

# SCOTTISH PODCAST AWARDS **20 26**

Entry Guidelines

# Scottish Podcast Awards

The Scottish Podcast Awards celebrate excellence, creativity and craft across Scotland’s audio landscape. From independent podcasters and community producers to radio, studios and international collaborators, we recognise the power of audio to inform, entertain, challenge and connect. The Awards are designed to be inclusive, accessible and creator-led, placing equal value on storytelling, originality and impact regardless of audience size, budget or platform.

*Celebrating Scotland’s Audio Creators – at Home and Beyond.*

## Why entering the Scottish Podcast Awards matters?

The Scottish Podcast Awards offer far more than a shiny trophy for your studio, boardroom or bedroom. Becoming a nominee, finalist or winner builds credibility, raises your profile and positions your podcast as a recognised voice within Scotland’s audio world. Award recognition can unlock new opportunities from attracting bigger guests and increased media attention, to opening doors for monetisation, funding and distribution. It can also grow your audience, strengthen your brand and connect you with peers and judges across the audio industry.

With over 5 million podcasts globally, very few can say they are award nominated or award winning. That distinction is a powerful advantage – and one worth owning.

## Contents

1. Key Dates.....	3
2. Eligibility.....	3
3. Who Can Enter .....	4
4. What you need to submit.....	5
5. Audio Submission Requirements .....	5
6. Judging Process & Principles.....	5
7. Duty of Care & Content Warnings .....	6
8. Choosing the Right Category .....	6
9. Terms of Entry & Organiser Rights .....	7
10. Use of Material & Promotional Rights .....	7
11. Categories & Descriptions .....	7



# 1. Key Dates

- Entries Open: Monday 26th January 2026
- Entry Submission Deadline: Monday 9th March 2026
- Judging Period: March–April 2026
- Shortlist Announced: May 2026
- Awards Ceremony: 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026
- Listener’s Choice Nominations Open: May 2026 (date tbc)

*All deadlines are 23:59 (UK time) on the stated date.*

## 2. Eligibility

For the purposes of these Awards, ‘podcast’ refers to any eligible podcast or audio work submitted for consideration.

To be eligible for the Scottish Podcast Awards, entries must meet the following criteria:

- Podcasts must have been first released between **1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026**. For all submissions all episodes must have been released within this time period.
- Podcasts may be episodic, limited series or one-off audio projects.
- To be eligible, entries must demonstrate a clear Scottish connection. This can include any one of the following:
  - The podcast has Scottish host(s), producer(s) or is made by a Scottish based production company;
  - The podcast is primarily produced or recorded in Scotland;
  - The podcast focuses on Scottish stories, audiences or communities

***Meeting any one of these criteria is sufficient.***



## Eligibility clarifications:

- Trailers, teasers and promotional episodes are not eligible.
- Bonus episodes or compilation episodes are not eligible.
- Podcasts that have been relaunched or rebranded during the eligibility period may enter where new original episodes have been released within the eligibility window.
- Back-catalogue content is not eligible unless substantially updated or re-worked.

## International category exception:

Podcasts without a Scottish connection may ONLY enter the International Podcast category. Entries from England, Ireland and Wales, as well as from around the world, are welcome in this category. International podcast entries are not eligible for other categories.

# 3. Who Can Enter

## Entries are welcome from

- Independent creators
- Production companies
- Radio stations and broadcasters
- Charities and third-sector organisations
- Brands and businesses
- Students and emerging talent.

All entries are submitted via self-nomination. There is no requirement for third-party endorsement or nomination.



## 4. What you need to submit

Each entry must include:

- Podcast or audio work title
- Category selection
- Written responses to category-specific questions
- Uploaded links (URLs)
- Full credits (host(s), producer(s), editor(s))

## 5. Audio Submission Requirements

Entrants will be asked to submit multiple short clips (up to 3 clips-max 20 mins duration). The total submitted audio must not exceed 20 minutes. Judges are not required to listen beyond the submitted duration. Entrants are encouraged to select clips that best represent what was published or broadcast.

## 6. Judging Process & Principles

Entries are judged by a diverse panel of industry professionals from across podcasting, radio, journalism, production, the creative industries, and podcast enthusiasts. Each category includes specific criteria, outlined alongside its description

Judging principles: Podcasts are judged on quality, creativity and craft—not audience size, budget or profile.

Independent and broadcaster-backed productions are judged equally. Judges assess entries based on creativity and originality, production quality and editing; storytelling and engagement, and cultural impact. Judging is conducted independently and confidentially. Decisions are final.



# 7. Duty of Care & Content Warnings

**Entrants must flag any content containing:**

- Distressing or sensitive subject matter
- Graphic descriptions
- Content relating to trauma, abuse or violence

Judges reserve the right to disqualify entries that fail to demonstrate appropriate duty of care, ethical responsibility or safeguarding considerations.

# 8. Choosing the Right Category

Many podcasts could comfortably fit into more than one category, and entrants are welcome to submit the same podcast into up to three categories per submission, where relevant. For example, a football podcast that is interview-led may choose to enter both the Football and Interview categories.

Ask yourself:

- Is your podcast defined mainly by its subject matter (for example, history, sport, health, comedy or relationships)?
- Is it best described by its format or craft (such as documentary, interview or scripted audio)?
- Or is its defining feature its purpose or impact (for example, community-led, charitable or socially driven work)?

If your podcast fits more than one category, choose the categories that feel most true to what listeners would expect when they press play. Judges assess entries within each category on their own terms, so you won't be disadvantaged for selecting categories that best reflect your podcast's intent, tone and audience.



## 9. Terms of Entry & Organiser Rights

The organisers reserve the right to move entries to a more appropriate category. Incomplete, misleading or ineligible entries may be disqualified. Categories may be withdrawn if insufficient eligible entries are received. Entry fees are non-refundable.

## 10. Use of Material & Promotional Rights

By entering, entrants grant the Scottish Podcast Awards the right to use submitted audio clips, descriptions and artwork for promotional purposes and to publicly list shortlisted and winning podcasts. Shortlisted and winning podcasts may describe themselves as such and use official awards branding, subject to brand guidelines.

## 11. Categories & Descriptions

### 1. Arts & Culture

For podcasts that focus on creative practice and the cultural industries.

This category celebrates audio exploring music, film, literature, theatre, visual art and the wider creative economy. Judges will be looking for insight into how art is made, experienced or critiqued, strong editorial voice, and thoughtful engagement with creative work and cultural production in Scotland.

### 2. Best Podcast Artwork

You cannot judge a book by its cover, but many of us do – and this new and creative genre has had the same effect for so many of us when browsing pages of podcasts. We believe the evidence is there that some of the artwork and graphics out there are more than worthy of recognition here.

### 3. Best Video Podcast

This category celebrates podcasts that excel in visual storytelling as well as audio. Entries should demonstrate how video enhances the podcast experience through strong on-screen presence, creative use of visuals, thoughtful production design, and seamless integration of sound and imagery. Judges will be looking for high production quality, originality, audience engagement, an original look or X-factor, and clear evidence that video is an essential part of the podcast's storytelling and impact not just a filmed version of an audio show.



#### 4. **Business 2 Business**

This category explores the world of work, enterprise, ambition and innovation. From entrepreneurial start-up stories and side hustles to leadership lessons, workplace culture and economic insight, this category celebrates podcasts that make business engaging and accessible. Interviews, analysis and narrative storytelling are all welcome with bonus points awarded if you can make spreadsheets sound interesting!

#### 5. **Community Impact & Charity**

This category looks for podcasts created by charities or nonprofit organisations as part of their wider work ones that make a truly meaningful difference in communities and lives. It celebrates audio that raises awareness, strengthens local or cultural communities, amplifies underrepresented voices or drives positive change. Entries may be national in reach or deeply rooted in a specific place, neighbourhood or group. Judges will look for purpose, authenticity and evidence of impact, whether that impact is wide-reaching or felt most strongly at a local level.

#### 6. **Comedy**

This category is for those who make people laugh. Scripted or unscripted, polished or gloriously chaotic, this category recognises comedy podcasts with a strong sense of humour, timing and originality. Judges will be listening for consistency, confidence and that elusive thing...actual laughs.

#### 7. **Documentary**

For factual podcasts that tell real stories with depth, care and narrative flair. This category celebrates long-form storytelling, investigative work and documentary craft. Judges will be looking for strong research, thoughtful structure and compelling storytelling, whether you're uncovering hidden histories or exploring contemporary issues.

#### 8. **Entertainment & Pop Culture**

This category is designed to recognise podcasts that entertain, delight and keep listeners coming back for more. Pop culture, celebrity life, fandom, big personalities, and making the ordinary and everyday funny, entertaining and sometimes even viral. If your podcast is about having a good time and bringing listeners along for the ride, this category is for you. Energy, format and audience connection are key.



## 9. **Food, Drink & Hospitality**

For podcasts about how we live now. Food, travel, hobbies, personal interests, and everyday obsessions. This category rewards podcasts that turn lifestyle topics into engaging listening with warmth and originality.

## 10. **Fiction & Drama**

For audio that tells fictional stories through scripted audio. This category celebrates imaginative storytelling across genres and styles from audio drama and serialised fiction to experimental narrative and genre-led storytelling. Judges will be looking for strong writing, compelling narrative structure, effective use of sound and music, and storytelling that fully embraces the creative possibilities of audio. Whether performance-led or concept-driven, intimate or epic, entries should demonstrate clarity of vision and excellence in scripted storytelling.

## 11. **Football**

Unsurprisingly, as we are in Scotland, this category is expected to be one of the most popular. After all, it is our national game, and it will be the summer of a World Cup we are finally at! Which division your team is in will mean nothing to the judges, and transfer budgets or analytic models will count for zip. Teams may be men's or women's, professional or grassroots. Whether you're analysing tactics, reliving great moments, diving into club culture or championing grassroots stories, judges will be looking for energy, insight and a genuine love of the beautiful game.

## 12. **Gaelic**

Airson pod-chaorlaidh a tha sa mhòr-chuid ann an Gàidhlig na h-Alba, seòrsa sam bith, cruth sam bith. Tha an roinn seo a' comharrachadh 's a taisbeanadh ath-bheothachadh na Gàidhlig agus cultar nan Gàidheal ann an doighean cruthachaidh.

## 13. **History, Foklore & Heritage**

For podcasts that bring the past vividly to life. From ancient history to recent memory, this category celebrates podcasts that make history engaging, accessible and relevant. Judges will be listening for strong research, storytelling skill and the ability to turn dates and facts into compelling narratives.



#### **14. International**

Created to celebrate great podcasts beyond Scotland, this category is open to podcasts from anywhere in the world. Podcasting is an inherently International medium, with audiences and creators crossing borders effortlessly, and this category is designed to acknowledge the international listening habits of Scottish podcast audiences. Entries do not need to have any connection to Scotland, and we welcome outstanding podcasts that demonstrate excellence in storytelling, production, originality and impact on an International stage. It is a cross-category award, so True Crime, History, Sport, etc. are all included here, as long as it is an International Podcast – and not even a Scottish granny will exclude you!

#### **15. Interview**

For podcasts where conversation is the main event. Whether you're chatting to household names or unsung everyday heroes, this category rewards strong interviewing craft. Judges will be listening for thoughtful questions, genuine rapport, and the ability to draw out original insight and emotion.

#### **16. Lifestyles, Health & Wellbeing, Fashion & Beauty**

This category celebrates podcasts that inspire, inform and empower audiences through engaging content on modern living. Eligible entries may explore topics such as physical and mental health, grief and loss, personal growth, wellness practices, relationships, style, fashion, beauty and self-expression. Judges will be looking for authenticity, originality, strong storytelling and positive impact offering listeners practical insights, fresh perspectives or meaningful conversations that enhance everyday life.

#### **17. Listener's Choice**

The Listener's Choice Award is decided by a public vote, giving podcasts the opportunity to be recognised directly by their audience. Voting in this category will open in May, with further details announced soon.

#### **18. News, Politics & Current Affairs**

This category celebrates audio covering what's happening in the world right now. From investigative journalism and in-depth reporting to analysis and commentary, it recognises podcasts that inform and contextualise current events. Accuracy, balance and clarity are essential. Opinions welcome, misinformation not so much.



## 19. **Scotland's Emerging Talent**

A category celebrating outstanding young podcasters, producers and audio creatives shaping the future of Scottish audio. For emerging talent making a big impression, this category celebrates new voices, fresh formats and standout debuts—the kind that make you think, “we’ll be hearing a lot more from you.” It includes podcasts created by young independents, students, and those working within universities or colleges. The category also celebrates early-stage audio making, from coursework projects and student-led shows to experimental ideas and first-time productions. Judges will be looking for creativity, storytelling potential and thoughtful use of audio, with an emphasis on learning, ambition and promise rather than polish.

## 20. **Sex, Family & Relationships**

A wide-ranging category for podcasts exploring intimacy, dating, love and human connection in all their forms. This category celebrates open, inclusive and thoughtful conversations about relationships and sexuality, including LGBTQIA+ experiences, diverse gender identities and a wide range of relationship structures. Judges will look for responsibility, warmth and the ability to tackle big topics with honesty, care and, where appropriate, a sense of humour. This category also incorporates Parenting and Family. It explores family life in all its messy, joyful, complicated glory from parenting advice to honest conversations about caregiving, relationships and growing up. Entries should feel relatable, supportive and real.

## 21. **Sport**

For podcasts celebrating sporting life in all its forms OUTSIDE of football. Be it rugby, NFL, golf, shinty, ice hockey, athletics or any more niche sports. Judges will be looking for energy, passion, humour, intellectual insight and a genuine love of the sport.

## 22. **Travel & Outdoors**

This category recognises podcasts that celebrate exploration, adventure and the natural world. Entries may focus on travel experiences, destinations, cultures, outdoor pursuits, sustainability or time spent in nature – whether close to home or further afield. Judges will be looking for engaging storytelling, originality, strong production values and content that inspires curiosity, connection or a sense of adventure in listeners.



### **23. True Crime, Mystery & the Dark Stuff**

For podcasts exploring real-life crime and justice. This category recognises strong storytelling, investigation and narrative structure – but with responsibility at its core. Judges will consider ethical approach, research depth and sensitivity to victims and communities.

### **24. Podcast of the Year**

The best of the best. Podcast of the Year is not a separate entry category. It is chosen by the judges from the winners of each category above and awarded to the production that stands out for exceptional storytelling, originality, craft and impact – the one that the judges simply couldn't forget.

**If you have any further queries or questions, please email the team**  
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