



Women's Enterprise Scotland Awards 2026

Application Form Guide

Please use this document as a guide to prepare your answers and complete the form online at surveymonkey.com/r/WESAwards2026

We recommend that you submit the form for your own business to ensure all questions can be fully completed. If you are completing the form on behalf of a business/individual please ensure they know about the application, and you have all the relevant information to complete the form.

Social enterprises, not-for-profit, or community interest companies can enter the Purpose-Led category only.

The Inspiring Leader category has no business legal status, or ownership requirements and is open to all female business leaders based in Scotland.

Charities are not eligible to enter these awards.

A business can apply for up to two categories.

The questions on the form ask for the following information

Name of the business applying for an award. IMPORTANT: These are the details of the business and owner/leader that will be judged for an award in the category selected. (If you are completing this form on behalf of a business/individual, please put your details in Q6 on the online form.)

Name of woman business owner/leader

Business Name

Address

Email

Phone number

Company Number (if the business is a Limited Company)

Business/Individual Social Media details: platform and account name

If applying on behalf of a business/individual:

Your name

Business name (if applicable)

Your email

Your phone number

Confirming the application meets the qualifying criteria:

- individual applicant is over 18 years old
- the application is for the Inspiring Leader category where business ownership/shareholding is not required, or
- the business is a community interest company (CIC) and the majority of the directors are women, or at least half of the directors are women, and they play a key role in driving the business, or
- the business is owned and led by a majority of women, or
- a woman is the key driving force behind the business and owns the business, or has a share in the business
 - what share in the business is held?

For each category you will be asked to answer the following questions:

- What is the applicant's role within the business? (include role title and responsibilities)
- Who is the owner/founder of the business? (if not the applicant, please provide details)
- In what industry does the business operate?
- Briefly describe the history of the business and/or background and what it does (max 300 words)
- Please outline how the business has progressed in the year to April 2026. (max 300 words) **(Not Inspiring Leader of the Year)**

The following sections show the questions relevant for each category of award. You may apply for up to two award categories per business.

IMPORTANT: Financial information

Please include details of the financial status of the business in the answers to the questions for each relevant category.

This should include the turnover for the previous year, projected turnover for the current year and comparison data to show the scale and relative growth of the business.

Figures on sales volumes, customers/client numbers, production levels, premises, and staff for the previous and current years help to demonstrate the trajectory and performance of the business.

This information helps the judges to understand your business and assess your application.

Applications are assessed on the basis of ALL the detail provided so it's important to also answer the specific questions and provide the information requested in each category.

Start-up business of the Year (up to 3 years old as at April 2026)

This award celebrates the entrepreneurial aptitude, vision, ambition, drive and commercial acumen to build a woman-led successful enterprise in Scotland from start-up.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding start up business, including details of entrepreneurial aptitude, vision, ambition, drive and commercial acumen. (max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, in the financial figures, taking on more staff, making a social or community impact, inspiring other women? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words).

Growth Business of the Year

This award celebrates Scotland's growing women-led businesses and recognises those that have taken significant steps towards strategic growth, achieved strategic growth, or financial performance. This could be through percentage turnover growth, profit growth, or having a strategic plan in place to achieve growth. This award is about demonstrating the relative growth in a business whatever the starting point. The rate or progress is more important than the highest value turnover. It recognises the businesses which have demonstrated a solid understanding of their competitors, customers, and markets they operate in; and have the foundations in place for continued commercial success.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding growth business, including details of the growth achieved in addition to demonstrating understanding of their competitors, customers, and markets they operate in; and having the foundations in place for continued commercial success. Include how the business has supported other women owned businesses or the women in business community. (Max 400 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, in the financial figures, taking on more staff, making a social or community impact, inspiring other women? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words)

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Inspiring Leader of the Year

This award recognises a female business leader in Scotland who has contributed to enhancing the landscape for women led businesses. Entrants should demonstrate support and involvement with the women led business community and play an instrumental role in enabling women to start up in business and thrive.

- Please outline how the business has benefitted from the work of the applicant in enhancing the landscape for women owned businesses in the year to April 2026. (Max 300 words)
- Please describe how the applicant has enhanced the business landscape for women owned businesses in the year to April 2026 including details of the leadership skills evidenced, the support and inspiration provided for women owned businesses, the involvement with the women owned business community and how this has helped women owned businesses to start up and grow. (Max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, in the financial figures, taking on more staff, making a social or community impact? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why the applicant should win this award? (Max 300 words)

Innovation Business of the Year

This award recognises the women-led businesses in Scotland that have successfully implemented new ideas, technologies, or approaches to drive growth, improve efficiency, or solve industry-specific problems. Entrants must demonstrate the positive impact of the innovation on the company's performance, customer experience, or industry as a whole.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding innovation business in terms of its new ideas, technology, or approaches. (Max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, driving growth, efficiency, or to solve problems, demonstrating the positive impact on financial figures, customers, or the sector? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words).

Service Excellence Business of the Year

This award is for a woman-led business in Scotland which has demonstrated outstanding service to customers. It recognises businesses that consistently deliver high-quality customer service, are committed to customer satisfaction and go above and beyond to meet customer needs.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding service excellence business, including details of the high-quality service, and how it exceeds expectations to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction. (Max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, in the financial figures, retaining or taking on more staff, making a social or community impact, inspiring other women-led businesses? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words).

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Rural Business of the Year

This award celebrates a woman-led business in a rural location in Scotland. Entrants must demonstrate how they have excelled in their respective industries while operating in a rural setting. This category recognises and celebrates businesses that have helped to boost the local economy and inspire other rural entrepreneurs.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding rural business, including details of operating in a rural location and the impact on the local community. (Max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, in the financial figures, attracting and retaining staff, making a social or community impact, inspiring other women-led businesses? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words).

Digital Business of the Year

This award recognises the women-led businesses in Scotland that have embraced digital transformation in order to deliver growth, open up new markets or provide new ways of working. This could be through e-commerce, use of AI, or strategic use of technology.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding digital business including details of the technical developments made and the impact achieved by the business. (Max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, in the financial figures, taking on more staff, making a social or community impact, inspiring other women-led businesses? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words).

Business to Watch of the Year

This award celebrates a woman-led business in Scotland progressing an exciting vision, for example utilising disruptive technology, driving societal change, applying a different approach, or evidencing all-round entrepreneurial flair. It recognises pioneering businesses whether in new, emerging industries or in existing sectors.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding business to watch for the future in terms of its vision or potential to achieve a societal change. (Max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, financial figures, use of technology, making a social or community impact or, demonstrating an entrepreneurial flair? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words).

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Purpose-Led Business of the Year

This award is for a women-led business which can demonstrate that it stands for something it believes in, going beyond profit and positively impacting society. The winner will be able to demonstrate that the business model has real purpose, by standing for and taking action on something bigger than its products and services.

- Please demonstrate why this business is an outstanding purpose-led business, including details of clear social or environmental vision and purpose and the achievement of an evidenced impact. (Max 300 words)
- How has this success been reflected in or through the operation of the business? For example, in the financial figures, taking on more staff, making a social or community impact? (Max 300 words)
- Please describe why this business should win this award? (Max 300 words)