

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE  
IN ADMISSIONS, MARKETING  
AND COMMUNICATIONS  
IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



AMCIS

Admissions, Marketing and Communications  
in Independent Schools

2024 **IMPACT** Awards

Welcome to the 2024 AMCIS IMPACT Awards, which celebrate admissions, marketing and communications initiatives that make a positive impact on a school and its community.

Our awards are open to AMCIS member schools and are free to enter.

## SEVEN CATEGORIES

1. Admissions **IMPACT** Award
2. Branding **IMPACT** Award
3. Communications **IMPACT** Award
4. Digital **IMPACT** Award
5. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) **IMPACT** Award
6. Small Budget **IMPACT** Award (max £2.5k)
7. Strategic Marketing **IMPACT** Award

FREE ENTRY  
FOR AMCIS  
MEMBER  
SCHOOLS

SPECIAL  
DISCRETIONARY  
AWARD FOR  
TEAM OF THE  
YEAR

## SHORTLISTED & WINNERS LOGOS

Shortlisted – and thereafter winning – schools receive a special logo to use on their website, literature, social and other media.

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Winners at the 2023 AMCIS IMPACT Awards Ceremony

## HOW TO ENTER

First, **read the rules and the entry criteria for each category** (see below). Then complete and submit the application form, following the five steps below, to tell us about the impact that you and your team have made within your school. You can download the application form from the AMCIS website.

### STEP 1

Select a category. You can enter more than one category but must submit a separate entry for each.

### STEP 2

Enter your school details on the application form.

### STEP 3

Give your entry a suitable title - eg *Art for All at ABC College* – and enter this on the application form.

### STEP 4

Write your entry in no more than 750 words. NB Entries over 750 words will only be judged as far as the first 750 words; anything beyond this will be dismissed. **Please read the rules of entry as well as the criteria for your specific category.** As a general guide, entries should contain:

- A brief outline of the project strategy or approach.
- A description of the activity/steps taken to deliver the initiative. Include teamwork here, if you wish to be considered for the discretionary Team of the Year Award.
- Evidence of the impact of your initiative.

### STEPS 5&6

Give your budget PLUS plus whatever data you have that demonstrates its impact.

### STEP 7

Choose a maximum of 5 pieces of optional supplementary evidence to include with your entry. These might be, for example, a news article, photograph, artwork, and/or a screen grab of a digital advertisement. Please list all items you choose to submit on the application form and submit them, as a PDF or JPG attachment or via a WeTransfer link ([www.wetransfer.com](http://www.wetransfer.com)), together with your completed application form, by email to [sarah@amcis.co.uk](mailto:sarah@amcis.co.uk). In the subject line of your email, please write the words 'IMPACT ENTRY' plus the relevant category and your school name eg *IMPACT ENTRY, Digital, My School*.

# CATEGORY ENTRY CRITERIA

Admissions <b>IMPACT</b> Award Criteria	Branding <b>IMPACT</b> Award Criteria
<p>This category is designed to celebrate the achievements of the Admissions Department. The types of projects our judges would like to see submitted could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in the admissions process which have made a positive impact on the number of families applying, registering or accepting places at your school. These could be IT system improvements, admissions process improvements, becoming paperless etc.</li> <li>• A new event or initiative which has resulted in more families applying to the school. Have you changed how you deliver prospective parent tours, redesigned your open day format, or created new events in the admissions calendar for prospective pupils, their families or feeder schools?</li> <li>• Increasing applications from a target audience or for a particular scheme, eg scholarships or bursaries. Have you introduced new scholarship or bursary schemes to improve access to an education at your school? Perhaps you have increased the number of families applying for bursaries from a particular demographic or postcode, or increased the number of applicants for a STEM scholarship by delivering experience days or gifted and talented workshops?</li> </ul> <p>NB any admissions project specifically designed to increase the diversity of applicants, and in particular to increase applications from students/families currently under-represented in your school (eg as identified by their ethnicity, race, gender or otherwise), may also, or instead, be entered into the Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion category.</p> <p><b>Guidance for entries in this category</b></p> <p><b>In addition to the requirements of the main Rules of Entry, please ensure that your submission contains the following information to ensure the judges can fully consider the impact of your initiative:</b></p> <p>A reference to comparison data or equivalent which clearly demonstrates the impact your initiative has achieved. Items such as event attendance data, enquiry registration and acceptance figures would be highly regarded by the judges.</p> <p>A description of the event or initiative and a snapshot of supporting literature etc.</p>	<p>This category allows schools to showcase initiatives which have enhanced or changed the school's overall brand. Types of projects that could be submitted for this category include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A branding project which has made a positive impact on the perceived image and/or positioning of your school by communicating or enhancing the school's unique personality.</li> <li>• A re-branding initiative such as changing your school's name or creating a new logo.</li> <li>• A merger of two school brands to create a new, unifying brand.</li> <li>• A branding project of a school moving to co-education.</li> <li>• The development of a new creative approach for the school as a whole, or a specific part of the school, such as the Sixth Form, Nursery or Prep School.</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance for entries in this category</b></p> <p><b>In addition to the requirements of the main Rules of Entry, please ensure that your submission contains the following information to ensure the judges can fully consider the impact of your initiative:</b></p> <p>A reference to yearly comparison data or equivalent which clearly demonstrates the impact your branding initiative has achieved. Items such as event attendance data, enquiry, registration and acceptance figures, social media engagement data, website analytics, focus group research etc. would be well received by the judges.</p> <p>An overview of the branding process that was undertaken as well as examples of the creative work used in the initiative.</p>

## CATEGORY ENTRY CRITERIA continued

Communications <b>IMPACT</b> Award Criteria	Digital <b>IMPACT</b> Award Criteria
<p>This category is designed to celebrate communications initiatives which have delivered an impact. The type of projects our judges would like to see submitted could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The communication of a significant event. This could be a school’s anniversary, an achievement such as the result of an ISI inspection, a pupil or staff achievement, sports team accolade, charity fundraising initiative etc.</li> <li>• Communicating for change. Perhaps your school has joined a group or acquired another local school, or is moving to co-education or opening an international school? Perhaps you have attempted to change perceptions of your school at the same time?</li> <li>• Crisis communications. Have you successfully managed the communications around an event that may otherwise have had an adverse impact on your school community and/or your school’s reputation? How did your approach to communications [help to] contain the situation?</li> <li>• Schools are involved in many state-school and community partnerships as well as outreach initiatives, and the judges are interested in how you have handled communications around these projects to make a positive impact.</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance for entries in this category</b></p> <p><b>In addition to the requirements of the main Rules of Entry, please ensure that your submission contains the following information to ensure the judges can fully consider the impact of your digital initiative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entries in this area should be focused on the school’s approach to communications (internal and/or external) for the project, and the positive impact this has made in terms of your communications/PR objectives.</li> <li>• An overview of the impact your communications approach has achieved, for example, the KPIs used, the planning approach you adopted, the target audiences etc. Entries which include social media engagement data, media coverage, website analytics, focus group research etc. would be well received by the judges.</li> </ul>	<p>This category is designed to celebrate digital marketing/communication initiatives which have delivered a positive impact. The type of projects our judges would like to see submitted could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A standalone digital marketing/communications initiative or campaign. This can be organic content or a campaign which has also featured paid-for activity.</li> <li>• The introduction or development of a school’s social media channels.</li> <li>• The use of video content or creation of a new school promotional film.</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance for entries in this category</b></p> <p><b>In addition to the requirements of the main Rules of Entry, please ensure that your submission contains the following information to ensure the judges can fully consider the impact of your initiative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reference to yearly comparison data or equivalent which clearly demonstrates the impact your digital marketing initiative has achieved. Items such as event attendance data, enquiry, registration and acceptance figures, social media engagement data, website analytics etc. would be well received by the judges.</li> <li>• Please also include a snapshot of the types of content, hashtags and imagery used.</li> </ul>

# CATEGORY ENTRY CRITERIA continued

EDI <b>IMPACT</b> Award Criteria	Small Budget <b>IMPACT</b> Award Criteria
<p>This category is designed to celebrate the achievements of a project or initiative designed to address EDI in your school, whether that be to improve diversity in your school community and/or to adopt a more inclusive approach in your admissions, marketing and communications. The types of projects our judges would like to see submitted could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A campaign or initiative aimed at increasing diversity in your school. You may have targeted advertising at specific marginalised or minoritised communities – eg your local Black community, same-sex parents or other under-represented groups - to indicate that your school welcomes their applications.</li> <li>• A campaign or initiative to adopt more inclusive admissions practices. For example, you may have changed your admissions processes and literature/website to welcome and acknowledge the needs of families who might otherwise feel marginalised. Perhaps you have overhauled your website, open days or signage to improve accessibility.</li> <li>• Marketing/communications/admissions initiatives that enable minoritised groups in your school to be represented and/or have opportunities to be involved as, for example, expert speakers, open day guides, Head students, exemplar students or teachers etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance for entries in this category</b></p> <p><b>In addition to the requirements of the main Rules of Entry, please ensure that your submission contains the following information to ensure the judges can fully consider the impact of your initiative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the impact your admissions, marketing and/or communications approach has achieved, with information on target audiences, objectives, and an indication (statistical or otherwise) of improvement. Entries which demonstrate steps to begin tracking data that has not previously been tracked, in order to monitor the success of future EDI initiatives, will be well received.</li> <li>• Where an EDI initiative is a whole-school or inter-school/community initiative, entries will be judged solely on the impact of the admissions, marketing and/or communications aspect as opposed to the success of the entire initiative (which can be hard to measure).</li> <li>• Entries should also include a snapshot of the methods/media used and results generated, eg advertisements, literature/stationery, news release, media coverage, social media, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>This category is designed to celebrate the achievements of a project or initiative which delivered a positive impact using a small budget of <b>no more than £2,500</b>. The types of projects our judges would like to see submitted could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The marketing of an initiative to, for example, increase applicants to the school as whole or to generate enquiries from a particular geographic area.</li> <li>• The marketing of a specific event, such as an open day or other recruitment events.</li> <li>• The launch of a new nursery, prep school, sixth form provision etc.</li> <li>• A campaign which focused on attracting more boarding or day pupils to the school.</li> <li>• A digital marketing/communications campaign.</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance for entries in this category</b></p> <p><b>In addition to the requirements of the main Rules of Entry, please ensure that your submission contains the following information to ensure the judges can fully consider the impact of your initiative:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reference to yearly comparison data or equivalent which clearly demonstrates the impact your small budget campaign has achieved. Items such as event attendance data, enquiry, registration and acceptance figures, social media engagement data, website analytics etc. would be well received by the judges.</li> <li>• Please also include a snapshot of the types of content, literature and imagery that was used.</li> <li>• Please detail how you used your small budget for the initiative.</li> </ul>

# CATEGORY ENTRY CRITERIA continued

## Strategic Marketing **IMPACT** Award Criteria

This category is designed to celebrate the success of a multi-channel marketing campaign that demonstrates strategic intent by making an impact that enables the school to move closer to achieving a wider objective. The types of projects our judges would like to see submitted could include:

- A marketing campaign to increase applicants from a particular geographic region or other target group, which contributes to a wider objective, eg to increase applicants overall or to widen the school's geographic reach.
- A marketing campaign around a specific event – eg, a recruitment, outreach or community event that contributes to a wider school objective, such as to increase applicants from a specific target group; to change perceptions of the school amongst primary school teachers; or to increase local community engagement.
- A marketing campaign to launch a new nursery, prep school, sixth form provision etc and thereby raise awareness of, and applications to, a new phase in your school's development.
- A campaign which focuses on attracting more boarding or day pupils to your school.

### Guidance for entries in this category

**In addition to the requirements of the main Rules of Entry, please ensure that your submission contains the following information to ensure the judges can fully consider the impact of your initiative:**

- The judges wish to understand the elements of your marketing planning process as well as the impact itself. Therefore, please show as much as detail as possible in your submission, including how your marketing campaign has contributed towards a wider objective.
- Please give details of the marketing mix you chose to use for this campaign. Entries in this category should show a mix of traditional and digital approaches.
- A reference to yearly comparison data or equivalent which clearly demonstrates the impact your marketing campaign has achieved. Items such as event attendance data, enquiry, registration and acceptance figures, social media engagement data, website analytics etc. would be well received by the judges.
- Please also include a snapshot of the types of content, literature and imagery that was used.

## RULES OF ENTRY

1. Only schools which are members of AMCIS may enter.
2. Schools are welcome to submit entries as soon as AMCIS announces the Awards open, which is 1 October 2023\*.
3. Schools may enter as many categories as they wish but may only submit one entry per category per year.
4. All entries must reflect a strategy, campaign or initiative carried out in the past 12 to 24 months and which is now complete or nearing completion.
5. Data to show evidence of the impact of the project, campaign or initiative must be submitted. Due to the volume of entries received, it is unlikely that entries that omit such data will be shortlisted.
6. Entries must state the financial budget used to deliver the initiative, or the percentage of the total marketing/departmental budget that this represents.
7. Where the services of an external consultant or agency have been used to deliver a campaign or initiative, this must be acknowledged in your entry.
8. No supporting material can be submitted outside of that requested in the 'How to Enter - Supporting Material' section of the Application Form. Any additional material will be disregarded by the judges.
9. Each entry must comply with the category-specific entry criteria outlined in this document.
10. The **Team of the Year Award** will be awarded – or not - at the judges' discretion. You cannot submit an entry for this award alone. Instead, entries wishing to be considered for this accolade must include, in their entry for one of the other awards, a brief overview of the team whose members contributed to the initiative and how their teamwork impacted on the success of the project. Entries do not need to be shortlisted in any of the other award categories in order to win this discretionary award.
11. Only those schools shortlisted are eligible to use the AMCIS IMPACT Award Shortlisted logo, which will be provided by AMCIS.
12. Only the winning schools are eligible to use the AMCIS IMPACT Award Winner logo, which will be provided by AMCIS.
13. Entries must be submitted on the appropriate form which should be emailed, along with attachments or links, as specified in How to Enter, to [sarah@amcis.co.uk](mailto:sarah@amcis.co.uk) no later than the **deadline**, which is **midnight on Thursday 30 November 2023**. Entries received after this deadline will not be accepted. You must submit a separate form and email for each category you wish to enter, with the words 'IMPACT ENTRY' plus the relevant category and your school name in the subject line eg *IMPACT ENTRY, Digital, My School*.
14. Entry to these awards indicates your agreement, should you be shortlisted, to:
  - a. allow AMCIS to use the information in your entry – and provide further information, such as a short self-made video, if required – for the AMCIS website and other AMCIS communications channels.
  - b. send a representative to the AMCIS 2024 Annual Conference Dinner, during which the AMCIS IMPACT Awards Ceremony will take place.
15. Shortlisted schools will be announced during the w/c 29 January 2024\*.
16. Winning schools will be announced and presented with their awards at the AMCIS IMPACT Awards Ceremony, which will form part of the AMCIS 2024 Annual Conference Dinner on Monday 13 May 2024\*.
17. The judges' decision is final and feedback on individual entries will not be provided.

*\*AMCIS reserves the right to change these dates.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q Do I enter as an individual or as a school?

*Please enter as a school and provide individual details for administrative purposes. We recognise that admissions, marketing and communications initiatives often involve many teaching and support staff, if not the whole school, and so we present AMCIS IMPACT Awards to the school, rather than the individual.*

### Q Is there an entry fee?

*There is no entry fee.*

### Q My school is not an AMCIS member, can I enter?

*Unfortunately, no. Only AMCIS member schools are eligible for entry. However, your school may join AMCIS at any time throughout the year for a pro-rata fee. Joining details and membership benefits can be found at [amcis.co.uk](http://amcis.co.uk)*

### Q Can international schools enter?

*Yes, we welcome entries from all independent schools, wherever their location, provided they are a member of AMCIS.*

### Q Can I submit more than 5 pieces of evidence?

*No. Only five pieces of supporting evidence are allowed per entry. Please see the Rules of Entry and the How to Enter section above.*

### Q When will I find out if my school has been shortlisted?

*We will inform all shortlisted entrants during **w/c Monday 29 January 2024**. Shortlists will also be published on the AMCIS website, in AMCIS bulletins/newsletters, and in social media.*

### Q When will the Awards be presented?

*The winners will be announced and awards presented at the AMCIS IMPACT Awards Ceremony which forms part of the AMCIS Annual Conference Dinner on **Monday 13 May 2024\***. We ask all entrants to commit to sending someone to the conference in order that the winning schools are able to receive their award in person.*

*\*AMCIS reserves the right to change this date.*



## CONTACT US

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