

CIO 100 2026: Question-by-question guidance for applicants

CIO 100 – Entrant answer guidance sheet

This guide explains what we're looking for in each question and how to craft a strong, concise, evidence-based submission.

General guidance for all questions

- Be specific – avoid generic statements like “we delivered business value.”
- Use data where possible – KPIs, savings, revenue impact, delivery metrics, productivity gains, customer outcomes, etc.
- Focus on your role – what you did, influenced, or led.
- Provide context – the situation, your actions, and the measurable result.
- Show business alignment – technology is a means to an outcome, not the outcome itself.
- Use clear, direct language – assume judges have limited time.

1. Technology delivery, architecture & alignment

Explain

- How technology is delivered (operating model, engineering practices, cloud/data strategy, AI use, etc.)
- How architecture standards are defined, communicated, and enforced
- How you keep teams and partners aligned (governance, playbooks, rituals)
Keep the focus on integration, consistency, and business alignment.

2. Technology initiatives & business value

Describe:

- The initiative, why it mattered, and the business problem/opportunity
- Delivery model (team size, partners, budget, timelines)
- Results backed by metrics (savings, revenue uplift, risk reduction, satisfaction improvements, efficiency gains)
Highlight your strategic and tactical contribution.

3. Collaboration & partner ecosystem

Provide examples of:

- How you work with business leaders (cadence, governance, alignment rituals)
- How you manage partners (objectives, performance measures, responsibilities)
- How collaboration accelerates delivery or improves outcomes
Be concrete—describe actual structures and approaches.

4. Culture, inclusion & team development

Explain

- What you personally did to shape culture
- Examples of diversity, inclusion, wellbeing, and team capability initiatives
- How you measure progress (engagement, retention, sentiment, progression, etc.)
Focus on actions you drove or influenced—not corporate-wide policies.

5. Sustainability & emerging technologies

Describe:

- Your role in sustainability efforts (green IT, energy-efficient architectures, responsible AI, etc.)
- How emerging technologies are applied (not just investigated)—AI, automation, IoT, edge, AR/VR
- Specific outcomes created by these technologies
Be clear about what your team did vs. third parties.

6. Forward strategy, challenges & alignment

Explain:

- Your key strategic priorities for the coming year
- How they connect to business goals
- The challenges you anticipate and how you plan to address them
- How success will be measured
Keep it practical and actionable.

7. Talent development & recruitment

Explain:

- How you attract, develop, and retain talent
- Frameworks, standards, or practices you use (career pathways, engineering standards, AI-enabled learning, mentoring, coaching)
- Any measurable outcomes (reduced attrition, faster onboarding, improved capability, skills uplift)
Focus on what you've implemented, not general philosophy.

8. CIO 100 summary

Summarise your standout achievements:

- 2–3 key business outcomes
- Why they matter
- What makes your leadership distinctive