# Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards

## 2025 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Supervision

## 1 Award of $5,000 – Nominations due by 4.00pm, Friday 27 June 2025

### Guidelines for nomination

This Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate-nominated award recognises and rewards current research staff, for their demonstrated and sustained excellence in the supervision of HDR candidates enrolled at ECU. Excellence in graduate research supervision is characterised by leadership in the modelling of good research practices, academic skills development, development of stimulating and supportive intellectual environments, and is evidenced by positive outcomes for HDR candidates including through active mentorship for appropriate career development.

The Award is aligned with the University's priorities of:

i)   advancing research that has significant social, economic, environmental and/or cultural impact, and
ii)  enhancing the education, development, experience and employability of HDR graduates.

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

### Eligibility Criteria

Current full-time or part-time ECU academic members may be nominated for the award, if they:

• have been employed at ECU for a minimum of five years.
• are compliant and eligible to supervise as a principal supervisor;
• are currently active as a principal supervisor; and
• have supervised at least three ECU HDR students to completion in the past five years.

This is an HDR candidate nominated award. Nominations must be provided by currently enrolled HDR (i.e. Masters by Research or PhD) candidates or recent (within 3 years of conferral) HDR graduates. Nominations by staff members will only be eligible if they are also

a current HDR candidate supervised by the nominee. Self-nominations, or peer-to-peer nominations, will not be considered for this award.

Nominees who have received an award in the previous three years are ineligible to be nominated for the same award category but can be nominated for a different award category. Unsuccessful nominees are eligible to re-apply.

Award winners will be required to:

- uphold ECU's values of Integrity, Respect, Rational Inquiry, Courage and Personal Excellence;
- display excellence in graduate research supervision and completions, over and above the normal expectations of the nominee's role;
- be a productive and active researcher who role models their excellence in all of their graduate research supervision.

## Expectations of Award Recipients:

Please note, as a condition of entry successful nominees for the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence in Graduate Research Supervision 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):

Nominators will be asked to outline the role and contribution of the nominee to research supervision and research training at ECU.  The nomination must be reflective of supervision that is above and beyond the standards expected of all supervisors.

The committee will consider the following criteria:

1. **Demonstrated engagement in high quality and innovative research supervision practice.  Examples include:**
- Providing specific academic skills development and assisting HDR candidates develop discipline-specific expertise;
- Developing research writing and communication skills leading to scholarly outputs;
- Organising discipline-based seminars or workshops for HDR candidates;
- Critical analysis of candidates' work, with timely, appropriate, helpful and explanatory feedback;
- Scaffolding candidate learning by maintaining a balance between guidance and encouragement to develop HDR candidates as independent researchers;
- Programs or initiatives that support HDR candidates' mental health and well-being;
- Fostering and facilitating the candidate's development of academic skills, graduate attributes and self-direction;
- Additional assistance supporting candidates to access specialist expertise and resources (e.g. statistics, computing, language);

- Demonstrating cultural competency when working with candidates from diverse backgrounds;
- Effective approaches to guidance during the planning of research projects;
- Engagement of research candidates in the broader intellectual life of the school/discipline, School and University, or evidence external to ECU;
- Induction of candidates into the national and international research communities in their fields;
- Ensuring good practices in respect of research integrity and ethical conduct.
- Role modelling as an exemplar researcher.

**2. Positive outcomes of candidates.  Examples include:**

- Supervision practices that lead to HDR candidates publishing, presenting papers at prestigious conferences, or winning prizes and awards;
- Supervision practices that led to HDR research projects and research theses judged by examiners to be of outstanding quality;
- Positive post-graduation outcomes of candidates, such as awards, employment and other graduate destinations;
- Timeliness of completions;
- Statements of how the supervisor/s have had significant influence on the career outcomes of HDR candidates.

**3. Co-publication or production of other research outputs with, or by, candidates Examples include:**

- Supervision practices that lead to candidates publishing in good journals appropriate for the field;
- Supervision practices that lead to candidates presenting papers at prestigious conferences, or winning prizes and awards at conferences;
- List of co-authored articles, or production of other research outputs jointly by HDR candidates and their supervisors;

**4. Development of HDR candidate employability skills and professional networks, and promotion of industry engagement.  Examples may include:**
- Mentoring of candidates in career development and/or developing a career plan or CV;
- Advising candidates on job contacts and possibilities;
- Encouraging candidates to utilise internship opportunities;
- Encouraging candidates to join professional associations and develop their own professional networks;
- Induction of candidates into the national and international research communities in their fields;
- Engagement with end-user or industry-based projects and supervisors;

- Assisting/supporting candidates to apply for research funding, including awards, grants and travel awards
- Encouraging candidates to develop responsible social media and academic media online research profiles.

## Nominations:

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

Any queries should be directed to Director, Research Services.

## Nomination guide and structure:

Nominations for Award for Excellence Graduate Research Supervision should comprise of the following:

1. Nominee's details – entered via online portal.
2. Nominator's details – entered via online portal.
3. Statement addressing the selection criteria (listed above) (up to 4 pages) – to be uploaded as a single pdf document to online portal.

To assist external award selection committee members, staff are asked not to use acronyms when outlining a work area or unit and to use the full title.

NOTE:  Nominations that are largely a "cut and paste" from a supervisor's CV are unlikely to be awarded.  The selection committee is specifically wanting to see statements of the "value-add" that the nominee has made to their HDR candidates.

### 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 nomination should be submitted via the **online nomination form** at www.ecu.edu.au/staff-awards, by the due date.  Statement to be uploaded as a single pdf document.

## 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;
- Dean, Graduate Research 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 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.

## Further information

Visit www.ecu.edu.au/staff-awards or email vcstaffawards@ecu.edu.au

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