

# Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards

## 2025 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Research by an Early Career Researcher

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

### Guidelines for nomination

This award recognises and rewards an early career researcher for their demonstrated excellence and growth in research and creativity 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 is an early career researcher. Applicants must have been employed by ECU for a minimum of 2 years and the award must be linked to their research conduct during this period. An early career researcher is defined as one who has graduated with a PhD within the past five years or, in the absence of a PhD qualification, has received an initial academic appointment (at level B or above) within the past five years.

All award winners will demonstrate:

- ECU's values of Integrity, Respect, Rational Inquiry, Courage and Personal Excellence;
- Excellence in research and contributions to the University's strategic priorities through this excellence, by an Early Career Researcher over and above the normal expectations of the nominee's role; and
- Research excellence achievements and/or recognition at a standard that would also be well recognised outside of ECU.

Awards will be made for excellent research performance over a sustained period. Nominees must provide evidence of sustained achievement and clear outcomes as a result of their performance.

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.

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 Vice-Chancellor's Excellence in Research by an Early Career Researcher 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 whilst employed at ECU (but not limited to) including externally-sourced research funding, publications, HDR supervision and completions;
2. Quality of the research, originality and/or innovation, based on top 5 research outputs;
3. Research Impact;
4. Engagement and collaboration outside of ECU;
5. Excellence in the field as demonstrated by external esteem measures or recognition by external bodies, prizes and awards; and
6. Research leadership in terms of own research team (i.e., research staff/students).

### 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 excellence in research as an Early Career Researcher and promote their submission of a nomination.

## Nomination guide and structure:

Once nominated, submissions for Excellence in Research by Early Career Researcher 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 the research program, with a focus on your research leadership role.*
  - **Research Outcomes** - *Outcomes achieved at ECU including external research funding, publications in peer-review journals and how well they have been cited to date (equivalence measures for creative arts research outputs), HDR supervision specifying the levels of supervision of students and completions.\* The committee will also be provided with a table of the nominee's research funding and outputs as generated by ECU Research systems. It is the responsibility of the nominee to ensure that this is up-to-date.*
  - **Quality of the research, originality and / or innovation.** - *Please provide examples of how your research has addressed important and/or novel issues using original and innovative methods and approaches. Please limit to your top 5 outcomes and support this by evidence as to why the quality is so high\* Provide citation metrics (e.g. FWCI) for the specific output, not for the publication source*
  - **Research Impact** - *Provide examples of how your research has addressed an important problem and/or what effect your research has had on the concepts or methods that drive the field, and/or how it has contributed to policy or practice or education in stakeholder groups.*
  - **Engagement and Collaboration**
    - **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. Please provide examples*
  - **Excellence** - *in the field as demonstrated by recognition by external bodies, prizes, awards and other esteem measures (e.g. conference talk invites).*
  - **Research Leadership** - *in terms of own research team (i.e. research staff/students)*
2. **A brief CV** that lists key achievements since obtaining doctorate or joining ECU. Any achievement/esteem measures not in RAS should be specifically included in your CV. The award is unlikely to be made to someone who has not attracted external research income to ECU.
3. **Referee reports** (minimum of 3 – these should be from academics who can specifically comment on the research excellence, of which at least two are external to ECU) (maximum of one page each)

The committee will be provided with a table of the nominee's research funding and outputs as generated by the ECU Research Systems (RAS and RMS), so this 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](mailto: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 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](http://www.ecu.edu.au/staff-awards) or email [vcstaffawards@ecu.edu.au](mailto:vcstaffawards@ecu.edu.au)

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