

South of Scotland Thistle Awards



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priorities and ambitions



Regional ownership

- 3 out of 5 regions are now regionally owned
- Focus on ensuring the local brand and feel is captured regionally through each programme and event



Responsible Tourism

- Continue to support the aim for Scotland to be recognised globally as a leader in this field through practice and education
- Instilled throughout the awards in entries, judging, comms messaging
- Responsible event delivery



Finalists and Winners

- Providing support to industry on how to become a winner
- Promotion of Thistles' finalists and winners and ensuring they are considered as first point of call for activity where relevant

Starting your entry

Review the categories and related questions and criteria before you begin. Have a think about what information you might need to gather before beginning.

Questions and criteria for every category are on the Scottish Thistle Awards website now if you want to get ahead!

What's the Format?

There is an **executive Summary** and **3 scored questions**, each with a **max. 500 words**

The executive summary is **not** scored – it's a quick summary to provide context for the judges.

What are the judges looking for?

- What are you doing that sets you apart?
- Be authentic and tell your story from the heart – let your passion shine through!
- Have evidence, facts and figures ready to demonstrate and back up what you are saying in your answers.
- Assume the judges don't know your business – what do you *want* them to know?
- All three answers need to be strong, not just one or two.

Top tips for completing your entry

1

Take time to read and understand what the questions are asking of you and ensure you begin the process as early as possible.

You could complete the answers **offline** or try **reading out loud**.

Ask someone that knows your business to **proof-read** your entry before you submit.

2

Make it **easy and clear** for the judges to read and understand the key points.

Judges aren't looking for perfectly polished answers, but make sure you use spell check!

3

No additional supporting evidence is accepted so use the opportunities provided on the entry form to **include weblinks** when they are asked for.

If there's something specific on those links that you want to draw the judges' attention to, **include it within one of your answers to the questions**.

Answering the questions

Example Question:

Q. What actions are you currently undertaking to develop your business? What do you hope to achieve and how are you measuring success?

You should provide **clear evidence** of current developments and how benefits will be **monitored / measured, e.g. through visitor feedback, increased revenue, target market statistics.**

Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Intentionally targeting new markets or increasing footfall
- Obtaining awards or accolades

How would you go about answering this question? Let's break it down...

Answering the questions

Q. What actions are you currently undertaking to develop your business? What do you hope to achieve and how are you measuring success?

Ensure you are answering all parts of the question. This example is asking for 2 things: **actions** and **measurement of success**.

Consider using **headings** to clearly signpost how you are addressing each part.

You should provide **clear evidence** of current developments and how benefits will be **monitored / measured, e.g. through visitor feedback, increased revenue, target market statistics**.

Clear evidence is bolded – don't just tell, show! What can you provide to back up your answer?

Answering the questions

Please cover any areas you think are relevant although you may wish to include aspects such as:

- Plans for new and innovative products/services
- New collaboration and/or partnership working
- Intentionally targeting new markets or increasing footfall
- Obtaining awards or accolades

These bullet points are just examples but are a great starting point to get you thinking.

Could you utilise these points as **headings** within your answer?

How are your answers scored?

SCORE	DESCRIPTION	GUIDANCE NOTES
9-10	Outstanding	This rating should be reserved for entries which have fulfilled the criteria to the highest level and to which other entrants might aspire.
7-8	Exceeded Expectations	There should be clear, consistent and recognisable evidence that the judging criteria have been exceeded.
5-6	Meets Expectations	This rating demonstrates entry criteria have been clearly demonstrated and met.
3-4	Too early to rate/ insufficient evidence	This rating indicates the entry criteria have not been met or demonstrated but it is anticipated they are on track to achieve them.
1-2	Does not meet requirements	If the judging criteria have not been achieved.
0	No evidence provided	Entrants should be given a zero score if they have failed to answer the question.

In summary

- Be authentic – the judges want to know what you think makes your business special and feel your passion shine through.
- Read the questions carefully and make it as easy as possible for the judges to understand your answers.
- If there's something you want the judges to know, say it explicitly – don't rely on your website or social media to do it for you!
- Don't be shy to ask for feedback! If you're not successful on this occasion, request feedback from the judges to help you improve your entry for next time.

