



Excellence in Graduate Research Education

Overview

The Australian Council of Graduate Research proudly presents a suite of awards for Excellence in Graduate Research Education. These awards were made for the first time in 2017 to publicly promote quality in higher degree research supervision, leadership, industry engagement, and HDR programs and support.

These awards not only recognise and reward international excellence but will also contribute to good practice in higher degree research (HDR) supervision and leadership amongst all ACGR members and encourage institutions to establish their own award programs.

The following awards will be presented in 2026:

ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Supervision
ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Leadership
ACGR Award for Excellence in Promoting Industry Engagement in Graduate Research
ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Programs and Support
ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Indigenous Excellence and Empowerment

Winners of each award will be publicly recognised at the ACGR National Meeting in November 2026 and featured on the ACGR website. Each will also receive a grant of \$3000.

Eligibility

1. Individuals or groups from all ACGR full and associate member institutions may be nominated for each award.
2. All nominations must be endorsed by their ACGR member representative (Dean of Graduate Research or equivalent) or nominee.
3. ACGR member representatives may only endorse nominations arising from within the ACGR member institution they represent.
4. Nominees must have a continuing or contract position at no less than 0.4 EFT (or an adjunct appointment) at their nominating University for a minimum of two years prior to the year of application.
5. In the case of a team nomination, the majority of the members of the team must have had a continuing or contract position at no less than 0.4 EFT (or an adjunct

appointment) at their nominating University for a minimum of two years prior to the year of application

6. Individuals and teams may only apply in one category in any given year.
7. Award recipients are not eligible for renomination in the same award category within three years of receiving an award in that category.
8. Institutions may only make one nomination per category per year.
9. ACGR member institutions may choose either to nominate the winners of their university level awards for the ACGR awards or to endorse individual nominations that arise independently and are indicative of the level of excellent practice within their institution.
10. Nominations must be submitted on the appropriate form, abide by stated word lengths and be received by the published closing date each year.

2026 Award Timetable

For the 2026 awards:

- Nominations are now open and must be received by close of 5 pm AEST on June 26
- The selection panel will meet in July and winners advised by end August.
- Awards will be presented at the ACGR National Meeting dinner in November 2026.
- Category winners will also be invited to present at one of the ACGR webinars throughout 2026 .

Award Details and Selection Criteria

ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Supervision

This will be awarded to an individual HDR supervisor or team of supervisors who demonstrate a track record of successful HDR candidate outcomes and engagement in high quality supervisory practice and research supervision leadership.

The judging panel will consider documented evidence of:

- demonstrated engagement in high quality and innovative research supervision practice,
- successful and timely HDR completions, relative to opportunity in disciplinary context and seniority,
- any research outputs with or by their candidates, within their disciplinary context, and based on their HDR research,
- the development of HDR candidates' employability skills and professional networks,
- promotion of industry engagement,
- positive post-graduation outcomes of candidates
- effective, collegial and collaborative co-supervision practices

ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Leadership

This will be awarded to an individual academic in a research training leadership role who demonstrates inspirational and effective local graduate research leadership at Faculty (or equivalent) or university level. Institutional deans of graduate research or equivalent are not eligible for this award.

The judging panel will consider, in light of the graduate research leadership/governance system across the university, beyond their academic unit, the nominee's contributions to:

- initiatives that have enabled a strong and supportive intellectual community for HDR candidates at Faculty (or equivalent) or university level,
- the development and maintenance of high quality and innovative HDR and/or skill development programs at Faculty (or equivalent) or university level,
- leadership in the provision of support and mentoring to less experienced supervisors, at Faculty (or equivalent) or university level,
- the development and strengthening of Faculty (or equivalent) or university level HDR strategy and policy

ACGR Award for Excellence in Promoting Industry Engagement in Graduate Research

This will be awarded to an individual or team of HDR supervisors, coordinators or professional staff who have initiated or supported innovative and transformational engagement between higher degree research candidates and industry partners at Faculty (or equivalent) or university level.

The judging panel will consider evidence of:

- initiatives that have enabled successful and effective collaborations between HDR candidates and industry partners,
- HDR programs and/or supervision that supports candidates to develop strong employability skills and wide professional networks,
- projects or initiatives that promote HDR candidates and graduates to industry.

ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Programs and Support

This award recognises outstanding service in the provision of a high-quality environment for graduate research students or staff through positive and engaging experiences.

This will be awarded to an individual or team of professional and/or academic staff who have delivered transformational engagement or support programs or services in graduate research education.

Nominees must demonstrate their provision of outstanding support for graduate research education across their institution and/or the design, development and implementation of a new initiative or support service.

The judging panel may consider evidence of:

- new initiatives that have enabled the development of strong and supportive communities of HDR candidates or innovative research training programs; or
- outstanding service to candidates and staff with clear impacts or benefits to the graduate research community; or
- changes or improvements to work practices impacting on graduate research candidates/programs: or
- projects or initiatives that promote HDR candidates and programs beyond the university

Nominees for this award will not be considered for any of the other ACGR awards in the same year.

ACGR Award for Excellence in Graduate Research Indigenous Excellence and Empowerment

This award recognises an individual or team who have excelled within the Indigenous Graduate Research space. This may include supervisory practices, support program development, curriculum development, and/or graduate research support services (e.g., Indigenous research methods and protocol training, meaningful community engagement programs, and/or creating cultural responsiveness within the graduate research education space).

The judging panel will consider evidence of:

- how the nominee's work outcomes have been translated or could be translated into empowering Indigenous HDR candidates
- how the nominee's work strengthens the ability of HDR candidates to conduct research from an Indigenous perspective and in alignment with Indigenous community needs and values
- impact on creating a safe and equitable research space for Indigenous staff and HDR students
- Demonstrated leadership in the development and strengthening of institutional HDR strategy and policy in relation to Indigenous HDR students or Indigenous research at a Faculty (or equivalent) or university level.

Nominees for this award must identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. If nominating a team, the team must be Indigenous led but may contain non-Indigenous members.

Judging Panel and Process

An independent and expert panel will be established to judge all five awards. The panel will comprise:

1. The ACGR President
2. Three Deans of graduate research or equivalent nominated by the ACGR President
3. A current HDR candidate representative nominated by the President or President's delegate
4. An industry representative
5. A winner of a previous ACGR Excellence Award
6. A senior HDR manager
7. An Indigenous graduate researcher and/ or research leader

Advice for Nominees

When completing their applications for these awards, nominees should:

- respond to each of the selection criteria listed on the nomination forms in the first person and from the perspective of the nominee/s,
- reflect on drivers for any changes or programs they have implemented and the impacts of these initiatives
- comment, where appropriate, on achievements relative to opportunity throughout their time in the graduate research leadership or supervisory role
- highlight any programs or initiatives that have specifically addressed or benefited indigenous graduate research candidates and/or supervisors
- seek supporting statements from candidates, colleagues and industry partners which highlight the benefits to candidates of the work done by the nominee

Prizes

A \$3000 grant will be presented to each award winning individual or team.