

The David Astor Journalism Awards NOMINATION GUIDELINES (2016)

The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust (DAJAT) is inviting nominations for its tenth round of professional development awards for East African print journalists.

The deadline for submitting nominations is 29th April 2016.

We are searching for exceptionally promising, talented and committed early-career journalists working in English who have the greatest potential and determination to excel in the profession. Three awards are available annually for candidates from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

All nominated candidates will be rigorously assessed, the most promising will be short-listed for personal interviews later this year, and an independent selection panel will choose the eventual winners early next year.

Assessment Criteria

The selection process for these awards is highly competitive. Nominators must consider very carefully the following five essential assessment criteria before nominating a prospective candidate. All of these criteria are equally important and a candidate must fully meet them if he or she is to progress through the evaluation process.

Professional Commitment. Are they passionate about practicing journalism as a professional 'calling', not just as an income-producing job? Do they have clear long-term aspirations within the profession and the determination to achieve their aims?

Local Commitment. Do they have strong ties to their local community and place a high value on the contribution they can make by working locally as a journalist? Do their career goals include continuing to practice journalism in their own country or elsewhere in Africa?

Talent. Do they display some special talent, aptitude and flair for journalism – distinct from the abilities and skills they may have acquired through formal education and training – and do they have high potential to excel in the profession?

Ethical Standards. Do they have unquestionable integrity and adhere to the highest ethical principles in their professional and personal life?

Personal Qualities. Do they have a sufficiently strong, resilient character to withstand the rigours of the profession and thrive? Are they highly motivated, ambitious and driven? Are they confident, independent-minded, courageous, resourceful and persistent?

There are no specific age restrictions, or educational, training and work experience requirements, but candidates must be full-time working journalists. They may be employed or retained by a news media house or working independently as a correspondent/freelancer for one or more news outlets.

Generally, a viable candidate is likely to have at least a year or two of working experience with a track record that can be judged. They must also show firm commitment to a long-term career in journalism. Someone who has worked as a journalist for six or more years, or already holds a fairly senior position, would not be considered a good match for this programme. Editors and sub-editors are not eligible.

The Nominating Process

Nominators are effectively the initial judges in the multi-stage selection process for these awards. Your role – identifying potentially suitable candidates in the first instance – is therefore crucial.

Since your opinions will be taken into account in assessing the relative strengths of the candidates, it is important that you supply as much firsthand information as possible. You should consult and carefully assess prospective nominees before making a nomination to ensure that they are suitable and wish to be considered for this programme.

Only one candidate will be accepted from each nominator per year. Each media house is considered a single nominator and limited to one nomination, regardless of the number of publications it produces. However, media houses that produce publications in more than one country may nominate one candidate from each country.

Other organisations – including journalists associations, training institutions and civic groups – and unaffiliated individuals each may nominate one candidate. If an organisation operates in more than one of the three countries, it may nominate one candidate from each country.

To nominate a candidate, the Nomination Form must be completed fully and returned no later than 29th April 2016. It should be e-mailed to: jim.meyer@dajat.org

The Selection Process

Nominated candidates will be asked to complete an application form, supply three examples of their recently published work, and write two personal statements: one telling their life story; the other explaining their professional interests and ambitions. After a thorough review of these submissions, a shortlist of preferred candidates will be interviewed and background checks will be conducted. Finalists will then be chosen and will be interviewed by an independent panel of judges, who will decide the winners. The winners will be announced in early 2017.

The Awards

Each award winner will take part in a work-experience programme, individually tailored to his or her particular professional development needs and interests, lasting three months.

The award programmes are designed in consultation with the winner and their employer, but they all involve working with journalists from outside the award winner's own country, usually at newspapers in the UK and/or South Africa.

The general aim of these programmes is to expose the award winners to different news reporting environments and some of the special know-how, expertise and working practices of other, more seasoned journalists. They offer opportunities for the award winners to enhance their capabilities, to broaden their professional outlook, and to develop useful new contacts.

Each award winner will also receive a nominal cash award of \$500 and become a career-long member of the David Astor Journalism Award Winners' Network, a regional peer-support group with links to other media professionals and organisations locally and abroad.