



2026 Annual Excellence Awards

Summary of all award categories, their criteria and questions

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ICNZB Excellence Awards 2026 - Information and Guidelines for entry

Please read this guide before completing an entry form.

Welcome to the Institute of Certified New Zealand Bookkeepers Awards journey. We hope it will be rewarding for you and your business.

We wish you the best of luck and look forward to learning more about your business. The guidelines are designed to assist you to complete your entry/entries. Entries must be submitted via the official entry nomination form by 5 p.m. on 8 June 2026. All entries will be checked to ensure eligibility criteria are met before acceptance. Any entry not meeting the criteria will be void.

Warmest wishes, the ICNZB team.

Key dates for the 2026 awards journey

- 9 April 2026 - Entries & nominations open for Awards Categories
- 8 June 2026 – Entries & nominations close 5pm, Monday 8th June 2026
- 9 June – 22 June 2026 – Judging
- 3 July 2026 – Finalists announced
- 25 July 2026 – Awards Presentation at Conference Dinner

Refer to the ICNZB Website or members Facebook Group for updates or links.

The ICNZB Code of Ethical Conduct

Find it here: <https://icnzb.org.nz/about-us/code-of-ethical-conduct/>

Key contacts

Kim Lazor – support@ICNZB.org.nz

Judging Process

The judging criteria are unique and specific to the ICNZB. Judging will be based on the answers supplied in the form.

There will be an online form to fill in for your entry. Each question is limited to a set number of characters, as per the criteria for each category.

It is imperative that you consider and answer each question.

Awards Categories and Conditions of Entry

ICNZB Bookkeeper of the Year

The ICNZB Bookkeeper of the Year is awarded to a member who has demonstrated their overall excellence in the field of bookkeeping, shown through the service they offer to their clients and their technical know-how. They have shown this by providing examples of how they have had a positive impact on their clients or community through real life situations, have dedicated time to their professional development, and have upheld the conduct set out in our Code of Ethical Conduct;

Nominations for this award are made by the ICNZB member.

Eligibility Criteria

- This category is awarded to an individual member (sole practitioner, contractor or business owner)
- The nominee must be a current ICNZB member and have been a member for at least 12 months before the Gala Awards presentation on 25th July 2026.
- The nominee must hold membership at either the Certified Bookkeeper or Master Bookkeeper levels.

Entry Form Questions

1. Provide a summary of your business

For background information for the judges

(Max. 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words)

2. The ICNZB Code of Ethical Conduct for Certified Bookkeepers sets out 6 core principles that our members are bound to.

Provide examples of how you uphold the ethics and principles.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Growth and Leadership

3. What specific strategies or initiatives have you implemented over the past year to drive your growth and enhance your service offerings?

Give examples of how you achieve growth, improve efficiencies, enhance or expand the services you provide to clients.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

4. How do you measure and maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of your work to ensure client satisfaction and long-term success?

Provide examples of performance metrics, quality control processes, client feedback systems, or workflow optimisation strategies that you use to ensure operational efficiency, effectiveness, and sustained client satisfaction.

(Max. 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words – 10%)

Technical Competence

5. What tools, technologies, or methodologies do you utilise to ensure accuracy, compliance, and efficiency in your bookkeeping services?

Share examples of accounting software, automation tools, data reconciliation methods, compliance checklists, or quality assurance processes that your business uses to maintain accuracy, ensure compliance, and optimise efficiency in your bookkeeping services.

(Max. 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words – 10 %)

6. Can you share a specific example of a complex technical challenge you have faced and how you resolved it effectively?

Share an example from the last 12 months such as resolving discrepancies in financial records, implementing new accounting software, or navigating complex compliance requirements, detailing the steps taken and the successful outcome achieved.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Client and Community Impact

7. How have you gone above and beyond to deliver exceptional value to your clients, and what has been the impact of your efforts?

Highlight specific actions or initiatives your business has undertaken to exceed client expectations, the unique value these efforts provided, and the resulting positive impact on your clients or their businesses through profitability, financial clarity and / or efficiency.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

8. How do you build strong client relationships and maintain a high level of trust?

Explain the strategies and practices your business employs to foster strong client relationships, ensure open communication, and build trust through reliability, professionalism, and exceptional service.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

9. Can you describe how you inspire or support those in the bookkeeping community or your local community?

Examples may include mentoring, training, voluntary work, networking, or industry leadership.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Ongoing Professional Development

10. What steps do you take to stay updated with industry trends, regulations, and best practices?

Describe any training, certifications, or CPD activities you've pursued in the past year.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

11. How have you applied new knowledge or skills to improve your bookkeeping practice or provide better service to clients?

Give an example of how professional development has led to real improvements in your work.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

ICNZB Bookkeeping Business of the Year

The ICNZB Bookkeeping Business of the Year is awarded to a bookkeeping business that has demonstrated overall excellence and technical know-how in the field of bookkeeping and business management.

This can be by demonstrating the impact they have had on their clients or local community; the growth they have experienced; provides professional development to staff to stay at the forefront of changes in industry; the leadership they demonstrate; how they have built trusting and cooperative relationships with their stakeholders and how they upheld the standards and ethics of ICNZB and the bookkeeping profession.

Nominations for this award are made by the bookkeeping business.

Eligibility Criteria

- This category is awarded to a business that offers bookkeeping services.
- The business owner/director must hold current ICNZB membership at either the Certified Bookkeeper or Master Bookkeeper level and they must have been a member of ICNZB for not less than 12 months before the Gala Awards presentation 25th July 2026.
- This category is open for entries from bookkeeping businesses owned or operated by an ICNZB member and may or may not employ staff or engage contractors. A bookkeeping business is defined as a limited liability company, a sole trader, a trust or a partnership.

Entry Form Questions

1. Provide a summary of your business

For background information for the judges. . 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words)

2. The Code of Ethical Conduct for Certified Bookkeepers sets out 6 core principles that our members are bound to.

Provide examples of how the business upholds these ethics and principles.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Growth and Leadership

3. What specific strategies or initiatives have you implemented over the past year to drive business growth and enhance your service offerings?

Give examples of how you achieve growth, improve efficiencies, enhance or expand the services you provide to clients.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

4. How do you measure and maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of your business operations to ensure client satisfaction and long-term success?

Provide examples of performance metrics, quality control processes, client feedback systems, or workflow optimisation strategies that your business uses to ensure operational

excellence.

efficiency, effectiveness, and sustained client satisfaction.

(Max. 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words – 10%)

5. Can you provide examples of how you have inspired and supported your team or community to excel in the field of bookkeeping?

Share examples of mentorship programs, team recognition initiatives, community outreach efforts, or knowledge-sharing practices that have motivated and supported your team or community to achieve excellence in bookkeeping..

(Max 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words – 5%)

Technical Competence

6. What tools, technologies, or methodologies do you utilise to ensure accuracy, compliance, and efficiency in your bookkeeping service?

Share examples of accounting software, automation tools, data reconciliation methods, compliance checklists, or quality assurance processes that your business uses to maintain accuracy, ensure compliance, and optimise efficiency in your bookkeeping services.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

7. Can you share a specific example of a complex technical challenge your team faced and how you resolved it effectively?

Share an example from the last 12 months such as resolving discrepancies in financial records, implementing new accounting software, or navigating complex compliance requirements, detailing the steps taken and the successful outcome achieved.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Client and community impact

8. How have you gone above and beyond to deliver exceptional value to your clients, and what has been the impact of your efforts?

Highlight specific actions or initiatives your business has undertaken to exceed client expectations, the unique value these efforts provided, and the resulting positive impact on your clients or their businesses through profitability, financial clarity and / or efficiency.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

9. How does your business build strong client relationships and maintain a high level of trust?

Explain the strategies and practices your business employs to foster strong client relationships, ensure open communication, and build trust through reliability, professionalism, and exceptional service.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

10. Can you describe how you inspire or support those in the bookkeeping community or your local community?

Examples may include mentoring, training, voluntary work, networking, or industry leadership.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Ongoing professional development

11. What initiatives or programs do you have in place to encourage continuous learning and skill development among your team members and how are they applied within your business to improve your bookkeeping practice or provide better service to clients?

Describe any initiatives or programs your business has implemented to promote continuous learning, or opportunities for team growth and development.

(Max. 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words – 15%)

ICNZB Bookkeeping Trainer of the Year – Gayle Buchanan Memorial Trophy

Gayle Buchanan was a valued member of ICNZB and was a strong advocate for accountants and bookkeepers working together for the betterment of the client. To this end, she was extremely passionate about training, educating and supporting the profession worldwide with a particular focus on cloud-based software. Gayle Buchanan passed away in October 2015 and this legacy award honours her pioneering spirit and groundbreaking work in the importance of training and mentoring bookkeepers worldwide.

The ICNZB Bookkeeping Trainer of the Year is awarded to an individual member who has excelled at training or mentoring other bookkeepers or clients in the principles and practices of bookkeeping and best practice. This individual will have shown a commitment to continuous research and upskilling of themselves to ensure that the training/mentoring they provide is current and relevant and they actively encourage compliance with the core principles of the ICNZB Code of Ethical Conduct.

Nominations for this award are made by the ICNZB member or someone who has used their services.

Eligibility Criteria

- This category is awarded to an individual member employed as bookkeeper.
- The nominee must be a current ICNZB member and have been a member for at least 12 months before the Gala Awards presentation 25th July 2026.
- The nominee must hold membership at either the Certified Bookkeeper or Master Bookkeeper levels.
- Must be providing bookkeeping training services as part of their service offering.

Entry Form Questions

1. Provide a summary of your business.

*For background information for the judges
(Max. 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words)*

2. Describe the nominee's role in training or mentoring others in bookkeeping.

Who do they train or mentor, in what context, and how frequently or consistently do they do this work?

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 10%)

3. How does the nominee demonstrate excellence in delivering training or mentoring?

Share specific examples that showcase their training or mentoring style, standout sessions, tools/resources they've created, and feedback received from those they've trained or mentored.

(Max: 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 20%)

4. What steps does the nominee take to ensure that their training or mentoring remains current and relevant?

Describe any training, certifications, or CPD activities they've pursued in the past year that ensure their training is up to date regarding changes in legislation, software, or bookkeeping best practice.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 20%)

5. In what ways does the nominee promote best practice and ethical standards in bookkeeping?

Give examples of how they embed or encourage compliance with the ICNZB [Code](#) of Ethical Conduct and other professional standards in their training or mentoring.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 10%)

6. What impact has the nominee's training or mentoring had on others?

How have they made a difference? Consider improvements in skill level, business outcomes, or professional growth for those they've supported. You can share testimonials, success stories, or observed changes.

(Max 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words - 20%)

7. Why do you believe the nominee deserves to be recognised as the ICNZB Bookkeeping Trainer of the Year?

What sets the nominee apart? Share your personal reflections on the nominee contribution to the profession and the nominee's commitment to lifting others.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 20%)

ICNZB Bookkeeping Employee of the Year

The ICNZB Bookkeeping Employee of the Year is awarded to an employee member who has demonstrated overall excellence in the field of bookkeeping by upholding the conduct set out in our Code of Ethical Conduct, providing examples of how they have had a positive impact on their employer's business through real-life examples using innovative measures, and dedicating time to their own professional development.

Nominations for this award are made by the ICNZB member, their employer or a colleague.

Eligibility Criteria

- This category is awarded to an individual employed as a bookkeeper.
- The nominee must be a current ICNZB member and have been a member for at least 3 months before the Gala Awards presentation 25th July 2026.
- The nominee must hold membership at either the Associate, ICNZB Certified Bookkeeper or Master Bookkeeper levels.

Entry Form Questions

1. Please describe the nominee's job and experience in the bookkeeping field.

For background information for the judges

(Max. 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words)

2. Why does the nominee deserve the title of Bookkeeping Employee of the year

(Max 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words - 20%)

3. Provide at least one example of how the nominee upholds the 6 core principles of the ICNZB Code of Ethical Conduct.

Provide examples of how the nominee upholds these ethics and principles.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 10%)

4. How has the nominee significantly contributed to the business.

(Max 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words - 20%)

5. What is the nominee's biggest achievement in the last 12 months?

(Max 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words - 20%)

6. What specific strategies or initiatives has the nominee implemented over the past year to drive their own growth and enhance their depth of bookkeeping knowledge?

Has this contributed to the nominee's biggest achievement and if so, explain how.

(Max 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words -30%)

ICNZB Emerging Bookkeeper of the Year

The ICNZB Emerging Bookkeeper of the Year is awarded to a member who has demonstrated their growth as a new bookkeeper in their understanding of bookkeeping principles and practice. They have shown themselves to be a valuable member of the bookkeeping community; provided examples of how they have had a positive impact on their clients through real life; upheld the conduct set out in our Code of Ethical Conduct; and have dedicated time to their own professional development.

Nominations for this award are made by the ICNZB member, their employer or a colleague.

Eligibility Criteria

- This category is awarded to an individual.
- The nominee must be a current ICNZB member and have been a member for at least 3 months before the Awards presentation 25th July 2026.
- The nominee is new to bookkeeping in any capacity within the last 3 years as an employee, contractor or self-employed.

Entry Form Questions

1. Provide a summary of the nominee’s business or bookkeeping role.

For background information for the judges

(Max. 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words)

2. The Code of Ethical Conduct for Certified Bookkeepers sets out 6 core principles that our members are bound to.

Provide examples of how the nominee upholds these ethics and principles.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Growth and Leadership

3. What specific strategies or initiatives has the nominee implemented over the past year to drive their growth and enhance their depth of bookkeeping knowledge?

Give examples of how you/they achieve growth, improve efficiencies, enhance or expand the services they can deliver to clients.

(Max. 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words – 10%)

4. How does the nominee measure and maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of their work to ensure client/employer satisfaction and long-term success?

Provide examples of performance metrics, quality control processes, client feedback systems or workflow optimisation strategies that are used to ensure operation efficiency, effectiveness and sustained client satisfaction.

(Max. 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words – 10%)

Technical Competence

5. What tools, technologies, or methodologies does the nominee utilise to ensure accuracy, compliance, and efficiency in their bookkeeping services?

Share examples of accounting software, automation tools, data reconciliation methods, compliance checklists, or quality assurance processes that are used to maintain accuracy, ensure compliance and optimise efficiency in their bookkeeping services.

(Max. 4,000 characters – approx. 600 words – 10 %)

6. Can you share a specific example of a complex technical challenge the nominee faced and how they resolved it effectively or used it as a learning opportunity?

Share an example from the last up to 12 months, such as resolving discrepancies in financial records, implementing new accounting software or navigating complex compliance requirements, detailing the steps taken and the successful outcome achieved.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Client and Community Impact

7. How has the nominee gone above and beyond to deliver exceptional value to clients and/or employer, and what has been the impact of those efforts?

Highlight specific actions or initiatives the nominee has undertaken to exceed employer or client expectations, the unique value these efforts provided and the resulting positive impact through profitability, financial clarity and / or efficiency.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

8. How does the nominee build strong relationships and maintain a high level of trust?

Explain the strategies and practices the nominee employs to foster strong relationships, ensure open communication and build trust through reliability, professionalism and exceptional service.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

9. Describe how the nominee made the most of their involvement in the ICNZB community and/or the opportunities that have become available to them since starting their bookkeeping career.

Examples may include participating in ICNZB events, using ICNZB resources available from the Member Hub, using the training / tutorials available from software providers or seeking support and mentoring from colleagues and ICNZB members.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

Ongoing professional development

10. What steps does the nominee take to stay updated with industry trends, regulations, and best practices?

Describe any training, certifications, or CPD activities the nominee pursued in the past year.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

11. How has the nominee applied new knowledge or skills to improve their bookkeeping work or provide better service to clients?

Give an example of how professional development has led to real improvements in the nominee's work.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

ICNZB Service to Bookkeeping Award

The Service to Bookkeeping Award is awarded to someone who has demonstrated significant service to the bookkeeping profession and encouraged and supported other bookkeepers in their professional journey and upheld the standards and ethics of ICNZB and the bookkeeping profession.

This award is a peer-nominated award.

Eligibility Criteria

- The nominee must be a current ICNZB member and have been a member for at least 12 months before the Gala Awards presentation 25th July 2026.
- The nominee must hold membership at either the Certified Bookkeeper or Master Bookkeeper levels.
- If you are unsure whether your nominee meets these criteria, please contact info@icnzb.org.nz prior to submitting a nomination for confirmation.

Entry Form Questions

1. Please provide details as to how you know the nominee and why you are nominating them for this award.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 20%)

2. In what ways does the nominee promote or uphold the standards and ethics of the ICNZB Code of Ethical Conduct in their support of the Bookkeeping Profession?

This may include examples of how they act with integrity, maintain confidentiality, encourage inclusive and respectful interactions, show professionalism or use their skills competently and objectively.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 20%)

3. Give one or more examples of how the nominee has shown significant and long-lasting service to the bookkeeping profession and how you feel this has benefited the profession.

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 20%)

4. In your own words, tell us what you feel the nominee has done to encourage and support other bookkeepers?

(Max. 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 20%)

5. What do you believe has been the nominee's biggest contribution to the bookkeeping profession within the last 12 months?

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 20%)

ICNZB Sustainable Business of the Year

The ICNZB Sustainable Business of the Year is awarded to a bookkeeping business that has excelled in environmentally sustainable business practices. This can be by demonstrating the impact they have had on the environment; the reduction in their business carbon footprint; the leadership they demonstrate in business sustainability and how their business practices support this.

Nominations for this award are made by the bookkeeping business.

Eligibility Criteria

- This category is awarded to a business that offers bookkeeping services.
- This category is open for entries from bookkeeping businesses that are owned or operated by an ICNZB member. A bookkeeping business is defined as a limited liability company, a sole trader, a trust or a partnership.
- The business owner/director must hold current ICNZB membership at either the Certified Bookkeeper or Master Bookkeeper level. They must have been a member of ICNZB for not less than 12 months before the Gala Awards presentation 25th July 2026.

Entry Form Questions

1. Provide a summary of your business or bookkeeping role.

For background information for the judges

(Max. 2,000 characters – approx. 300 words)

2. Describe your sustainability vision for your business.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 15%)

3. How does this vision translate to improving your business's sustainability?

(Max 400– 15%)

4. Describe where you are in your journey in reducing your business's environmental impact and what is your strategy moving forward.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 15%)

5. Give details of the policies you have already implemented.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 15%)

6. Provide an example of a change implemented in the last 12 month that allows your business to operate in a more sustainable manner.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 15%)

7. How do you stay informed and up to date with sustainable business practices?

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 15%)

8. The Code of Ethical Conduct for Certified Bookkeepers sets out 6 core principles that our members are bound to.

Provide examples of how you uphold these ethics and principles.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words – 10%)

ICNZB Community Contributor of the Year

The ICNZB Community Contributor of the Year Award is awarded to an individual that has shown themselves to be a valuable member of their local community volunteering their time and knowledge to assist others, while upholding the standards and ethics of ICNZB and the bookkeeping profession.

Nominations for this award are made by an ICNZB member or someone in their community.

Eligibility Criteria

- This category is awarded to an individual member.
- The nominee must be a current ICNZB member and have been a member for at least 12 months before the Gala Awards presentation 25th July 2026.
- The nominee must hold membership at either the Certified Bookkeeper or Master Bookkeeper levels.

If you are unsure whether your nominee meets these criteria, please contact info@icnzb.org.nz prior to submitting a nomination for confirmation.

Entry Form Questions

- 1. Describe the community group(s) the nominee has been involved with over the past 12 months.**

What is/are the group's purpose or mission? In what way(s) is the nominee involved? How frequently and for how long do they contribute their time and energy.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 10%)

- 2. How has the nominee used their bookkeeping skills to support others in the community?**

Give one or more examples of how their knowledge, training, or practical bookkeeping support has helped an individual or organisation. Consider education, financial systems, compliance, or record keeping.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 30%)

- 3. In what ways does the nominee promote or uphold the standards and ethics of the [ICNZB Code of Ethical Conduct](#) in their volunteer work?**

This may include examples of how they act with integrity, maintain confidentiality, encourage inclusive and respectful interactions, show professionalism, or use their skills competently and objectively.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 10%)

- 4. What motivates the nominee to give back to their community, and how do they approach their volunteer work?**

Share insight into their values, mindset, or sense of purpose. What drives them to contribute, and how do they show up in this work?

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 25%)

5. Share an example or story that captures the heart of why this person deserves to be recognised.

It could be a moment that inspired you, the impact they've had, or the way they quietly go above and beyond to help others.

(Max 3,000 characters – approx. 400 words - 25%)