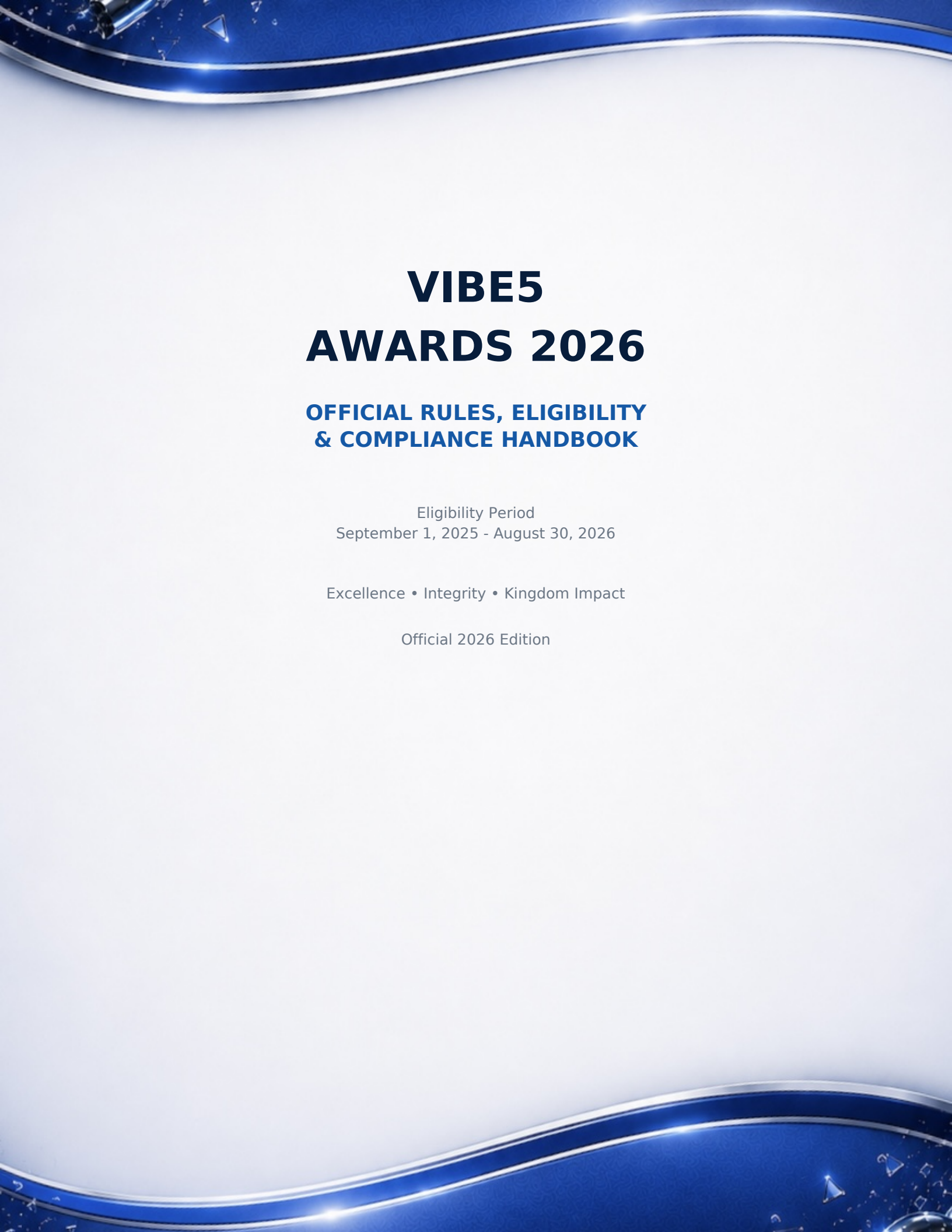




VIBE5 AWARDS 2026

OFFICIAL RULES, ELIGIBILITY & COMPLIANCE HANDBOOK

Eligibility Period
September 1, 2025 - August 30, 2026

Excellence • Integrity • Kingdom Impact

Official 2026 Edition

Table of Contents

- 1. Purpose & Authority
- 2. Eligibility Period
- 3. Nomination Rules
- 4. Evidence & Academy Review
- 5. Finalist Selection & Final Decision
- 6. Voting, Campaigning & Integrity
- 7. Conflicts of Interest & Vibe5 Affiliates
- 8. Category Eligibility Checklists
- 9. Award Acceptance & Conduct
- 10. Fraud, Disqualification & Revocation
- 11. Administration & Interpretation
- 12. Nominee Certification

1. Purpose & Authority

The Vibe5 Awards recognize excellence, consistency, creativity, professionalism and Kingdom impact across Christian music, media and ministry. This handbook establishes the official standards for the 2026 awards cycle and is intended to provide nominees, voters, judges, partners and the public with a clear and consistent process.

The Vibe5 Standard. Audience size, church membership, follower count, streaming totals and financial resources may demonstrate reach, but shall not independently determine eligibility, finalist status or an award recipient.

Eligibility means a nominee may be considered. It does not guarantee finalist status, placement on a ballot, or receipt of an award.

2. Eligibility Period

The official 2026 eligibility period is September 1, 2025 through August 30, 2026.

- Unless a category expressly states otherwise, qualifying releases, events, episodes, ministry activity and other submitted work must fall within this period.
- Work released before the eligibility period may be referenced as background, but should not serve as the primary basis for a 2026 competitive nomination.

3. Nomination Rules

- Nominations are open to the public through the official Vibe5 Awards website nomination process.
- All required website fields must be completed for a nomination to be considered.
- Self-nominations are permitted.
- Only one valid nomination is required for an individual, group, project, church, organization or outlet to be considered in a category. Multiple nominations do not increase a nominee's standing.
- Duplicate submissions may be consolidated by Vibe5.
- Nominees must be entered into the category that best matches the submitted work and published category requirements.
- A nomination containing materially false, misleading or unverifiable information may be rejected.

4. Evidence & Vibe5 Academy Review

All nomination evidence and finalist qualifications will be reviewed by the Vibe5 Academy. The Academy may verify public information and request reasonable supporting documentation when a submission cannot be adequately verified.

- Acceptable evidence may include official release links, event flyers, performance footage, credits, ministry or organization pages, episode links, published programming, public posts, analytics screenshots, or other credible documentation.
- Evidence should verify eligibility and impact; nominees are not required to have major-label, major-media or large-budget credentials.
- Failure to provide requested verification may result in removal from consideration.

5. Finalist Selection & Final Decision

Following eligibility review, the Vibe5 Academy will determine which qualified nominees advance for finalist consideration. Final voting results will be reviewed through a runoff process by an appointed panel. After that review, the Vibe5 CEO will make the final award decision.

- Public support may be considered where public voting is used, but it does not override eligibility, integrity review or the official final-selection process.
- The final decision should be based on the published category standards, verified information and the integrity of the awards process.
- Vibe5 may decline to name a winner in a category if no nominee sufficiently satisfies the standards or if integrity concerns materially compromise the category.

6. Voting, Campaigning & Integrity

Professional, organic campaigning is permitted. Nominees may encourage supporters to participate through legitimate personal, social, email, church, artist, ministry and community networks.

- Nominees may share official voting links and approved promotional materials.
- Nominees may publicly ask supporters to vote, provided communications are truthful and respectful.
- Automated or manipulated voting is prohibited.
- The use of bots, automated voting services, AI-enabled vote automation, click farms, scammers, purchased fraudulent votes, scripts, or any system designed to manufacture non-human or deceptive votes is prohibited.
- Vibe5 may audit suspicious voting patterns and request supporting information.
- A nominee found to have knowingly used or authorized prohibited vote manipulation may be disqualified.
- Confirmed integrity-based disqualifications may be publicly announced by Vibe5 through its official channels and may be communicated to media platforms or outlets as appropriate. Any public statement should accurately describe the verified basis for the action.

7. Conflicts of Interest & Vibe5-Affiliated Nominees

- Vibe5-affiliated nominees are not automatically excluded from competitive consideration.
- Affiliated nominees must satisfy the same published eligibility requirements and Academy review as other nominees.
- A nominee may not cast a vote for themselves during an applicable voting period.
- Panelists or decision-makers should disclose a material personal, financial, management or professional relationship with a finalist when that relationship could reasonably call impartiality into question.
- Vibe5 may recuse, replace or limit the participation of a reviewer when necessary to protect the integrity of the process.
- Final votes proceed through the panel runoff process, with the CEO making the final decision.

8. Category Eligibility Checklists

A checked item establishes a qualification to be reviewed; it does not itself guarantee finalist status.

Premier Awards

The highest competitive honors recognizing excellence in Christian music and ministry.

1. Artist of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes the artist demonstrating the strongest overall body of work, consistency and Kingdom impact during the eligibility period.

- ☐ Active Christian/Kingdom recording or performing artist during the eligibility period.
- ☐ At least one qualifying music release during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Documented live performance, ministry, appearance or artist activity during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Maintained a verifiable public artist presence.
- ☐ Music is available through at least one verifiable public platform.
- ☐ Provides evidence of meaningful growth, reach, engagement, ministry impact or audience connection.

Evaluation focus: Music quality; consistency; live/artist activity; professionalism; audience connection; Kingdom impact.

2. Album of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes an outstanding cohesive full-length Christian music project.

- ☐ Publicly released during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Contains at least 7 tracks OR at least 30 minutes of original recorded material.
- ☐ Available through a verifiable public music or distribution platform.
- ☐ Primary project is Christian, faith-centered or Kingdom-aligned.
- ☐ Credits and release information can be verified.

Evaluation focus: Songwriting; production; artistic performance; cohesion; originality; message; overall execution.

3. Song of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes an outstanding individual Christian music recording released during the eligibility period.

- ☐ Officially released during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Available through a verifiable public platform.
- ☐ May be a standalone single or a track from an eligible project.
- ☐ Artist/title/release information can be verified.
- ☐ No minimum stream or view count is required.

Evaluation focus: Songwriting and message; performance; production; originality; replay value; impact.

4. Collaboration of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes an outstanding recording created through meaningful collaboration.

- ☐ Officially released during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Includes two or more credited artists or creatives with meaningful contributions to the finished recording.

- ☐ Collaborators are publicly credited or otherwise verifiable.
- ☐ Merely appearing in a video without contributing to the recording does not establish a musical collaboration.

Evaluation focus: Creative chemistry; performance; production; originality; contribution of collaborators; Kingdom impact.

5. Producer of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes excellence and consistency in Christian music production.

- ☐ Produced or co-produced at least 3 publicly released Christian/faith-centered recordings during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Production credits can be verified.
- ☐ Submitted work demonstrates active production rather than a nominal credit.
- ☐ Work involving more than one artist is encouraged and may strengthen evidence of breadth, but is not mandatory.

Evaluation focus: Production quality; versatility; creativity; consistency; musical contribution; professionalism.

Excellence Awards

6. New Artist of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes an emerging artist establishing a professional/public recording career.

- ☐ Artist is within the first 24 months of their professional/public recording career as of the close of eligibility.
- ☐ At least one officially released song during the relevant career window.
- ☐ Demonstrated active development through releases, performances, ministry or audience-building.
- ☐ Prior informal singing, church participation or performing does not automatically make an artist ineligible.

Evaluation focus: Artistic promise; music quality; growth; originality; consistency; professionalism; Kingdom impact.

7. Music Video of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes excellence in visual storytelling for Christian music.

- ☐ Video publicly premiered during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Video accompanies an eligible Christian/faith-centered recording.
- ☐ Official video is publicly viewable or can be supplied for Academy review.
- ☐ No minimum view count is required.

Evaluation focus: Concept; storytelling; cinematography; editing; originality; performance; connection to the song; execution.

8. Spoken Word Artist of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes excellence in faith-centered spoken word, poetry and performance.

- ☐ Actively created or performed original spoken-word/poetry material during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Work substantially reflects faith, testimony, Kingdom principles, Christian culture or meaningful social/community impact.
- ☐ At least 2 documented qualifying performances OR 1 officially released spoken-word project/piece during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Submitted work can be verified through recordings, event documentation or public releases.

Evaluation focus: Writing; delivery; originality; consistency; audience connection; Kingdom/social impact.

9. DJ of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes DJs contributing excellence, professionalism and culture to Christian music and events.

- ☐ Actively DJed qualifying Christian/Kingdom programming or events during the eligibility period.
- ☐ At least 3 documented appearances, events or broadcasts during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Qualifying settings may include concerts, churches, radio, showcases, community events or Christian entertainment programming.
- ☐ Activity can be verified through flyers, recordings, broadcasts, event pages or similar evidence.

Evaluation focus: Technical ability; music selection; crowd engagement; professionalism; consistency; Kingdom representation.

10. Artist Event of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes an outstanding artist-led or artist-centered Christian music experience.

- ☐ Event occurred publicly during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Event was artist-led or primarily centered on Christian artists/music.
- ☐ Event had a defined program, experience or audience.
- ☐ Concerts, tours, album-release events, showcases, worship experiences and artist-produced community events may qualify.
- ☐ Event can be verified through promotional materials, footage, venue/event documentation or public coverage.
- ☐ No minimum attendance requirement applies.

Evaluation focus: Experience; organization; production; creativity; artist presentation; audience engagement; impact.

Kingdom Impact Awards

11. Kingdom Influencer Award - Male

Purpose. Recognizes a male digital creator whose content demonstrates meaningful Christian influence and audience impact.

- ☐ Actively created original faith-centered digital content during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Maintained an active public presence on at least one major digital/social platform.
- ☐ Published at least 12 qualifying pieces of original content during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Content demonstrates meaningful Christian, Kingdom, ministry, testimony or faith-based influence.
- ☐ No minimum follower count is required.

Evaluation focus: Authenticity; consistency; creativity; engagement; quality; demonstrated Kingdom influence.

12. Kingdom Influencer Award - Female

Purpose. Recognizes a female digital creator whose content demonstrates meaningful Christian influence and audience impact.

- ☐ Actively created original faith-centered digital content during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Maintained an active public presence on at least one major digital/social platform.
- ☐ Published at least 12 qualifying pieces of original content during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Content demonstrates meaningful Christian, Kingdom, ministry, testimony or faith-based influence.
- ☐ No minimum follower count is required.

Evaluation focus: Authenticity; consistency; creativity; engagement; quality; demonstrated Kingdom influence.

13. Radio / Media Outlet of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes a media platform consistently serving Christian artists, ministries, culture or audiences.

- ☐ Operated consistently for at least 6 months during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Regularly produced, broadcast, published or distributed Christian/Kingdom content.
- ☐ Has a verifiable public presence or programming history.
- ☐ May include terrestrial radio, internet radio, digital publications, Christian media networks/platforms and comparable legitimate outlets.
- ☐ Demonstrates support of artists, ministry, community or Christian culture.

Evaluation focus: Programming/content quality; consistency; reach; artist/community support; professionalism; Kingdom impact.

14. Podcast of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes an outstanding Christian or Kingdom-centered audio or video podcast.

- ☐ Released at least 6 full episodes during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Podcast substantially addresses Christianity, faith, ministry, Kingdom culture, Christian entertainment or issues relevant to Christian audiences.
- ☐ Episodes are publicly available or otherwise verifiable.
- ☐ Audio-only and video podcasts are equally eligible.
- ☐ No minimum download, subscriber or view count is required.

Evaluation focus: Content; consistency; production; originality; presentation/host chemistry; audience engagement; Kingdom impact.

15. Church of the Year - Under 50 Active Members

Purpose. Recognizes exceptional ministry and community impact by a small church.

- ☐ Church averaged fewer than 50 active members during the eligibility period.
- ☐ For this category, an active member is a person who regularly participates in the church's worship, ministry or community life; Vibe5 may request reasonable verification.
- ☐ Church remained active in ministry during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Completed at least 2 documented outreach, community or ministry initiatives beyond ordinary weekly worship during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Church can provide evidence of service, discipleship, outreach or community impact.

Evaluation focus: Community impact; discipleship; service; stewardship; innovation; ministry fruit. Building size, production budget and financial resources are not judging advantages.

16. Pastor / Clergy of the Year

Purpose. Recognizes exceptional Christian ministry leadership, service and Kingdom impact.

- ☐ Nominee served actively as a pastor, minister, elder, evangelist or other recognized Christian clergy/ministry leader during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Maintained at least one continuing ministry assignment or recognized area of ministry responsibility.
- ☐ Completed or led at least 2 documented ministry/community initiatives or significant areas of service during the eligibility period.
- ☐ Leadership and ministry activity can be reasonably verified.
- ☐ Nominee demonstrates service beyond merely holding a title.

Evaluation focus: Spiritual leadership; integrity and professional conduct; service; mentorship; community impact; innovation; Kingdom influence.

9. Award Acceptance & Conduct

Winners will generally be provided approximately 2-3 minutes for an acceptance speech, subject to live-show timing and production needs.

- Winners are encouraged to thank God, family, management, collaborators, supporters, ministry partners and others who contributed to their work.
- Acceptance remarks must remain respectful, professional and Kingdom-minded.
- An acceptance speech may not be used to demean, attack, ridicule or intentionally disparage another nominee, finalist, artist, ministry, organization, judge or candidate.
- Production may end or mute remarks that violate these standards or materially disrupt the program.
- A confirmed serious violation may result in removal from the event and/or ineligibility for the 2027 Vibe5 Awards after review. If Vibe5 publicly announces a sanction, the statement should accurately reflect the verified conduct and decision.

10. Fraud, Disqualification & Revocation

Vibe5 reserves the right to reject a nomination, disqualify a nominee, remove a finalist, withhold an award or revoke an award when credible evidence establishes that eligibility was obtained or maintained through fraud, material misrepresentation, fabricated evidence, prohibited vote manipulation or another substantial violation of these rules.

- Vibe5 may investigate suspected irregularities before or after the ceremony.
- An award may be revoked after presentation if later-discovered evidence establishes that the winning submission was materially fraudulent or ineligible.
- Where practical, Vibe5 should document the basis for a material disciplinary decision and provide the affected party an opportunity to supply clarifying evidence before a final determination.
- Public statements regarding disqualification or revocation should be factual, limited to verified information, and issued through authorized Vibe5 channels.

11. Administration & Interpretation

- Vibe5 may interpret these rules and resolve circumstances not expressly addressed in the handbook in a manner consistent with fairness and the integrity of the awards.
- Administrative corrections may be made to typographical errors, duplicate nominations, category placement or other non-substantive issues.
- Material changes affecting eligibility or voting should be communicated publicly when reasonably practicable.

Important notice: This handbook is an organizational rules document and is not legal advice. Vibe5 should have counsel review provisions involving publicity, disciplinary announcements, releases, contests/voting, intellectual property and event operations before publication.

12. Nominee Certification

By submitting or accepting a nomination, the nominee or authorized submitter certifies, to the best of their knowledge, that:

- ☐ The information provided is truthful and materially complete.
- ☐ The submitted nominee/work satisfies the published eligibility period and category requirements.
- ☐ Submitted evidence is authentic and has not been knowingly fabricated or materially altered to mislead the Vibe5 Academy.
- ☐ The nominee will comply with applicable voting and campaigning rules.
- ☐ The nominee understands that one nomination is sufficient and duplicate nominations do not improve standing.
- ☐ The nominee understands that eligibility does not guarantee finalist status or an award.
- ☐ The nominee acknowledges Vibe5's authority, under these rules, to investigate fraud, disqualify ineligible entries and revoke an award obtained through a materially fraudulent submission.

2026 VIBE5 AWARDS

Official Rules, Eligibility & Compliance Handbook