

Annual Awards 2019 – Criteria for Nominations

Award categories	Thresholds
Best New Share Plan	-
Best International Share Plan	-
Most Effective Communication of an Employee Share Plan	Up to 500 employees
	501 – 5,000 employees
	5,001 – 50,000 employees
	50,001+ employees
Best Employee Share Plan Outcome Following a Major Corporate Change	-
Best Commitment to Employee Share Ownership in a Private Company	Privately-held companies with any number of employees
Most Effective Use of Technology	-
Best Financial Education Initiative for Employees	-
Best Overall Performance in Fostering Employee Share Ownership	Up to 500 employees
	501 – 5,000 employees
	5,001 – 50,000 employees
	50,001+ employees
Employee Share Plans Champion of the Year	-
Services to Employee Share Ownership	-

Important: service providers and advisors to be named alongside winning and commended companies, if named in the nomination.

We reserve the right to re-allocate submissions to different categories and to merge award categories if seen fit. ProShare reserves the right to use a judging coordinator should the level of nominations and circumstances demand it.

Best New Share Plan

This award is open to any company that has launched one or more new employee share plans during the last year or extended an existing plan to a significant number of employees in countries other than the 'home' country during the last 12 to 18 months.

Judging criteria:

- Plan design which links clearly with business or corporate objectives
- Outline your share plan(s) and how they meet those objectives. Include details of any areas of innovation.
- Effective communication of the plan to encourage participation
- Analysis, pre- and/or post-launch, of eligibility and/or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan attractive to potential participants, especially those that have not previously participated in a scheme.
- Ease of participation for employees
- Describe what employees have to do to participate in the plan.
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated
- If relevant, give reasons for a low level of participation.

Best International Share Plan

This is for companies that operate their share plans internationally. Companies operating an employee share plan on a global basis face a number of challenges. We introduced this category to recognise those companies that, in spite of the challenges faced, operate their employee share plan(s) internationally. To win this award you will need to offer your share plan(s) in at least three countries outside of the UK.

Judging criteria:

- Plan design that links clearly with business or corporate objectives
- Outline your share plan(s) and how they meet those objectives. Also include details of any innovation used in plan design.
- Describe how you addressed the challenges of operating an international share plan
- Describe how you dealt with regulatory requirements and any other challenges that were presented
- Describe how you overcame any challenges that arose due to cultural differences.
- Include information on how you dealt with exchange rate issues.
- Analysis, pre- and/or post-launch, of eligibility and/or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Effective communication of the plan to encourage participation
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan attractive to potential participants.
- Ease of participation for employees
- Describe what employees have to do to participate in the plan.
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated
- If relevant, give reasons for a low level of participation.

Most Effective Communication of an Employee Share Plan

Up to 5,000 employees

5,001 – 50,000 employees

50,001 + employees

These awards are for the companies that have most effectively communicated their share plans to employees to encourage and increase their understanding of the plan, and to create a closer identity of interest between employees and shareholders.

Judging criteria:

- Clarity and design of documentation
- Provide examples of booklets, circulars, posters, on-line campaigns, summaries of rules, etc.
- Innovation and variety in communication methods
- Describe or provide examples of intranets, financial modelling tools, telecoms, audio, video, face-to-face briefings, etc (note that there is also a separate category for most effective use of technology).
- Analysis of eligibility and/or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Involvement of employees in the design of the communication programme at the time of offering participation and when dealing with queries and follow-up
- Describe how employees were involved before, during and after the launch and at the time of making subsequent offers under one or more employee share plans.
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who have participated in the plan.
- If relevant, give reasons for a low level of participation, or quantify the level of engagement compared with previous campaigns.

Best Employee Share Plan Outcome following a Major Corporate Change

This category has proven to be very popular as an increasing number of corporate transactions are being seen in the market. These transactions range from IPOs and rights issues to takeovers and schemes of arrangements. They will very often impact on employees who are participating in existing share plans, often at a sensitive time for those employees.

Judging criteria:

- Impact on employee share plans
- Outline the transaction and its impact upon your employee share plans.
- Board commitment to continued employee share ownership
- Describe how you weighed up the different alternatives you could have offered employees and why you chose the route you did. Demonstrate the Board's ongoing support for employee share ownership within your organisation.
- Analysis of participation data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Effective communication with employees
- Describe or exhibit communication methods used to make the transaction easy for employees to understand.
- Ease of participation for employees
- Demonstrate quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees who participated in the transaction.

Best Commitment to Employee Share Ownership in a Private Company

This category aims to recognise and acknowledge best practice in commitment to employee share ownership, and the particular challenges faced in achieving this, at privately-held companies. The company should demonstrate that its philosophy, attitudes, ambitions and actions are conducive to fostering employee share ownership and participation, whether listed or privately held.

Judging criteria:

- A clear vision of the positive impact that employee share ownership has had on the culture of the company
- Provide evidence of the board's commitment to employee participation and examples of the employees' positive attitudes and behaviours.
- A clear link between employee share ownership and strategic, business or corporate objectives
- You could for example, refer to rules on eligibility, performance, forfeiture, retention, etc.
- Effective communication of the plan(s) to encourage participation
- Liquidity opportunities / private markets provided for employees to allow them to trade their shares, where offered / appropriate.
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan(s) attractive to potential participants.

Most Effective Use of Technology

This award recognises the increasingly sophisticated technologies being used in connection with the communication, administration and legal and tax compliance management of employee share plans.

Judging criteria:

- Effective implementation
- Explain why the technology was implemented and issue(s) that it addressed. Highlight any areas of innovation.
- A clear vision of the positive impact that technology can have
- Provide evidence of the impact of technology on share plan participation.
- Analysis of plan data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Clarity and consistency of corporate branding and share plan design and message
- Show how the use of technology fits in with the company's communications and employee profile.

Best Financial Education Initiative for Employees

This award recognises the role that financial education can play in the workplace in supporting employees in making informed decisions regarding their share plans and other workplace benefits. The timing of provision of financial education is also critical given that employees need to make decisions at key points in their working life e.g. buying their first home, ahead of retirement, when share awards mature/vest etc.

Judging criteria:

- Effective implementation with delivery utilising a range of employee-centred channels
- Clear explanation of the reason for the initiative
- Clarity on rationale for choice of third party provider
- Analysis of plan data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- Feedback from participants
- Data supporting decisions made and/or behaviours changed by participants immediately afterwards or as a direct result of their participation in the initiative.

Best Overall Performance in Fostering Employee Share Ownership

Up to 5,000 employees

5,001 – 50,000 employees

50,001 + employees

These are the top awards for companies committed to employee share ownership and recognise outstanding achievement. Companies that enter this category are likely to have been operating employee share plans for some years. However, a company that has only recently introduced its first share plan could be in contention for one of these awards if it can demonstrate that its philosophy, attitudes, ambitions and actions are conducive to fostering employee share ownership in the longer term.

Judging criteria:

- A clear vision of the positive impact that employee share ownership has had on the culture of the company
- Provide evidence of the Board's commitment to employee participation and examples of the employees' positive attitudes and behaviours.
- Innovative design of the share plan(s) to support the vision
- Describe the features of the plan that might be held to be innovative and supportive of a long-term fostering of employee share ownership.
- Plans that link clearly with business or corporate objectives
- Analysis of eligibility and/or take-up data to identify and ensure inclusion of eligible and under-represented employee groups
- You may refer to rules on eligibility, performance, forfeiture, retention, etc.
- Effective communication of the plan(s) to encourage participation
- Describe or exhibit communication methods that make the plan(s) attractive to potential participants.
- Ease of participation for employees - describe what employees have to do to participate.
- Quantifiable success as measured by the proportion of employees at all levels who participate in the plan(s) and the number of employees who are shareholders
- Provide the number of participants in each plan and the number of employees who have retained some shares to become direct shareholders in the company.

Employee Share Plans Champion of the Year

Individuals working in-house at plan issuers typically have to deliver share plans to their employee populations on lean resources and budgets, pulling in the support of a network of individuals within their broader organisation. They also have to juggle many priorities – and stakeholders, external and internal – to keep their plans compliant and effective. This award recognises the commitment shown by an individual in promoting understanding of share plans/ownership and encouraging informed employee share plan participation within their organisation. Their job title may or may not denote formal or full-time involvement in share plans, and their role may well encompass a number of different responsibilities alongside share plans.

Individuals may be nominated by their line manager, colleagues or an advisor or service provider involved in the design or delivery of the organisation's share plans.

Judging criteria:

- Examples of individual's commitment of time and effort
- Ability to generate enthusiasm amongst colleagues and plan participants
- Examples of practical help given in encouraging informed participation in the plan(s)
- Supporting testimonials from a range of sources who have worked with/for the individual
- Factors demonstrating the individual going above and beyond expectations of their role / relative seniority, and/or dealing with significant organisational and perhaps regulatory changes and challenges.

A significant donation will be made to a charity of the winner's choice, courtesy of ShareGift.

Services to Employee Share Ownership

This award recognises individuals who have, over the course of their careers, made a significant contribution to the share plans industry and employee share ownership as a whole. This award will not automatically be made on an annual basis. Formal nominations are not invited for this award (though individuals are welcome to make suggestions). The award is granted at the discretion of the Executive Director of ProShare, and the Director of Policy of the ICOSA, with input from the Awards Judging Panel and, where appropriate, ProShare's Advisory Panel.

A significant donation will be made by ShareGift to a charity of the awardee's choice.

NB: Best Performance in Fostering ESO in a Smaller Company

From 2019 this will no longer be made as a stand-alone award. A sub-500 employees threshold has been added to the Effective Communication and Fostering ESO award categories.