THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

UWA DATA INSTITUTE

UWA Data Institute
Senior Research Award

Guidelines 2026

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UWA Data Institute Research Awards

The University of Western Australia (UWA) Data Institute recognises that major contributions to research and scholarship require commitment and dedication. In this series of awards, the UWA Data Institute wishes to acknowledge the achievements, relative to opportunity[1], of outstanding staff members at different levels of their careers who are using data science, statistics, machine learning and artificial intelligence in any domain.

These awards are designed to highlight data-driven researchers at UWA and act as a pipeline into the existing UWA Research School and Vice-Chancellor's Awards. It is the expectation that UWA Data Institute Research Award winners would go on to be nominated for the corresponding category in the UWA Research School and Vice-Chancellor Awards.

The UWA Data Institute Research Awards process has been designed with submissions requiring the same content as that required by the UWA Research Awards to enable easy progression for winners into submissions for the School and Vice-Chancellor Awards. This Guideline document is based on the UWA Research Awards Guidelines document, which should be referred to for background information if required.

As per the UWA Research Awards, the UWA Data Institute Research Awards recognise the diverse career opportunities of UWA researchers and serve to celebrate the work that they undertake to deliver improved outcomes to Western Australians and the broader community.

These awards recognise excellence. Such recognition is important for us to celebrate UWA research, as well as to strengthen staff members' applications for external awards and funding.

In addition to the Awards for staff members, the UWA Data Institute Awards will also recognise outstanding PhD candidate research using data science, statistics, machine learning and artificial intelligence in any domain. This Award does not have a corresponding category in the UWA Research School and Vice-Chancellor Awards.

Award categories

1. The UWA Data Institute Senior Research Award
2. The UWA Data Institute Mid-Career Research Award
3. The UWA Data Institute Early-Career Research Award
4. The UWA Data Institute PhD Candidate Research Award

Awards 1 – 3 are a subset of the UWA Research School and Vice-Chancellor Award categories.

As data science, statistics, machine learning and artificial intelligence research spans every domain, up to two winners can be awarded in each of the above categories, provided the award winners are from different UWA Schools.

[1] https://www.uwa.edu.au/policy/home#c72b2735-51ff-41eb-a8a8-4f1493e14c95

Nomination and selection process

Applicants

Award nominations may be made by supervisors, managers, or colleagues, or by the nominee themselves.

When preparing submissions, applicants should ensure that they:

- provide responses to the criteria that are coherent, well-structured, and written in plain language
- prepare an application that is current and reflects any changes to guidelines or evaluation criteria
- avoid repetition and ask someone to proof the application before submitting
- avoid jargon and define necessary technical language and abbreviations
- support claims with quantitative and qualitative evidence/data
- make it clear what is attributable to their effort versus what is attributable to their team or colleagues
- do not include webpages and links to files, as judging is based on submitted selection criteria
- allow adequate time to prepare the application, as late submissions will not be accepted
- make use of the relative to opportunity statement, wherever applicable

Submission process

Submissions are made using the applicable UWA Data Institute Research Awards template available on the UWA Data Institute Awards page https://uwadatainstitute.org.au/awards/ and should be emailed to uwadatainstitute@uwa.edu.au with 'UWA Data Institute Research Awards' as the Subject Line.

The UWA Data Institute will manage receipt of submissions for the Awards and all applicants will receive notification that their submission has been received.

The UWA Data Institute will be responsible for promoting the awards and winners within UWA.

There will be a six-week submission window, in line with the submission window for the UWA Research Awards later in the year.

Selection process

The Assessment Panel selecting the winners will be comprised of at least three people, including the UWA Data Institute Director and Deputy Director, and they will use the selection criteria to score submissions.

It is the responsibility and choice of the winners to make their own submission for the corresponding UWA Research School and Vice-Chancellor Awards. Winners of the UWA Data Institute Research Awards are NOT automatically submitted for these Awards.

Promotion of winners

UWA Data Institute Research Award winners will be promoted on the UWA Data Institute communication and social channels, listed on the web site and feature in Institute events.

UWA Data Institute Research Awards will be announced and presented at the annual UWA Data Institute Conference in mid June.

Award winners are welcome to add their awards to their UWA Profile and Research Repository profile.

Timeline

Specific dates will be calculated each year and published during the Advertising period. The Timeline has been set to allow winners time to nominate for UWA Research School and Vice-Chancellor Awards which open in July each year.

Date	UWA Data Institute Awards Activity
Start Feb	Advertising commences
Mid Feb	Submissions open
End Mar	Submissions close
Start Apr	Submissions collated
Mid Apr	Submissions reviewed
End Apr	Winner announcement
May	Promotion of Winners
Mid June	Awards presented at UWA Data Institute Conference
The following dates are taken from the UWA Research Awards timeline and are provided here for information	
Start July	Research Awards submissions open for all School and VC Research Awards
Mid Aug	School and VC Research Awards submissions close
Mid Sep	School Award Winners available
October	VC Award winners notified (embargoed until Prize Giving ceremony) via the DVCR Office
Early December	VC'S Prize Giving Ceremony

Eligibility

The following information mirrors that in the UWA Research Awards Guidelines and applies to Senior, Mid-Career and Early Career Awards.

All University of Western Australia research active staff, including full time, part-time, and sessional staff, and those on parental leave who are paid under a Professional Staff Contract, as well as UWA Adjuncts substantively employed by our affiliated medical research institutes (Lions Eye, The KIDS, ESIA, Perkins, Perron and IRH) are eligible to apply for the UWA Data Institute Research Awards, subject to specific award criteria. Staff with a substantive position at another university or other medical research institute are not eligible.

The following information applies to the PhD Candidate Award.

All University of Western Australia PhD candidate active students, including both full time and part-time, are eligible to apply for the UWA Data Institute Research Awards, subject to specific award criteria. PhD candidate students enrolled at another university or other educational institution are not eligible.

PhD candidates are only eligible if they have confirmation of candidature and will not be submitting before the end of March of the Award year.

The following information applies to all UWA Data Institute Awards.

Nominees may not apply more than once for the same award in a given year. Previously unsuccessful applicants are eligible and encouraged to re-apply. Please ensure your application is current and reflects any changes to guidelines or evaluation criteria.

Previous winners of UWA Data Institute Research Awards may re-nominate for the same category after a period of 2 years (e.g. win in 2026, renomination is possible for the same award in 2028), with the proviso that any renomination must be for a new activity.

For all awards, nominators MUST obtain the consent of a nominee before making a submission. Each nominee can be submitted only once per category, with the first submission being the submission accepted.

Relative to Opportunity (RtO)

The assessment of nominations and eligibility for nomination must be contextualised based on RtO. Such circumstances will be considered when judging eligibility and content of the nomination. This information is confidential and will be used only for the purpose for which it is intended, viewed only by the assessment panel and support staff, and will form the basis of a contextual and holistic assessment of your achievements.

It is up to the nominee to decide if they wish to make an RtO statement though we recommend them for these Mid-Career, and Early-Career Awards. For example, if you have been part-time, perhaps just 0.4FTE for the period, then this is very relevant to the impact you will have had for your research.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- unemployment or periods of part-time work
- service or teaching loads
- transitions between (academic and industry) roles
- medical conditions or major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities
- disability
- personal trauma
- country relocation
- late or non-linear entry into academia
- community or cultural obligations
- non-research employment
- limited or no access to facilities and resources—such as through workplace interruptions
- disaster management and recovery
- misadventure
- COVID-19 related impacts
- disruptions caused by parental leave

Applicants should refer to https://www.arc.gov.au/about-arc/program-policies/eligibility-and-career-interruptions-statement for guidance.

UWA Data Institute Award Categories

In assessing applications, the Assessment Panel will consider evidence of claims against the nominated criteria. The selection process will take account of career breaks, part time status, and other relative opportunity factors.

The UWA Data Institute Research Award Selection Criteria mirror those for the UWA Research Awards.

1. The UWA Data Institute Senior Research Award

The UWA Data Institute Director will confer the UWA Data Institute Senior Research Award annually for an individual's distinguished achievement in research or scholarship using data science, statistics, machine learning or artificial intelligence in any field of the University.

Nomination statements should clearly articulate how the research being done relates to Data Science, Statistics, Machine Learning or Artificial Intelligence. The statements should also seek to articulate specific pieces of work that are being done and the outcomes and impact that resulted from that work.

The recipient of this award will usually be 16 or more effective full-time academic years from receipt of their doctoral degree or equivalent. Any career interruptions should be explained.

Selection criteria and nomination package

Criteria	Score
Clear statement (400 words) describing major contributions of the applicant and the rationale for the nomination. Submissions must address **category 1 AND EITHER category 2 OR 3**, as listed below. Assessors will only see the first 400 words of your combined answers to the following.	
1. Evidence of standing in the field. Sustained career excellence as judged by original contribution, such as publication, scholarly writing, live performance, recordings or renderings of creative works, exhibitions, or patents, trademarks and plant breeder's rights, and funding (public and private).	**/10**
2. Mentoring or supporting students or trainees.	/10
3. Engagement, service to the discipline, and/or innovation.	/10
Total score	**/20**
Supporting information. *Failure to complete the following will result in the application being deemed as ineligible.*	
Relative to opportunity statement, *if applicable.*	
Confirmation that the nominee has comprehensively populated their profile on the UWA Profiles and Research Repository, including: Photograph of you (headshot), Biography, Education/Qualifications, research outputs relevant to the nomination, ORCID, and where applicable: non-traditional research outputs (NTROs), e.g. research reports, creative works, live performance works and exhibitions. See e.g.: Anna Nowak, Alan Lourens.	
Plain language summary (100 words) for possible use by media outlets, including within UWA. This summary will describe you, your passion for the research you conduct, and the impact or potential importance of your research within the community.	

2. The UWA Data Institute Mid-Career Research Award

The UWA Data Institute Director will confer the UWA Data Institute Senior Research Award annually for an individual's distinguished achievement in research or scholarship using data science, statistics, machine learning or artificial intelligence in any field of the University.

Nomination statements should clearly articulate how the research being done relates to Data Science, Statistics, Machine Learning or Artificial Intelligence. The statements should also seek to articulate specific pieces of work that are being done and the outcomes and impact that resulted from that work.

The recipient of this award will be between 8 - 15 effective full-time academic years of receipt of their doctoral degree or equivalent . Any career interruptions should be explained.

Selection criteria and nomination package

Criteria	Score
Clear statement (400 words) describing the contributions of the applicant and the rationale for the nomination. Submissions must address **category 1 AND EITHER category 2 OR 3** as listed below. Assessors will only see the first 400 words of your combined answers to the following.	
1. Career excellence as judged by original contribution, such as publication, scholarly writing, live performance, recordings or renderings of creative works, exhibitions, or patents, trademarks and plant breeder's rights, and funding (public and private).	**/10**
2. Mentoring or supporting students or trainees.	/10
3. Engagement, service to the discipline, and/or innovation.	/10
Total score	**/20**
Supporting information. *Failure to complete the following will result in the application being deemed as ineligible.*	
Relative to opportunity statement, *if applicable.*	
Confirmation that the nominee has comprehensively populated their profile on the UWA Profiles and Research Repository, including: Photograph of you (headshot), Biography, Education/Qualifications, research outputs relevant to the nomination, ORCID, and where applicable: non-traditional research outputs (NTROs), e.g. research reports, creative works, live performance works and exhibitions. See e.g.: Anna Nowak, Alan Lourens.	
Plain language summary (100 words) for possible use by media outlets, including within UWA. This summary will describe you, your passion for the research you conduct, and the impact or potential importance of your research within the community.	

3. The UWA Data Institute Early-Career Research Award

The UWA Data Institute Director will confer the UWA Data Institute Early-Career Research Award annually for individual investigators within the first seven (0 - <8) effective full-time academic years[5] of receiving their PhD degree or research doctorate equivalent, who have demonstrated exceptional promise of pursuing a career in research or scholarship using data science, statistics, machine learning or artificial intelligence in any field of the University. Any career interruptions should be explained.

Nomination statements should clearly articulate how the research being done relates to Data Science, Statistics, Machine Learning or Artificial Intelligence. The statements should also seek to articulate specific pieces of work that are being done and the outcomes and impact that resulted from that work.

Selection criteria and nomination package

Criteria	Score
Clear statement (400 words) describing the contributions of the applicant and the rationale for the nomination. Submissions must address **category 1 AND EITHER category 2 OR 3** as listed below. Assessors will only see the first 400 words of your combined answers to the following.	
1. Career excellence as judged by original contribution, such as publication, scholarly writing, live performance, recordings or renderings of creative works, exhibitions, or patents, trademarks and plant breeder's rights, and funding (public and private). Will have obtained some independent funding to support their research.	**/10**
2. Mentoring or supervision.	/10
3. Service to the discipline.	/10
Total score	**/20**
Supporting information. *Failure to complete the following will result in the application being deemed as ineligible.*	
Relative to opportunity statement, *if applicable*	
Confirmation that the nominee has comprehensively populated their profile on the UWA Profiles and Research Repository, including: Photograph of you (headshot), Biography, Education/Qualifications, research outputs relevant to the nomination, ORCID, and where applicable: non-traditional research outputs (NTROs), e.g. research reports, creative works, live performance works and exhibitions. See e.g.: Anna Nowak, Alan Lourens.	
Plain language summary (100 words) for possible use by media outlets, including within UWA. This summary will describe you, your passion for the research you conduct, and the impact or potential importance of your research within the community.	

4. The UWA Data Institute PhD Candidate Research Award

The UWA Data Institute Director will confer the UWA Data Institute PhD Candidate Research Award annually for individual PhD students who have demonstrated exceptional promise of pursuing a career in research or scholarship using data science, statistics, machine learning or artificial intelligence in any field of the University. Nominees must have confirmation of candidature and must not be submitting before the end of March of the Award year. Any career interruptions should be explained.

Nomination statements should clearly articulate how the research being done relates to Data Science, Statistics, Machine Learning or Artificial Intelligence. The statements should also seek to articulate specific pieces of work that are being done and the outcomes and impact that resulted from that work.

Selection criteria and nomination package

Criteria	**Score**
Clear statement (400 words) describing the contributions of the applicant and the rationale for the nomination. Assessors will only see the first 400 words of your answer.	
1. Career excellence as judged by original contribution, such as publication, scholarly writing, live performance, recordings or renderings of creative works, exhibitions, or patents, trademarks and plant breeder's rights, and funding (public and private).	/10
Total score	**/10**
Supporting information. *Failure to complete the following will result in the application being deemed as ineligible.*	
Confirmation that the nominee has comprehensively populated their profile on the UWA Profiles and Research Repository, including: Photograph of you (headshot), Biography, Education/Qualifications, research outputs relevant to the nomination, ORCID, and where applicable: non-traditional research outputs (NTROs), e.g. research reports, creative works, live performance works and exhibitions. See e.g.: Anna Nowak, Alan Lourens.	
Plain language summary (100 words) for possible use by media outlets, including within UWA. This summary will describe you, your passion for the research you conduct, and the impact or potential importance of your research within the community.	

Appendix A – Impact Pipeline

The following information mirrors that in the UWA Research Awards Guidelines.

Research Impact is the contribution (benefit/change) that research makes on the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond the contribution to academic research.

Research Impact is often confused with research engagement and outcomes. However, Research Impact has only been achieved once you can identify a benefit.

The Impact Pipeline Template below outlines the links between the research program and engagement and importantly, will help you to understand your impact.

Refer to the UWA Research Impact Toolkit for more information and examples of Research Impact.

IMPACT PIPELINE TEMPLATE

For reference only - do not include the table in your submission.

ENGAGEMENT			IMPACT	
INPUTS	**ACTIVITIES**	**OUTPUTS**	**OUTCOMES**	**BENEFITS**
Time and resource materials	Engagement activities you undertake	Products your engagements produce	Changes that happen because of your research	The overall measurable benefit your research has achieved
EXAMPLES: ▪ *Research Income* ▪ *Staff* ▪ *Background IP* ▪ *Infrastructure* ▪ *Collections*	*EXAMPLES:* ▪ *Research work & training* ▪ *Workshop/Conference organising* ▪ *Use of facilities* ▪ *Membership of learned societies & academies* ▪ *Community & stakeholder engagement*	*EXAMPLES:* ▪ *Publications (incl. e-pubs)* ▪ *Additions to national collections* ▪ *New IP: Patents & inventions* ▪ *Policy briefings* ▪ *Media* ▪ *Research reports* ▪ *Creative works* ▪ *Live performances* ▪ *Exhibitions*	*EXAMPLES:* ▪ *Commercial products, licences & revenue* ▪ *New companies - spin offs, start-ups or JVs* ▪ *Job creation* ▪ *Implementation of programs & policy* ▪ *Citations* ▪ *Integration* ▪ *Advocating for social change*	*EXAMPLES:* ▪ *Economic, health, social, cultural, environmental, national security, quality of life, public policy or services* ▪ *Higher quality workforce* ▪ *Job creation* ▪ *Risk reduction in decision making* ▪ *Change of social attitudes*