



TELEVISION JOURNALISM AWARDS 2025 CRITERIA

Submissions are now invited for the Television Journalism Awards. The awards, for both news and current affairs, seek to recognise creative and excellent journalism by organisations whose broadcasts are transmitted on a UK based platform, such as Freeview, Freesat, Sky or Virgin or who create online video content from a UK production base. Where the category criteria refer to “network channel” this means a TV channel which is broadcast widely in the UK, rather than to a specific nation or region.

The 2025 Awards Ceremony will be held on Wednesday 5 March 2025 at the London Hilton on Park Lane.

Please note changes to the criteria below:

- **Camera Operator of the Year** has been renamed **Camera Person of the Year**
- Duration of entry for **Current Affairs International** and **Current Affairs Home** has been increased to a **maximum of 90 minutes**
- **Innovation Award** has been replaced with a new category, **Digital Journalism**

If there are questions on the eligibility of any entry, these should be addressed to Jo Sampson at jsampson@rts.org.uk.

Please read the criteria for each category carefully before submitting your entry.

The Juries will be asked to follow these overarching criteria which apply to all categories.

- *Quality of the journalism. Juries will be asked to gauge this particularly in the context of the type of market where the entry is mainly targeted.*
- *Impact and resonance with the target audience. Evidence should be submitted separately and may be taken into account by the jury.*
- *Enterprise. Juries will be asked to give credit for creative, original, resourceful and imaginative approaches.*
- *Technical quality. Juries will be asked to measure this in the context of production pressures; for example, turn-round time and the conditions under which an item is produced.*

In common with other RTS awards, entrants should bear in mind in selecting their entries that judges are asked to ensure that these awards reflect diversity within the industry and within wider society.

CATEGORIES

News Coverage – Home

The Home News Award is for the best coverage of a major news story in the UK as it unfolds. Entries can include material ranging over weeks or months. The award is intended to recognise every aspect of coverage including journalistic enterprise, quality of reporting, picture and sound, analysis and explanation.

Entries: Up to three entries per network channel or agency to a maximum of 30 minutes (including slates/black) per entry. In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one story which has also appeared on a network channel or online. Entries can consist of a maximum of 10 excerpts, each clearly identified by time and date. Sequences must be separated briefly by black and must not be edited internally. Entries from news agencies should include copies of scripts sent with the original material and, where possible, details of how the content was used by broadcasters. Foreign elements can be included, as long as they are clearly relevant to the story and represent no more than 25% of the total footage supplied for judging.

News Coverage - International

The International News Award is for the best coverage of a major news story outside the U.K. as it unfolds. Entries can include material ranging over weeks or months. The award is intended to recognise every aspect of coverage including journalistic enterprise, quality of reporting, picture and sound, analysis and explanation.

Entries: Up to three entries per network channel or agency to a maximum of 30 minutes (including slates/black) per entry. In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one story which has also appeared on a network channel or online. Entries can consist of a maximum of 10 excerpts, each clearly identified by time and date. Sequences must be separated briefly by black and must not be edited internally. Entries from news agencies should include copies of scripts sent with the original material and, where possible, details of how the content was used by broadcasters.

Network Daily News Programme of the Year

The Network Daily News Programme of the Year Award is for the programme which has demonstrated the greatest journalistic excellence throughout the year. The jury will take into account the programme's production values as well as its journalism. They may also take into account the performance of a programme beyond the submitted material, from within the criteria year.

Entries: Up to three entries per network channel to a maximum of 60 minutes (including slates/black) per entry. Entries can consist of up to a maximum of 30 separate sequences, each clearly identified by time and date. Sequences must be separated briefly by black and must not be edited internally.

News Channel of the Year

The News Channel of the Year Award is for the news provider which has best reported the events of the year which will be of interest to viewers in the U.K. regardless of where the stories have taken place. A news channel is considered to be a continuous live video stream on network TV and/or online which may contain some pre-recorded elements. The jury may take into account the performance of an entrant beyond the submitted material, within the criteria year.

Entries: One per network channel. Each entry should consist of a maximum of 40 excerpts and should be separately identifiable extracts, with no internal edits, of up to 60 minutes (including slates/black) in total covering a number of different news events. The material must be as first broadcast. Submissions should indicate the date and time of each extract.

Breaking News

This award recognises the expertise of news organisations in responding in real time to an unscheduled or unexpected major news story. The judges will be focusing on the initial coverage from the moment the story breaks, including the speed of response, and the quality of cogent reports, background, context and analysis. They will also consider how well the broadcaster reported subsequent events over the first 48 hours. The jury may take into account the performance of an entrant beyond the submitted material, from within the criteria year.

Entries: Up to two entries per network channel or agency to a maximum of 30 minutes (including slates/black) per entry. In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one story which has also appeared on a UK-wide channel or online. Entries can consist of a maximum of 12 excerpts shown within the first 48 hours of the coverage, each clearly identified by time and date. Sequences must be separated briefly by black and must not be edited internally. Entries from news agencies should include copies of scripts sent with the original material and, where possible, details of how the content was used by broadcasters.

On-Demand Journalism

This award recognises the huge growth in video-journalism produced specifically for internet connected on-demand platforms. These include websites, apps, YouTube and OTT (“over-the-top”) TV channels. Any professional video-journalism organisation with a UK production base is eligible to enter (including mainstream broadcasters). The spirit of this award is to encourage and reward original journalism not made for broadcast on a traditional linear channel. Entries should have been commissioned and designed for a digital platform or platforms. Entries may subsequently have been shown on conventional TV (DTT, satellite or cable) but this should not have formed part of the commissioning process. The judges will be looking particularly for an originality of approach, film and/or digital production techniques and delivery of journalism for non-broadcast audiences. This type of journalism is often produced by individuals or very small teams who are multi-skilled, and this will be also taken into account by the judges.

Entries: Should be a single piece of video-journalism, news or a feature, running between 5 and 15 minutes. Original pieces which are longer may be edited into up to three segments. Each organization, including regional centres, can enter up to TWO pieces.

Please note: very short pieces made for social media (e.g. for TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat are more likely to be suitable for the Innovation Award.

Digital Journalism

This is a new category which replaces the Innovation Award and can be given to a team or individual. As part of the Television Journalism awards, this category is video focused. Entries should encompass video story-telling and could also include info-graphics, text, audio, visual experiences and use of multi-platforms. This award seeks to recognise outstanding work in this field commissioned by news media organisations where the primary publication point is the organisations' website, social media applications or other digital platforms. Technical innovation will be recognised as part of the judging criteria if relevant, alongside core original journalism. The judges will be particularly looking for evidence that entries have helped engage audiences, especially those who are hard to reach. It is likely that entrants will need to support their entry with information to help the judges understand why the entry deserves special credit which could include data on reach, social engagements etc. Entries will contain short video segments accompanying text and other digital elements up to a maximum of 10 minutes of video with no more than 5 separate items. Note: longer video stories/films without other accompanying elements are likely better directed to the On-Demand Journalism category.

Entries: Up to two per news organisation, agency or production company. In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one entry. Entries may be single pieces of media or separately identifiable items with no internal edits.

Scoop of the Year

This award recognises exclusive, entrepreneurial journalism in either news or current affairs by a broadcaster or agency. Entries will be judged on the strength of the journalism and the wider impact more than the production values of the transmitted story.

Entries: Up to three entries per network channel or agency of up to 30 minutes (including slates/black) each, consisting of a maximum of 10 excerpts. In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one story which has also appeared on a UK-wide channel or online. Entries may either be single items or separately identifiable extracts, with no internal edits, of items taken from the coverage of one story.

Emerging Talent of the Year (formerly Young Talent of the Year)

The Emerging Talent of the Year Award is for the best work in news or current affairs during the year by an on or off-screen journalist, editor, video journalist, camera operator or technician. Entrants will normally be under the age of 30 (on the last day of the twelve-month period from which entries are invited) and in the early stages of their career. In exceptional circumstances, an entrant will be considered who is not under 30 but who has become a journalist later in life or who has been 'discovered' after working in a different field. In the case of offscreen candidates especially (but all candidates ideally), the judges will welcome supporting written material and background information to help understand the individual contribution.

Entries: Two per network channel or production company of up to 30 minutes (including slates/black). In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one entry where the material has also appeared on a UK-wide channel or online. Entries should consist of a maximum of five excerpts with no internal edits, to demonstrate range.

Camera Person of the Year

The Camera Person of the Year Award is for the best work by a camera operator in news or current affairs. The judges will wish to see the breadth and depth of the camera operator's skill. It will be particularly helpful for the jury to be provided with written background information on whether, for example, the camera operator also helped to produce the items or edited them.

Entries: Up to three per channel or agency of up to 15 minutes (including slates/black). In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one entry where the material has also appeared on a UK-wide channel or online. The submitted material should consist of pictures and effects only, i.e., without any added commentary or music, although a written script may be submitted as well. Only in exceptional circumstances will an entry with commentary be considered. The material should be as first broadcast (or, in the case of agencies, as sent to clients on the day) with no subsequent edits or later post transmission techniques such as grading. Natural sound levels may be restored to their original levels as recorded at the time but with no enhancement.

Network Interview of the Year

This award recognises the importance of the television interview in making news and in analysing issues. The judges will be looking for an interview which reveals new - and often unexpected - information and demonstrates journalistic skills by the interviewer. The award is given for the best interview, not for the best package of interviews by one journalist.

Entries: Up to three entries per network news organisation with a maximum of 20 minutes (including slates/black) per entry. No editing is permitted within the entry.

Political Journalist of the Year

The award recognises the high quality specialist knowledge and expertise required for political journalism on TV and video platforms. In this context political journalism is not confined to coverage of Westminster. Credit will be given for original story-getting, reporting, analysis and interviewing. The jury may take into account the performance of the individual beyond the submitted material, from within the criteria year.

Entries: Three per network channel of up to 30 minutes (including slates/black). In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one entry where the material has also appeared on a UK-wide channel or online. Entries must be separately identifiable extracts, with no internal edits.

Specialist Journalist of the Year

The award recognises high quality specialist knowledge and expertise in thematic genres such as arts, entertainment, science, health, education, business, economics and defence inside or outside the UK. Coverage of a particular area of the world is not considered specialist in itself but reporting of a theme or issue within that area is. The jury may take into account the performance of the individual beyond the submitted material, from within the criteria year.

Entries: Three per network channel of up to 30 minutes (including slates/black). In addition, news teams serving a nation (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or an English region or the Channel Islands may submit one entry where the material has also appeared on a UK-wide channel or online. Entries must be separately identifiable extracts, with no internal edits.

Network Presenter of the Year

The Network Presenter of the Year Award is for the best news and/or current affairs presenter whose skills may include interviewing, responding to breaking news, effective communication with the programme audience and presenting on location as well as studio presentation. Reporter packages made on presentation assignments may be submitted but this category is primarily for presenting not reporting and those reports can be submitted into the news coverage categories. The jury may take into account the performance of a presenter beyond the submitted material, from within the criteria year.

Entries: Up to five entries per network channel of up to 30 minutes (including slates/black). Please provide a maximum of 10 excerpts. Entries may be single items or separately identifiable extracts, with no internal edits. Entrants are permitted to include material from more than one channel in their entry but must only be from their work for news or current affairs. Where there is a crossover of channels, entrants will need to specify from which channel their entry comes. Please ensure your excerpts feature the presenter being judged and no co-presenters.

Network Television Journalist of the Year

The Television Journalist of the Year award is for the best work during the year by an on-screen television journalist in news and/or current affairs. Judges will expect to see a demonstration of the range of the journalist and may take into account the performance of a journalist beyond the submitted material, from within the criteria year.

Entries: Up to three per network channel of up to 30 minutes (including slates/black). Entries, with no internal edits, should include a minimum of three items to demonstrate range

NATIONS AND REGIONS AWARDS

Nations and Regions News

The Nations and Regions News Award is for the programme which has best demonstrated originality and production quality as well as journalistic excellence. Entrants should bear in mind that judges are asked to consider not only the treatment of major news stories but evidence of how a programme team can create a sense of belonging that distinguishes individual programmes from the output of other areas. Entries are invited from news teams in the nations (Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), the regions of those nations, the English regions and sub-regions, the Channel Islands and local TV services in the UK.

Entries: One entry per news team, up to 30 minutes in length. Programmes entered should be complete with no internal edits and have been first transmitted anytime within the criteria year.

Nations and Regions Factual

This Award seeks to recognise how the market for topical television journalism has never been more diverse, both in its range and content as well as the way in which it is delivered. It encompasses the broad church of all treatments of longer form journalism - from Current Affairs to Documentary - and is designed to reward exceptional talent and creativity in programme making outside of daily news. It is open to every team in the Nations (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England), the English Regions, the Channel Islands and Local TV services in the UK.

Entries: Normally one per nation or region but two if it is an independent production, of any length up to 60 minutes (including slates/black). Entries should be a complete programme consisting of either a single subject or different features.

Nations and Regions Reporter of the Year

The Nations and Regions Reporter of the Year Award recognises the best visual storytelling and innovative technical ability. The judges will be looking for strong all-round reporting skills - scripting, use of pictures, original journalism, and on-screen presence. They will give additional credit for human interest stories that illuminate important or complex issues and, where applicable, excellence in self shooting and editing. The category applies to both news and sport journalism.

The accompanying submission with this category must make it clear exactly what the reporter did, whether it was self-edited, self-shot and how much postproduction was involved. The judges will take any third party help into consideration.

Entries are restricted to items commissioned by Nations and Regions news teams for their nightly news programmes. Entries should be no longer than 30 minutes with no single item longer than 10 minutes.

CURRENT AFFAIRS AWARDS

Current Affairs - Home

The Home Current Affairs Award is for the best piece of current affairs journalism shot in the UK. It seeks to recognise excellence in programmes ranging from daily long-form news to weekly or bi-weekly current affairs and to other forms of topical video journalism on TV or online. Short-form single current affairs items are also eligible for entry.

This category is emphatically NOT for documentaries which should be entered in the documentary categories in the RTS Programme Awards.

Definition - Programmes/videos in which a news story/topical event is explored at length in a timely way. If you are unsure if your entry fits the category/criteria, please email Jo Sampson at the RTS on jsampson@rts.org.uk with the title and description of your Current Affairs programme for confirmation.

Entries: Normally three entries per network channel but up to four per channel if one is an independent production. Entries can be no longer than 90 minutes and should be a single programme or a single report from a programme, not multi-item programmes or compilations. Where a programme runs longer than 90 minutes, the entrant can reduce the length to 90 minutes by cutting out a single segment and submitting two separate segments.

Current Affairs - International

The International Current Affairs Award is for the best piece of non-UK current affairs journalism. The programme should be substantially about an international subject. It seeks to recognise excellence in programmes ranging from daily long-form news to weekly or bi-weekly current affairs and to other forms of topical video journalism on TV or online. Short form single current affairs items are also eligible for entry.

This category is emphatically NOT for documentaries which should be entered in the documentary categories in the RTS Programme Awards.

Definition - Programmes/videos in which a news story/topical event is explored at length in a timely way. If you are unsure if your entry fits the category/criteria, please email Jo Sampson at the RTS on jsampson@rts.org.uk with the title and description of your Current Affairs programme for confirmation.

Entries: Normally three entries per network channel but up to four per channel if one is an independent production. Entries can be no longer than 90 minutes and should be a single programme or a single report from a programme, not multi-item programmes or compilations. Where a programme runs longer than 90 minutes, the entrant can reduce the length to 90 minutes by cutting out a single segment and submitting two separate segments.

AWARDS GIVEN AT THE DISCRETION OF THE SOCIETY

The RTS welcomes suggestions for the following two Awards, these will be awarded or deferred at the discretion of the Society following discussion and guidance from the Jury Chairs and Entrants representatives. Suggestions for the two awards must be submitted via the online entry site, no payment is required for these suggestions.

RTS Special Award

The Special Award is for an individual (on or off screen) or a team to recognise an outstanding contribution to the advancement of video Journalism during the awards year. The principle of this award is that it is for achievements which are not represented in or go beyond any of the conventional categories. Nominations must be made via the awards portal. A nomination must be supported by the reasons why it should win, as well as supporting documentation and testimonials. The RTS Committee of Neutral Chairs will consider all nominations and make a recommendation to the RTS. The RTS reserves the right not to make the award if it considers there are no suitable nominations. This Award cannot be made posthumously.

Outstanding Contribution Award

The Outstanding Contribution Award recognizes an individual's work over a sustained period. The spirit of this award is that recipients should have several significant achievements during their careers. Nominations must be made via the awards portal. A nomination must be supported by the reasons why he or she should win, as well as supporting documentation and testimonials. The RTS will take into account evidence of the individual's contribution to the wider industry, for example by promoting diversity. The RTS Committee of Neutral Chairs will consider all nominations and make a recommendation to the RTS. The RTS reserves the right not to make the award if it considers there are no suitable nominations. This Award cannot be made posthumously.

TELEVISION JOURNALISM AWARDS 2025 - CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- 1 Entries will be accepted from broadcasting organisations, news providers, freelance technicians and independent producers whose broadcasts are transmitted on a UK based platform, such as Freeview, Freesat, Sky or Virgin or who create online video content from a UK production base.
- 2 All entries must have been first transmitted on any platform in the UK or made available through a website between (00:01) 16 November 2023 and (23:59) 15 November 2024.
- 3 Entries should be checked carefully to ensure that they meet the criteria and conditions of entry, and that sound and vision are continuous throughout. If entries are found not to meet criteria and conditions of entry, they may be declared ineligible at any stage in the judging process.
- 4 **REGULATORY ISSUES:** If an entry is under investigation for any reason, the entrant should make this known at the time of entry. The RTS may reject an entry which is subject to a regulatory investigation. All entries must be from the original source and not taken from a subsequent showing elsewhere.
- 5 We would also stress the need for all organisations to show awareness in their selection of entries of the need for recognising diversity in our industry and in our wider community.
- 6 Entries must be endorsed by the television organisation or agency which transmitted or distributed the material.
- 7 The entry must be as originally edited for transmission. Except where indicated otherwise, no items may have internal edits and individual excerpts must be clearly identified with title slates. **Graphics showing press coverage of entries are not permitted.** Subsequent editing to improve the recording for the purpose of these Awards is not permitted.
- 8 **IMPORTANT: DURATION OF ENTRY – THIS MUST INCLUDE ALL VIDEO CONTENT – INCLUDING ALL TITLE SLATES, FADE TO BLACK ETC.**
- 9 Soundtracks on news items should contain only the sound recorded at the time of shooting unless otherwise stated in the criteria.
- 10 **All entries must be submitted using the RTS Online Awards Entry System -** <https://awardsentry.rts.org.uk/entrant/index.php>. Please contact Jemima Debenham on 020 7822 2821 or jdebenham@rts.org.uk with any queries about the system.
- 11 **Please be aware that should your entry receive a nomination (announced at the end of January), we will require two 30 second clips per nomination. These will be projected on the large screen at the ceremony in HD. Details of the delivery format for these will be issued at the time of nomination notification.**
- 12 **Supporting information** – entrants should answer the questions asked and adhere to the wordcount. This should be typed/inserted into the text box on the entry system and no other supporting material should be attached.
- 13 The cost per entry is £370.00 + £74.00 VAT. Payment should be made to **RTS Enterprises Ltd.**
- 14 All entries **MUST** be submitted by **23:59 on Wednesday 4 December** (this deadline will NOT be extended)
- 15 The decisions made by the judges are final and no correspondence can be entered into as to why particular entries were not chosen for nomination.
- 16 The RTS will require permission to rebroadcast on its website any clips of nominated entries shown at the ceremony.
- 17 The RTS may use any uploaded publicity stills on its website and social media, therefore please ensure they have been cleared for copyright and by uploading them you give the Society permission to use them.
- 18 **PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT ALL ENTRIES ARE CHECKED THOROUGHLY TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS OF ENTRY AND MAKE SURE THAT SOUND AND VISION ARE PRESENT THROUGHOUT.**
- 19 **PAYMENT MUST BE RECIEVED PRIOR TO JUDGING, WHICH WILL COMMENCE IN JANUARY 2025.**