

Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards

2024 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Research

1 Award of \$5,000 - Nominations due by 4:00pm, Wednesday 19 June 2024

Guidelines for nomination

This award recognises and rewards current academic staff for excellence in research while employed at ECU. The award is aligned with the University's research priority to build its research profile and generate enhanced research outcomes in selected areas of excellence, particularly those with the potential for high social, economic, environmental, and/or cultural impact.

One award (individual) will be made annually. Award recipients will receive \$5,000 and a certificate presented by the Vice-Chancellor.

Eligibility Criteria

Nominees are eligible to apply if:

They have received an invitation to submit a nomination by their Associate Dean Research, Director of ECUSRIC or Executive Dean via the online portal.

They are a current full-time or part-time ECU academic staff member who has been employed with ECU for a minimum of 2 years and are active in research. Please note the award must be linked to their research conducted during this period.

All award winners will demonstrate:

- ECU's values of Integrity, Respect, Rational Inquiry, Courage and Personal Excellence;
- Involvement in excellence in research over and above the normal expectations of the nominee's role;
- A significant contribution to researcher development (through research staff supervision and HDR completions) within the nominee's School; and
- A significant contribution to the achievement of the University's strategic priorities through their excellence in research, including through external research funding.

Awards may be made in recognition of specific projects / activities with significant and tangible outcomes or for excellent performance conducted at ECU over a sustained period. Nominees must provide evidence of sustained achievement and clear outcomes as a result of their performance, as appropriate.

Applicants who have received this award in the previous three years are ineligible to apply. Unsuccessful nominees are eligible to re-apply, however are recommended to seek advice about doing so from the Associate Dean (Research) in their School or from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Nominees may only apply for one award in any one year.

Expectations of Award Recipients:

Please note, as a condition of entry, successful nominees for the Excellence in Research Award may be requested by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research (DVCR) to display their nomination on the university website as an ECU research exemplar.

Selection Criteria (all criteria must be addressed):

Nominations will be assessed on the basis of evidence provided in relation to the following criteria:

1. Research outcomes achieved at ECU including external research funding, highly cited peer-review publications or equivalents for creative arts research outputs, HDR supervision and completions¹;
2. Quality of the research, originality and/or innovation, based on top 10 research outputs;
3. Significance and impact of the research to the discipline and field;
4. Engagement and collaboration with others outside of ECU to further drive the excellence of the research outcomes;
5. Leadership in the field as demonstrated by esteem measures of recognition by external bodies, prizes and awards; and
6. Research leadership including, where relevant, evidence of research team leadership and coherence. Include evidence of mentoring and training of more junior researchers in the development of their research careers.

Nominations:

In conjunction with the People and Culture, Research Services will call for nominations on an annual basis.

An invitation to nominate must be made by your Associate Dean Research, Director of ECUSRIC or Executive Dean via the [online nomination](#) portal.

An email invitation will then be sent to the nominee with instructions on how to submit their nomination for consideration of the awards selection committee.

Any queries should be directed to the Director, Research Services.

Management for Performance (MPS):

During performance review discussions, Line Managers are encouraged to identify, support and / or nominate staff members who demonstrate exemplary research and promote their submission of a nomination.

¹ Note that this award is unlikely to be awarded to a researcher with no external funding and no HDR completions.

Nomination guide and structure:

Once nominated, submissions for the Excellence in Research Award should comprise of the following:

1. **Statement** addressing Research Description and **all** Selection Criteria (up to 5 pages)
 - **Research Description** - *Provide a description of your research program/area and indicate your specific contribution to and/or leadership of the research program.*
 - **Research Outcomes** - *(based on top 10) achieved at ECU including external research funding, highly-cited peer-review publications (or equivalents for creative arts research outputs), HDR supervision completions specifying the levels of supervision of students and their degrees. The committee will also be provided with a table of nominee's research funding and outputs as generated by ECU Research systems. It is the nominee's responsibility to check this is up-to-date.*
 - **Quality of the research, originality and / or innovation.** - *Please provide examples of how your research has addressed important issues using original and innovative methods and approaches, and significantly driven the field further, nationally and/or internationally.*
 - **Significance and Impact** - *Provide examples of how your research has addressed an important problem and/or what effect your research has had on the stakeholders and end-users of the research.*
 - **Engagement and Collaboration** - present examples under the following headings:
 - **Academic Collaboration** – *researchers or research teams from universities other than ECU with whom the nominee has collaborated. Provide examples and describe the nature of the collaboration.*
 - **Research Collaboration** – *this refers to active engagement, partnerships or collaborators with industry, government, organisations and other stakeholders from outside of universities.*
 - **Leadership in the field** - *as demonstrated by recognition by esteem measures linked to external bodies, prizes and awards, keynote/plenary invites – especially at the 'international or national' level.*
 - **Research Leadership** - *Include evidence of mentoring others in the development of their own research careers within your school/institute/centre. What have mentees or supervised researchers been able to achieve because of this leadership? List any significant contributions also achieved outside of ECU, through your ECU role.*
2. **A brief CV** that lists key achievements since obtaining doctorate or joining ECU. This should include full details of all external funding awarded, and HDR student completions over past 5 years (specifying the level of supervision). Any achievement/esteem measures not in RAS should be explicitly stated.
3. **Referee reports** (minimum of 3) – Please note all must be external to ECU and all referees should be academics. At least one should be from an international academic. Please attach letter of support from each.

The committee will be provided with a table of the nominees' research funding and outputs as generated by ECU Research Systems (RAS and RMS), so this information does not need to be provided separately.

NB: Nominees should ensure that the ECU Research Activity System (RAS) is up to date capturing all of their relevant outputs within the last 5 years along with HDR student lists – current and completed, specifying the levels of supervision of students. Any achievement/esteem measures not in RAS should be included in your CV this can include non-ECU completed co-supervisions. Only achievements produced at ECU will be considered.

Nominations should avoid using acronyms or the use of discipline-specific language or jargon. It is important that all nominations are able to be fully read and understood by those not expert in this field.

Formatting requirements

Please ensure that all documents are A4 page size, fonts are 11 point Arial or Calibri, margins are at least 2cm all around, there is clear definition between paragraphs, and page numbers and section headings are included.

Submitting the nomination

The nominee should email their selection criteria as outlined above, their CV and referee reports to vcstaffawards@ecu.edu.au by the due date in **one (1) single pdf attachment**.

Award Selection Committee:

The committee will assess nominations and decide on winners. It will comprise the following, none of whom may be nominees or nominators:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or nominee as Chair;
- Chair, Academic Board or nominee;
- One ECU Professor elected by the Academic Board;
- Director, Research Services; and
- Executive Officer, Research Services (non-voting).

Nominated and elected committee Members will have a term of three years commencing 1 January.

The Award Selection Committee has the authority to seek further evidence from such persons it deems necessary to evaluate the nominations.

The Award Selection Committee reserves the right not to recommend an award if, in its assessment, there is no nomination of sufficient merit.

The Executive Officer shall present the nominations and any other relevant information to the Vice-Chancellor's Award Selection Committee.

The Vice-Chancellor will review the recommendations from the Awards Selection Committee and decide upon the winners. The Vice-Chancellor's decision will be final.

The winners will be formally advised of the outcome. A copy of the certificate will be filed in the respective personnel files.

Presentation of Awards:

The Vice-Chancellor will host an event to provide a formal and public recognition of the respective achievements and excellence of ECU's staff.

Successful recipient(s) may be asked to present at various public events. Event photography may be utilised to promote the awards.

Method of Payment:

Nominated staff must choose a preferred option for payment as part of their nomination prior to the event. An email will be sent prior to the event in November to request the preferred option for payment:

- **Cash lump sum payment** – default method if no selection made (paid through the payroll system and subject to income tax at the employee's marginal tax rate); or
- **Payment credited directly to your Superannuation Account as a pre-tax contribution**; If you select this option you may wish to seek personal financial advice as there are caps on the amount you can contribute to your super each financial year that, if exceeded, may result in additional tax implication; or
- **Nominated ECU project/research/school account to be paid into an ECU account of choice**. The prize monies must be used for work related expenditure and cannot be redistributed among team members for personal use. Nominees are advised to consult their respective Operations Manager before electing to nominate an ECU account, as there are limitations for time in which prize monies are to be spent. These funds will be allocated to your School or Centre in January of the following year and must be used within one year.

An email will be sent to all nominees prior to the event in November to request the preferred payment option. If no selection is made and the nominee is successfully selected as a winner of an award, payment of the award prize will default to payment via cash lump sum paid through payroll.

Work related expenditure does not normally attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT). However, if FBT does apply to the expenditure, it will form part of the award amount so the team members would only be eligible to spend the net-of-FBT amount. Nominees are advised to consult their respective Operations Manager or Finance Team if unsure.

Research Services Responsibilities:

On an annual basis Research Services in conjunction with People and Culture shall:

- Advertise the awards including inviting members of the University to identify and encourage suitable nominations;
- Arrange for the panel to consider the nominations;
- Prepare all meeting Minutes and recommendations;
- Invite the winners to participate in activities where they can share their expertise;
- Report on the outcomes of the VCERA awards to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and then provide outcomes and necessary details to the Vice-Chancellor; and
- Record and document the final decision by the Vice-Chancellor.