



Research Recognition Award

Guidance Notes
October 2025

www.ulster.ac.uk/awards/research-excellence-awards

RESEARCH RECOGNITION AWARD CATEGORY

(Applicable to the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences and the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment only).

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of its strategy for supporting research excellence, Ulster University wishes to recognise promising and outstanding researchers at the early stages of their research career and to assist in the development of these staff as excellent researchers. This indicator of recognition is in the form of an annual *Research Recognition Award*.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Any postdoctoral researcher in the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences or the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment, who is within 5 years of their first research appointment (Research Associate/Research Assistant), including any relevant prior appointments, who is actively engaged in conducting research.

3. CRITERIA/SCORING

The Research Recognition Award is intended to recognise an outstanding postdoctoral researcher who has made a significant contribution in their area(s) of expertise. Nominees for this award must be able to show evidence of having achieved research outcomes commensurate with their role(s) and experience. The Research Recognition Award is a competitive process and the criteria/scoring that will be used in the selection process for successful applicants are as follows:

- a) Significant and demonstrable contributions to research (50%)**
Exceptional early and ongoing achievements that have made significant and demonstrable contributions to research resulting in positive outcomes in projects, publications, funding application activities or related initiatives;
- b) Contribution to Impact (25%)**
Contributions that are having a sustained and positive impact on the institution and/or broader society by way of civic impact;
- c) Active contribution to team (25%)**
An active contribution to team decisions and projects both in terms of time and effort to help the team achieve its shared goals;
- e)** In assessing submissions, the Awards Panel will take account of any situation where the nominee has lost time in their career through family commitments, illness, late entry into higher education, part-time status or other individual staff circumstances. In the event of such circumstances being pertinent, the application should highlight that they wish special circumstances to be considered and include details of the time period(s) that the individual was away from the University.

Additional Notes:

- **Research appointment** – is defined as having a contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, within a HEI or closely related organisation, whether in the UK or overseas which lists research as a primary function.
- **Eligibility Number of years:** Any member of staff within 5 years of their first Research appointment (Research Associate/Research Assistant), including any relevant prior appointments, at the closing date for receipt of applications/nominations.
- Applicants can only submit an application to one of the individual Awards categories, so it is important to review the eligibility criteria as set out in the Guidance Notes for each category and choose the most appropriate category.
- Previous Faculty winners (in this Research Recognition Award category) cannot be a Faculty winner again in the same category.

4. APPLICATION/NOMINATION PROCESS

1. Nominations may be initiated by peers or line managers and self-nominations are also permitted. In the case of a peer-initiated nomination, the nominator must notify the candidate and secure his/her approval prior to the submission of the application.
2. The following forms/supporting documentation must be submitted to the relevant Associate Dean for Research & Innovation **by 12 noon on Friday 16 January 2026**.

Research Recognition Award 2025/26 Application Form which includes:

- a) *A Statement of Nomination and Research Contributions (maximum 1000 words)* describing the nature and significance of the nominee's research achievements and contributions, and a brief statement on how the nominee would use the Award, if successful, to further his/her research;
- b) *Information and evidence to meet criteria a) to c) and if appropriate, special circumstances section, as detailed in section 3 above (maximum 1500 words);*
- c) *A supporting statement* from the Research Director who will be asked to endorse the evidence provided on the nominee's research and scholarly achievements and to indicate that the nominee's achievements in relation to the criteria are at a level commensurate with the discipline.

Please note: There are various elements to this application form i.e. Research Director Statement and Statement of Nomination - so please allow sufficient time to complete these prior to the deadline for submissions.

All forms and guidelines can be downloaded here <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/awards/research-excellence-awards>

5. ASSESSMENT PANEL

- a) The Associate Dean for Research & Innovation will convene a panel comprising a number of Research Directors and/or other senior academic staff (at the discretion of the ADRI) to review all the applications received by the Faculty. Panel members will receive the reports on the nominee's research outputs and grants, by the Department for Research & Innovation. Applicants will be ranked based on criteria a) to c) as described in section 3, with consideration given to responses to any special circumstances, as appropriate.
- b) A scoring matrix will be used by the panel; and all applicants scored against each of the essential criteria. The criteria will carry the following weightings: significant and demonstrable contributions to research (50%), contributions to impact (25%), active contribution to team (25%). A score of zero in any category for any applicant will eliminate them from that year's competition.
- c) The decision of the Associate Dean for Research & Innovation pertaining to the highest-ranking Faculty nominee as the recipient of the Faculty Award will be final.
- d) In making its decisions the Panel will take account of the material presented to it and judge it solely on the quality and volume of the contributions made. The Panel will also give significance to the nominee's statement on how they would use the Award to further their research work. As appropriate, certified achievements attained at any relevant previous employment prior to joining Ulster University will be taken into account when assessing nominees in keeping with the eligibility criteria.
- e) The Panel will take into account any situations where the nominee has lost time in their career through family commitments, illness, late entry into higher education, part-time status or other individual staff circumstances. In the event of such circumstances being pertinent, the applicant has been asked to highlight the case in which special circumstances should be taken into account and to quantify the time period(s) that they were away from the University.

6. NOTIFICATION

All nominees will be informed of the outcome in Spring 2026. The winners will be honoured at the Research Excellence Awards ceremony in May 2026.



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