concept or narrative.
Long-form Content	Narrative or documentary work created for brands that extends beyond traditional commercial lengths.	

ADVERTISING CATEGORIES	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Innovation	Creative Use of Technology	Creative work that uses technology in a novel way to deliver a brand idea.
	Creative Innovation	Original ideas or solutions created by or for a brand to solve business or user problems. This may or may not involve technology, but must be original.
	Creative Use of AI	Creative work that uses artificial intelligence as a central tool or collaborator in the development or execution of a brand idea.
	Data-driven Creativity	Creative work informed or powered by data, where the use of data directly shapes the idea or its execution.
	Gaming & Virtual Worlds	Creative work designed for interactive gaming environments or virtual platforms.
Experience	Experiential Advertising	Work that creates an outstanding brand experience for consumers through experience-led activations such as stunts, events, pop-up shops, technology-led experiences and public environments for brands.
	Branded Social Post	A single piece of branded content created for a social platform.
	Branded Social Campaign	A series of three or more branded social posts connected by a single idea, created specifically for social platforms.
	Digital Experience	Interactive experiences created using digital technology that enable meaningful user engagement with a brand.
	Creator-led Content	Content created in collaboration with a creator, where their voice, style, and audience are central to the idea.
	Platform-native Experience	Creative work designed specifically for a platform, built around its behaviours, features, and user culture.
	Community-driven Brand Experience	Brand experiences that invite audiences to participate, contribute, or shape the outcome over time.
	Cultural Collaboration (Brand x Music / Film / Art)	Creative work developed through collaboration between brands and cultural partners, resulting in output beyond traditional advertising.

ADVERTISING CATEGORIES	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Integrated & Earned	Integrated Campaign	A campaign built around a single idea that is executed consistently across multiple media channels.
	Earned Media Campaign	A campaign designed to generate organic attention and coverage through social sharing, press, and editorial channels.
	Tactical Advertising	Real-time or reactive creative work that responds to current events, news, or cultural moments to create relevance and attention for a brand.
	Long-Term Brand Building	Creative work that builds and strengthens a brand consistently over an extended period of time.
Media	Creative Use of Media	Innovative or strategic use of paid media channels where the media placement itself is central to the idea.
	Media Innovation	New or unconventional media formats, placements, or buying approaches that unlock creative impact.
PR	Creative PR	Creative work designed to earn attention through storytelling, influence, or public conversation rather than paid media.
	Earned-Led Campaign	Creative work where earned media, advocacy, or public participation is the primary driver of reach and impact.
Advertising Craft	Art Direction	Excellence in the visual concept and execution of advertising.
	Copywriting in English	Excellence in writing persuasive or creative advertising in English.
	Copywriting in Irish	Excellence in writing persuasive or creative advertising in Irish.
	Direction for Radio	Creative direction of radio advertising, including voice, sound design, and music.
	Illustration & Graphics	Use of illustration or graphic design to communicate a brand idea.
	Photography	Creative use of photography in advertising communication.
	Typography	Creative and effective use of type in advertising communication.
	User Experience for Advertising	Design of interactive advertising experiences across digital platforms.

PRODUCTION CATEGORIES	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Production	Animation	Excellence in the creation of animated content. The animator, animation studio, or production/post-production company should enter.
	Cinematography	Excellence in the art of capturing moving images. The cinematographer or production company should enter.
	Original Composition in Music	Excellence in original music composition. The composer, music producer, or production/post-production company should enter.
	Production Design	Excellence in designing sets, environments, and visual worlds for film. The production designer or production company should enter.
	Sound Design	Excellence in the creation and integration of sound. The sound designer, audio company, or post-production/production company should enter.
	Visual or Special Effects	Excellence in the creation of visual effects, both practical and digital. The VFX studio or post-production/production company should enter.
	Direction Single	Excellence in directing a single piece of advertising film. The director or production company should enter.
	Direction Campaign	Excellence in directing a connected series of advertising films. The director or production company should enter.
	Colour Grading	Excellence in the creative use of colour to shape tone, mood, and storytelling in advertising. The colourist or post-production company should enter.
	Casting	Excellence in selecting and directing talent to enhance a creative idea. The casting director or production company should enter.
	Use of Archive or Found Footage	Excellence in the creative integration of existing footage into new advertising work. The editor, director, or production/post-production company should enter.
	Editing up to 60 seconds	Excellence in editing short-form advertising for clarity, rhythm, and impact. The editor or post-production/production company should enter.
	Editing over 60 seconds	Excellence in editing long-form advertising to shape narrative and pacing. The editor or post-production/production company should enter.
	Use of Licensed or Adapted Music	Excellence in selecting and integrating existing music to enhance a creative idea. The music supervisor, editor, or production/post-production company should enter.

DESIGN CATEGORIES	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Identity and Branding	Logo	Design or redesign of a logo or logo system.
	New Branding Schemes	Creation of a new visual identity system for a brand.
	Rebranding Schemes	Redesign and repositioning of an existing brand identity system.
	Sonic or Audio Identity	Creation of a distinctive and cohesive audio identity system for a brand.
Print	Book(s)	Design of printed books.
	Book Cover(s)	Design of book covers.
	Catalogue(s) / brochure(s) / report(s)	Design of printed catalogues, brochures, or reports.
	Newspaper(s) / Magazine(s) / Periodical(s)	Editorial design for newspapers, magazines, or periodicals.
	Poster(s)	Design of printed posters.
	Stamp(s)	Design of postage stamps.
	Applied Print Graphic(s)	Printed graphic design for formats outside core print categories, such as invitations, tickets, packaging elements, or merchandise.
	Integrated Graphics	Graphic design applied consistently across multiple print formats from a single concept.
	Print for Direct Mail Marketing	Printed design created specifically for direct mail campaigns.
Digital	Phone or Tablet App UI Design	Design of mobile or tablet applications that enable users to interact with a brand through a digital product or service.
	Website Design	Design of websites that enable users to access, navigate, and interact with a brand online.
	User Experience Design	Design that improves the usability, accessibility, and overall quality of interaction between users and digital products or services.
	Immersive Digital Design	Design of interactive or non-interactive digital environments, including augmented reality, projection, or spatial digital experiences.
	Motion Design	Design of moving graphic elements for digital or audiovisual platforms, including animations, idents, signage, and event graphics.
	Applied Digital Graphics	Digital graphic design for formats outside core categories, such as social content, invitations, tickets, or digital assets.
	Service Design	Design of systems and services that shape how people interact with a brand or organisation across multiple touchpoints.

DESIGN CATEGORIES	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Environmental	Permanent Branded Environment	Design of permanent physical branded spaces, including retail stores, restaurants, offices, interiors, and public environments.
	Temporary Branded Environment	Design of temporary physical branded spaces, including pop-ups, events, festivals, and short-term installations, indoors or outdoors.
	Wayfinding	Design of systems that guide and orient people within physical spaces.
	Exhibition Design	Design of spatial environments that communicate a theme, concept, or narrative within a curated physical space.
Packaging	Consumer Goods	Design of packaging for physical consumer products.
	Music / Film Packaging (Cover / Sleeve Design)	Design of physical packaging for music or film releases, including covers, sleeves, and related physical formats.
Design Craft	Art Direction	Excellence in the visual direction and composition of design work.
	Illustration	Excellence in illustration for design. The illustrator should enter.
	Use of Illustration	Excellence in the use of illustration as a fundamental part of a design concept. The design studio should enter.
	Photography	Excellence in photography for design. The photographer should enter.
	Use of Photography	Excellence in the use of photography as a fundamental part of a design concept. The design studio should enter.
	Typeface & Lettering Design	Excellence in the design of published or proprietary typefaces and lettering. The type designer or lettering artist should enter.
	Use of Type & Lettering	Excellence in the use of type and lettering as a fundamental part of a design concept. The design studio should enter.
	Printing	Excellence in print production and execution. The printer should enter.

OTHER CATEGORIES	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Irish Language	Irish Language Advertising	Advertising work conceived and executed primarily in the Irish language
	Irish Language Design	Design work where the Irish language is central to the concept and execution.
Accessibility	Accessible Advertising	Creative advertising that improves usability, clarity, and accessibility across physical or digital experiences.
	Accessible Design	Creative design that improves usability, clarity, and accessibility across physical or digital experiences.
Sustainability	Sustainable Advertising	Creative work that promotes environmental responsibility or drives positive climate-related behaviour change.
	Sustainable Design	Design work that reduces environmental impact through materials, processes, systems, or behaviours, or supports more sustainable ways of living or working.
	Sustainable Innovation	Creative work that introduces new approaches, systems, or technologies to reduce environmental impact or improve sustainability outcomes.
Creative for Change	Advertising	Work that shifts conversation, behaviour, or culture beyond the brand itself. The agency or creative should enter. Jurors may also nominate eligible entries from other categories for this award.
	Design	Work that shifts conversation, behaviour, or culture beyond the brand itself. Design studio or creative should enter. Jurors may also nominate eligible entries from other categories for this award.
Student Award	Advertising	A body of creative work in the field of advertising, created as part of a 3rd level educational programme
	Design	A body of creative work in the field of design, created as part of a 3rd level educational programme.
	Production	A body of work created by a craftsperson (illustrator, photographer, director, production designer, editor etc) as part of a 3rd level educational programme.
Greenhorn Award	Advertising	A body of creative work by an art director or copywriter working in the industry for less than three years.
	Design	A body of creative work by a designer working in the industry for less than three years.
	Production	A body of creative work by a craft practitioner (e.g. director, illustrator, photographer) working in the industry for less than three years.

Does everyone who worked on the project need to be a member?	<p>All key creatives for a given entry must be ICAD members, or in the case of craft categories, the key craftsperson (i.e., the photographer for a Photography entry).</p> <p>The person actually entering projects into the awards platform does not necessarily require ICAD membership. The creative on whose behalf the work is being entered does. Anyone you'd expect to go on stage to accept the award should be a member.</p>
What if I have trouble logging in?	<p>If you can't remember your award platform password, you can easily reset it through the award platform. If you continue to have difficulty logging in, please contact info@icad.ie</p>
Can other people in my agency/studio submit entries too?	<p>Yes. Different people from the same company can submit entries.</p> <p>Each should set up their own user profile and assign the entries to the relevant company.</p>
Do I need to be a member to enter for a Greenhorn or Student award?	<p>To be eligible to enter the Awards, Student's and Greenhorn's must hold ICAD membership. Membership is free for Students and available via ICAD's website</p>
How do I enter for a Greenhorn or Student award?	<p>Greenhorn and Student categories work differently from the other categories. You're not entering a single piece of work, but rather a body of work by a creative who fits the criteria for Greenhorn (working in the industry for three years or less). Please see the Categories and Fees sections of this document.</p>
How do I know what categories to enter?	<p>See the Categories section of this document. If you're still not sure, contact info@icad.ie. Please note that judges may move work between categories if they feel another category would better suit the work.</p>
What's the difference between a single and a campaign entry?	<p>A single entry is where one execution is entered. A campaign entry includes more than one execution. In some categories, particularly in Design, 'campaign' is replaced with 'series' or 'range'.</p>
What files do I need to submit?	<p>Please see the Files section of this document.</p>

FAQ

Can I enter case study videos?

Yes, if you feel it would help explain your entry, but remember, we'll be judging the concept and execution of your entry and not the production of your case study. If you feel a case study video is required, please consider the judges' time and keep it short.

How do I best represent my work?

In all instances, we are trying to simulate the original experience of the viewer for the jury. In the case of a book or a press ad, this is relatively straightforward. In other categories, it can be more complicated. Please try to provide enough details to the jury that they have a full grasp of what you are entering while not overloading them with unnecessary information.

What information should I include in my files?

Ideally, the only information should be contained in the work itself or information requested in the entry system. Files should not be captioned and should not contain the name of the entrant unless the work is self-promotional.
