



Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team Award

Guidance Notes
October 2025

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

OUTSTANDING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH TEAM AWARD

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of its strategy for supporting research excellence, Ulster University wishes to acknowledge and recognise the importance of teamwork in delivering outstanding research which delivers impact. The Award for *Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team* celebrates the achievements of a research team which brings together researchers and skilled specialists from within the University, with diverse backgrounds and perspectives to address complex research challenges.

The winning team will be honoured at the Research Excellence Awards ceremony in May 2026.

2. ELIGIBILITY

A group of 3 or more Ulster University staff who are part of an interdisciplinary team. The team should comprise of at least two different internal research disciplines (either from at least two different Schools, Research Units or Faculties at Ulster University). All types of staff are eligible to be included in this team award, academic, research, business support, technical, etc.

3. CRITERIA/SCORING

The *Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team Award* is intended to recognise and celebrate the excellent contributions of a diverse range of team members in delivering excellent interdisciplinary research with impact.

The *Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team Award* is a competitive process and the criteria/scoring that will be used in the selection process for successful submissions are as follows:

a) Outputs (40%)

What outputs have been produced as a result of this interdisciplinary research project? Outputs can include the generation of research funding, significant events, new collaborations, the production of research outputs such as publications, patents, performances, devices, reports etc.

b) Impact – Contribution to society and economy (40%)

What impact was achieved as a result of this interdisciplinary research project? (See Appendix A for the REF definition of impact);

c) Team Aspect (20%)

Please outline how the internal interdisciplinary team structure worked in delivering excellent research. For example, what was the rationale for the composition of the internal interdisciplinary team and how has this interdisciplinary team approach been an advantage? Did the internal interdisciplinary team include a range of staff members

(i.e. senior researchers, early career researchers, technical staff, business development etc.) and how did the team benefit from the variety of skills, expertise and support that the members and varying disciplines brought. How have all the team members been included in the process and acknowledge in their contribution, e.g. have technical staff, ECRs, CRS, research professional staff been supported in the process and where substantial contribution made and included in publications, outputs, and grant acknowledgements or conference presentations etc.

Additional Notes:

- Submissions should ensure that they have substantive and appropriate evidence to support the commentary, predominately collected within the last 10 years
- Applicants can only submit one application to the team award categories in any given year, so please choose the team category that best suits your team's research project.
- Team structure
 - Teams should be made up of members of Ulster University staff who have made a meaningful contribution to the interdisciplinary research project - academic, research, business support, technical, etc.
 - A Team will represent the core team and normally consist of a minimum of 3 and maximum of 10 staff members
 - The interdisciplinary team should comprise of at least two different internal research disciplines (either from at least two different Schools, Research Units or Faculties at Ulster University).
- Projects that have previously been winner of the Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team Award cannot re-apply again in the same category.

4. HOW TO APPLY

Teams must complete the *Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team Award* Application Form and submit to Connie Gerrow at C.Gerrow@ulster.ac.uk by **12 noon on Friday 16 January 2026**.

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

5. ASSESSMENT PANEL

- a) An assessment panel comprising of the four Associate Deans for Research & Innovation will assess and score the *Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team Award* applications based on the scoring criteria outlined in section 3.
- 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: Outputs (40%), Impact (40%), and Team Aspect (20%).
- c) The details of the highest-ranking team will be conveyed to the PVC Research, as the recipients of the Team Award.

- d) The decision of the Associate Deans for Research & Innovation pertaining to the highest-ranking team as the recipient of the *Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research Team Award* will be final.

6. NOTIFICATION

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

Definition of impact for the REF

For the purposes of the REF, impact is defined as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.

Impact includes, but is not limited to, an effect on, change or benefit to:

- the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
- of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
- in any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

Impact includes the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects.

For the purposes of the impact element of the REF:

- a) Academic impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge (whether in the UK or internationally) are excluded. (The submitted unit's contribution to academic research and knowledge is assessed within the 'outputs' and 'environment' elements of REF.)
- b) Impacts on students, teaching or other activities both within and/or beyond the submitting HEI are included. The 'Panel criteria' (paragraphs 301 to 302) sets out the panels' expectations for impact in this area.

Impacts will be assessed in terms of their 'reach and significance' regardless of the geographic location in which they occurred, whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. The UK funding bodies expect that many impacts will contribute to the economy, society and culture within the UK, but equally value the international contribution of UK research.

Source:

<https://2021.ref.ac.uk/publications-and-reports/guidance-on-submissions-201901/index.html>
(page 68)



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