

Nuclear Institute Volunteer Awards 2026 - Celebrating Excellence in Nuclear Professionalism



Volunteer Awards Guidelines

May 2026

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Introduction

The Nuclear Institute (NI) is proud to recognise the outstanding contributions of volunteers and professionals who advance the nuclear sector through their dedication, leadership, and advocacy. The 2026 Volunteer Awards celebrate achievements in alignment with the Nuclear Professionalism Standard®, promoting excellence, inclusivity, and innovation.

2026 Volunteer Awards

These guidelines are published to support nominations for the 2026 Volunteer Awards.

The 2026 ceremony celebrates efforts completed over the previous 12 months.

The event is intended to solely recognise the work of volunteers. Any work done by a paid member of staff or work for financial remuneration is ineligible for recognition. However, it is appreciated that some activities may be completed in a voluntary capacity separate from their employment. For these voluntary duties members or paid staff may be nominated for activities undertaken voluntarily, separate from their paid employment.

Please read these guidelines thoroughly prior to submitting any nominations. If you have any questions, please contact communications@nuclearinst.com at the earliest opportunity

The Nuclear Institute (NI) is indebted to the outstanding contributions of volunteers. The annual Volunteer Awards are designed to say a thank you to all who contribute to the Nuclear Institute's purpose - **to promote nuclear professionalism and excellence, and to enhance public trust and understanding in nuclear**. The awards also allow individuals to celebrate their achievements.

Acronyms & Abbreviations Glossary

This glossary provides definitions for key acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the document to support clarity and consistency.

Acronym	Full Term	Description
NI	Nuclear Institute	The UK's professional body dedicated to advancing nuclear professionalism, excellence, and public understanding.
YGN	Young Generation Network	A network of members within the NI aged 37 and under who support early-career professionals in the nuclear industry.
SIG	Special Interest Group	Volunteer-led groups within NI focused on specific areas of technical or professional interest.
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Principles and initiatives that promote fairness, representation, and inclusive practices in the sector.

NAILS	Nuclear Academics and Industry Liaison Sub-committee	A working group uniting academia and industry to support collaboration, information sharing, and leadership in nuclear education and skills.
EAO	Education and Outreach	A function supporting educational activities and public engagement.
RAMTrans	Radioactive Materials Transport	A conference focusing on the safe and effective transport of radioactive materials.

Nomination Procedure

1. Eligibility & Key Rules

- **Open to:** NI members, YGN/SIG volunteers, Assessors, Branch, Special Interest Groups, NI Committees and (for *Prizes*) non-members where specified.
- **Volunteer Awards:** Must be for unpaid contributions. Paid work is ineligible.
- **Self-nominations:** Only permitted for the *Pinkerton Prize* (professional prize).

2. Nomination Process

a) Submission

- **Preferred:** Digitally via Microsoft Form attached [here](#).
- **Alternative:** Email completed form to communications@nuclearinst.com

b) Mandatory Requirements

- **Citations** (250 words max):
 - Describe how the nominee meets the **specific award criteria**.
 - Focus on achievements during **the past 12 months** (except for lifetime/service awards).
 - *Example:* For *Excellence in EDI*, detail initiatives led and measurable impact.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Articles (Pinkerton), service records (Lifetime Achievement), or letters of recognition.

c) Confidentiality

- Merit-based nominations (e.g. *Volunteer of the Year*) must **not** be disclosed to the nominee.

3. Timeline

- **Nominations Open:** Monday 1st June 2026
- **Deadline:** Friday 24th July 2026

- **Judging:** Early August 2026
- **Winners Announced:** Late August 2026
- **Ceremony:** 24 September 2026 (Crewe – further details in the official invite)

4. Post-Submission

- **Verification:** NI staff may crosscheck service years or membership status.

5. APPEALING A DECISION

- **Appeals:** Submit within 14 days of results with evidence to communications@nuclearinst.com
- Appeals against a decision, must be made within 14-days or receipt. Appeals must be made to communications@nuclearinst.com and must clearly state the reason for appeal. Appeals will be considered by the Volunteer Awards Committee should sufficient evidence be lodged.

Awards & Prizes

These awards are divided into two categories:

1. **Volunteer Awards:** Recognising exceptional voluntary contributions to NI activities.
2. **Prizes:** Honouring professional achievements, including published works.

An independent Awards Panel will oversee nominations, ensuring fairness and adherence to criteria.

Award Categories

Volunteer Awards

1. Lifetime Achievement Award

Description: This award recognises sustained, high-impact contribution to the Nuclear Institute and the wider profession through leadership, governance, or long-term service.

Criteria:

- Completing a 20+ year nuclear career
- Volunteering with NI for 5+ years
- Demonstrating significant leadership contributions to the NI and commitment to the principles and ethos of Nuclear Professionalism Standard®. It is not a criteria requirement to be a Member (MNUCL) or Fellow (FNUCL) i.e. have demonstrated the competences of the Nuclear Professionalism Standard® for this award.

2. Young Leader of the Year

Description: This award is for rising stars within the UK nuclear industry who are in the first 10 years of their nuclear career who have already achieved success and are seen as future leaders.

Criteria:

- Showing leadership potential and commitment to the industry's future
- Volunteering actively for YGN, SIGs, Branches or committees
- Demonstrate practical experience of leadership skills e.g. organising an event, managing a team, or implementing leadership training

3. Excellence in Advocacy of EDI

Description: This award is for individuals who champion and implement inclusive values and practices.

Criteria:

- Creating an inclusive environment that values diversity
- Developing and implementing innovative practices that promote inclusion
- Leading initiatives that promote equity and inclusivity practices
- Volunteering actively for YGN, SIGs, Branches or committees

4. Most Outstanding Advocate

Description: This award is for NI volunteers who have shown outstanding activity to positively influence the nuclear sector, fellow members, or public opinion.

Criteria:

- Increasing participation in NI events by "activating" communities or engaging wider communities
- Supporting the delivery of the NI mission
- Advocating for nuclear as a viable low carbon energy solution
- Volunteering actively for YGN, SIGs, Branches or committees

5. Mentor of the Year

Description: Celebrating those who have invested significantly in developing people through mentoring at the NI. This award is for NI mentors who have shown consistent dedication to supporting and developing mentees, as well as investing time and effort into the future of the nuclear sector.

Criteria:

- Demonstrates consistent and sustained engagement in mentoring activities
- Supports knowledge-sharing, capability-building, and future workforce development
- Invests significant time and effort in supporting mentees
- Evident positive influence on mentees' personal and professional growth

6. Innovator and Collaborator Award

Description: Recognises a volunteer who has introduced fresh ideas, innovative approaches, or impactful collaborations that benefit the Institute and its members. This award celebrates individuals who have demonstrated outstanding cross-sector collaboration to advance professional practice, innovation, or public understanding in support of the Nuclear Institute's mission; this award is especially relevant to our SIGs.

Criteria:

- Brings together stakeholders across industry, academia, government, supply chain, or other sectors
- Strengthens collaboration across different parts of the Institute
- Promotes excellence, innovation, and best practice across the nuclear profession
- Contributes to the Institute's role in supporting professional standards and development
- Shares knowledge that benefits the wider professional community
- Outreach, engagement, or communication beyond the sector, and participating in activities that strengthen the industry as well as the Institute

7. NI Volunteer of the Year

Description: This award recognises outstanding voluntary contributions to NI.

Criteria:

- Contributing positively to nuclear advocacy
- Creating and supporting inclusive environments
- Participating in NI activities
- Embodying the Nuclear Professionalism Standard®

8. Regional Branch of the Year

Description: Recognises a regional branch that has delivered exceptional value to members over the past year through engagement, innovation, and alignment with Nuclear Institute values.

Criteria:

- Provides a vibrant and engaging programme of activities for members
- Encourages participation across a diverse membership base (career stages, disciplines, organisations)
- Provides a vibrant and engaging programme of activities for members
- Encourages participation across a diverse membership base (career stages, disciplines, organisations)
- Builds partnerships that extend the reach and impact of the Institute

Prizes

1. Pinkerton Prize

Description: Established in the 1960s, this prize recognises outstanding articles published in Nuclear Future.

Criteria:

- Publishing article(s) of exceptional merit in Nuclear Future
- Open to all professionals (volunteer status not required)

2. YGN Prize for Outstanding Contribution

Description: This prize recognises longstanding, dedicated YGN volunteers who have provided significant support and mentorship.

Criteria:

- Leading or organising projects that benefit YGN
- Providing valuable mentorship to fellow YGN members
- Demonstrating commitment to YGN's goals and values
- Actively volunteering for YGN for 5+ years

Volunteer Badges

In addition to the awards and prizes the NI will also recognise the length of service for volunteers using the following criteria:

Hierarchy of roles

1. Board of Trustees
2. Core Committee
3. National Committee – YGN, Conference
4. Branch/SIG Committee
5. Sub-committee

If a member undertakes multiple roles across committees, the highest ranked role in the hierarchy will be used to award a badge.

Definitions

Core Committees	Assurance, EDI, Editorial, Membership (including Membership Assessors), Nominations, Outreach, Policy, Remuneration
Conference Committee	Modelling, RAMTrans, Digital, Security, other HQ-organised conferences as relevant
Branch Committee	formal committee and any sub-committees e.g. Branch Dinner
YGN Sub-Committees	any sub-committee supporting a Committee Lead e.g. EAO, Marketing, EDI, Membership, Industry Liaison. Company Catalysts. Nuclear Future YGN Editor



Gold

- Trustees – 1 year+
- Chairs of Core Committees – 3 years +
- Core Committee members – 5 years +
- Conference Committee Chair – 3 years +
- YGN Chair – 3 years + -
- YGN Committee members – 5 years +
- Branch/SIG Chair – 3 years+



Silver

- Chairs of Core Committees – 1-2 years
- Core Committee members– 3-4 years
- Conference Committee Chair – 1-2 years
- Conference Committee member – 3 years +
- YGN Committee member – 1-4 years
- YGN Sub-Committee member – 3+ years
- Branch/SIG Chairs – 1-2 years
- Branch/SIG Committee member – 3 years +
- NAILS Chair – 3 years+



Bronze

- Branch/SIG Committee members – 1-2 years
- Core Committee members– 1-2 years
- Conference Committee member – 1-2 years
- YGN Sub-Committee member – 1-2 years
- NAILS Chair – 1-2 years

Additional awards may be granted at the discretion of the Nuclear Institute CEO across any category.

Badge Allocation Process

1. **Annual Review:** Conducted by NI staff, cross-referenced with committee records.

2. **Discretionary Awards:** CEO may grant badges for exceptional cases outside standard criteria.
3. **Appeals:** Members may query eligibility via communications@nuclearinst.com

Nomination Form

Eligibility: As specified per award category

Key Dates:

1. Nominations Open: 1st June 2026
2. Nominations Close: 24th July 2026
3. Judging: 27th-31st July 2026
4. Winners Announced: August 2026
5. Ceremony: 23rd September 2026 (Crewe)

FAQs

Q: Can I self-nominate?

A: No, except for the Pinkerton Prize (professional prize) through submission and publication of a technical paper.

Q: How are disputes resolved?

A: Appeals with evidence may be submitted within 14 days of results to communications@nuclearinst.com

Q: Who do I contact if I need help?

A: Contact communications@nuclearinst.com

Q: Will you publish my nomination or details?

A: All nominations are confidential; however, we may publish a full list of everyone who has been nominated, and we will publish the names of the recipients of any award or prizes including badges.

Celebrating Excellence in Nuclear Professionalism