

Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal showcase the accomplishments of ACU staff and publicly recognise, reward and encourage excellence in performance and achievement.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This Policy applies to all Academic and Professional Staff members of the University.

(3) The Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal are presented annually.

(4) The Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President administers the awards by:

- a. managing the annual award timeline;
- b. collating nominations and liaising with nominees and nominators;
- c. providing secretariat support for the Selection Panel; and
- d. publicising and promoting award winners (in conjunction with Marketing and External Relations).

Section 3 - Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal Categories

(5) The Vice-Chancellor and President may award up to two commendations per award category (individual or team) and one overall peak Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence from those listed for commendation. The award categories and criteria are listed below.

(6) Nominations are assessed against the criteria for each award alongside other individual or team nominations within the same category. Other considerations for assessment include the nominee's contribution to the [ACU Strategic Plan](#), and relevant ACU frameworks.

(7) The Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal complement the existing Vice-Chancellor's awards in other areas of the University such as:

- a. The Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award;
- b. The Vice-Chancellor's Postgraduate Teaching Award; and
- c. ACU Citations for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning.

Award Categories

Mission Excellence

(8) The Vice-Chancellor's Award for Mission Excellence recognises individuals and teams who have demonstrated excellence in living out the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) through areas of service, the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and contributions to the common good (within the past three years). There are many varied ways in which the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) are lived out in the daily working lives of staff and this category aims to recognise those in the University community who exemplify the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#). Examples of mission excellence can be demonstrated within the University or broader community activities in connection with the University.

(9) The criteria for submissions under this category are as follows:

- a. nominees have shared their experience, skills and talent in an outstanding way in their specific field within the University or communities in which they have served and also met at least four out of five mission attributes:
 - i. Catholic Intellectual Tradition;
 - ii. Service;
 - iii. Pursuit of knowledge;
 - iv. Dignity of the human person; and
 - v. The common good.
- b. evidence that the contribution benefits students, staff or the broader community;
- c. nominees considered for this Award are committed to the wellbeing of others, display personal integrity, witness to service for the common good of the community and evidence of positively influencing others;
- d. evidence the contribution is supporting ACU's strategic direction; and
- e. evidence that the contribution demonstrates impact through empathy.

Service Excellence

(10) The Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Service Excellence celebrates and recognises outstanding service by individuals and teams (on and / or off campus). For the purpose of this award, "service" is interpreted broadly and includes activities, initiatives, practices and / or projects that have contributed to the delivery of exceptional or significantly improved services to ACU's staff, students and / or external stakeholders. Service can be demonstrated via professional services, teaching or research provided at ACU.

(11) This award category aligns to the four service excellence dimensions of: people & culture, policies & processes, solutions & systems, and measurement & performance.

(12) Applications for the Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Service Excellence will be considered on the basis of exceptional recent service (within the past three years) involving substantial project(s) or activities, or an exemplary single project/activity over a shorter timeframe.

(13) Criteria for submissions under this category are as follows:

- a. evidence of exceptional customer service that is consistently positive, respectful and responsive resulting in increased student / staff satisfaction;
- b. evidence of a significantly improved service process or policy that has substantively improved the quality or efficiency of services or enhances academic activity;
- c. evidence of a significantly improved system that has enhanced usability, functionality and/or access to services and/or information resulting in an improved service experience and benefits ACU;
- d. evidence of a service initiative that provides insights into the service experience and/or measures service performance to inform service delivery and enhance the service experience; and

- e. evidence that the contribution demonstrates impact through empathy.

Excellence in Community Engagement

(14) The Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement is available to individuals or teams involved in significant University community engagement projects (within the past three years).

(15) Community engagement draws upon capabilities of the University's staff to work collaboratively with community groups and organisations on projects that build capacity, improve wellbeing, and produce just and sustainable outcomes in the interests of individuals, communities and the University.

(16) Applicants in this category may provide an optional written testimonial from a relevant community organisation confirming that the project was undertaken in collaboration with, and has had impact on, the community.

(17) Criteria for submissions under this category are as follows:

- a. evidence of the nature and extent of the individual's/team's involvement in the community engagement;
- b. evidence of learning, reflection and growth by the individual/team through involvement in the community engagement;
- c. evidence of the long-term sustainability of the community engagement;
- d. evidence that the individual's/team's engagement with the community is aligned to the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) and strategic direction;
- e. evidence that the engagement with the community demonstrates impact through empathy.

Excellence in Student Experience

(18) The Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Student Experience are available to individuals and teams who have shown evidence of the highest level of service to students and outstanding achievement in the support of the student experience (within the past three years). The Selection Panel is seeking evidence of recent contributions that go beyond normal good practice to contributions that display responsiveness to students' needs and make well-informed and distinctive contributions to students' learning, student engagement and the student experience at ACU.

(19) This may include an outstanding contribution in academic or student support services or the provision of resources to facilitate learning and enhance the student experience. It may be related to the support of a specific group of students, such as high achievers, mature age, part-time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students who have experienced educational disadvantage, or students from a low-socio economic background.

(20) Applications need to include clear descriptions of particular practices relevant to the contribution, with concrete examples, and positive student outcomes relevant to the contribution. Examples could include; improvements in learning in a particular subject matter; additional learning activities that extend the student experience outside the ACU campus, e.g. overseas learning opportunities; particular teaching or support strategies that have produced improvements in success for particular groups of students; support for students to showcase their excellence, leading to student achievements such as prizes or awards. Evidence could include positive student feedback, as shown in ACU's standard student feedback surveys and/or other relevant indicators depending on the contribution, peer recognition, or senior staff commendation.

(21) Criteria for submissions under this category are as follows:

- a. evidence of responsiveness to student needs;
- b. evidence of sustained excellent service to students through their work in the University;
- c. development of resources or services that enhance the student learning experience and has an impact on student learning or the student experience;

- d. evidence that the contribution is supporting ACU's strategic direction; and
- e. evidence that the nomination demonstrates impact through empathy.

Excellence in Research and Research Partnership

(22) This award recognises the important role that staff, individuals and teams, play in developing and managing research partnerships, and the significant benefits that these collaborations bring to the University (within the past three years). Nominations will be accepted from individuals and teams who meet the award criteria.

(23) Criteria for submissions under this category are as follows:

- a. evidence of developing and managing a significant national or international research partnership during the past six years;
- b. description of the impact, or potential impact, and benefits of the research partnership;
- c. evidence of the quality of the research; that is, evidence that the research has been published in high quality peer reviewed outlets (publications and citation data);
- d. evidence of alignment with the [ACU Strategic Plan](#); and
- e. evidence that the research demonstrates impact through empathy.

Spirit of Reconciliation

(24) As part of Vice-Chancellor's commitment to ACU's [Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan](#) and [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Plan 2023 - 2026](#), this award recognises the contributions of individuals and teams at ACU who strive to achieve culturally appropriate programs and activities for the betterment of our students and staff and commitment towards meeting the University's Indigenous targets.

(25) Criteria for submissions under this category are as follows:

- a. evidence of shared experience, skills and / or talent in an outstanding way to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and Countries in the building of an inclusive national Australian identity;
- b. evidence of their contribution to ACU culture that acknowledges and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their knowledge, histories and cultures;
- c. evidence of service experience, learning and teaching or research culture that builds capabilities, through the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives within and across University courses and University policies;
- d. evidence of alignment with the Reconciliation Action Plan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Employment Strategy and / or [ACU Strategic Plan](#); and
- e. evidence that the nomination demonstrates impact through empathy.

Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence

(26) The Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence is selected from the award recipients. This award is personally selected by the Vice-Chancellor and President from all the award recipients, both individual and team.

(27) In addition to the award recipients, the Vice-Chancellor and President can award the Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence at their discretion to recognise outstanding service by individuals who exemplify Australian Catholic University's values of truth, excellence and service.

Section 4 - Eligibility

(28) ACU believes in impact through empathy by inspiring and equipping people to make a difference and cultivating their ability to act and think empathetically. Applicants and nominees should consider the [ACU Mission, Identity and Values](#) within their nomination.

(29) The following eligibility requirements apply:

- a. the awards are open to all academic and professional staff members, including full-time or fractional, fixed term, contract, sessional and casual staff, who have been employees of ACU, have completed at least one year of service prior to the date of nomination;
- b. nominees must be employees of ACU at the time of the Selection Panel's assessment;
- c. to receive prize money (see Section 6), nominees must be on a current contract at the time of the award presentation;
- d. the awards are open to individuals and teams. Teams may be within the same work area or across one or more organisational units (e.g., Schools, Faculties, Directorates or Portfolios);
- e. nominators can nominate any ACU staff member, including themselves and/or members of their own team;
- f. anonymous nominations are accepted, however, all nominees will be advised of their nomination outcome once all submissions are received;
- g. a nominee's contribution, initiative, activity or project must demonstrate significant and sustained achievement over and above the expected normal performance expectations of the nominee's substantive role or team's usual remit;
- h. nominations are assessed against the criteria for each award alongside other individual or team nominations within the same category;
- i. nominations of a single initiative or activity against multiple categories will not be accepted. Nomination against multiple categories will be automatically deemed as ineligible. Different initiatives or activities from a single nominee (or team of nominees) can be submitted against multiple categories;
- j. unsuccessful applicants are eligible to reapply in subsequent years;
- k. any nominee or recipient who is no longer employed by the University will not be eligible;
- l. nominees agree that, in receiving an award, they will be acknowledged in University media publications including but not limited to photographs, video recording, ACU website, Staff Bulletin, Workplace, Annual Report and other promotional avenues;
- m. a nominee is ineligible if they have been the subject of discipline or unsatisfactory performance review, where the results were upheld against the nominee, within the past 12 months. If a nominee was the subject of a discipline review where the allegations were dismissed against that individual, they are eligible for a VC Staff Excellence Award; and
- n. all nominees must demonstrate/model the University's [Code of Conduct for Staff](#) at all times.

Section 5 - Timeline

(30) The timeline for the Award nomination process follows:

Nominations Open	August
Nominations Close	September
Selection Panel meets	September
Awards Announced	October/November

Section 6 - Benefits and Prizes

(31) Successful individual awards are granted at \$500 and team scholarships are granted at \$2,500 (per team). The Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence is granted at \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for a team.

(32) This prize money will be a salary payment and will be subject to the legislative requirements of the [Australian Taxation Office](#) such as pay as you go income tax at the employee's marginal tax rate and the Superannuation Guarantee Charge. Notification to People and Capability will be a memorandum outlining the staff member's name, and value of the Award for payment.

(33) Please note any award recipients no longer employed by, or associated with, Australian Catholic University will not be entitled to an award nor receive any benefits or attend the presentation ceremony.

Section 7 - Recognition

(34) The Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards are presented at an annual University-wide presentation ceremony. As the Vice-Chancellor's Medal will only be announced at the presentation ceremony, recipients, supervisors and nominators will be advised of the outcome, however, they will not be aware of the award type (i.e., Vice-Chancellor's award or Vice-Chancellor's Medal) until awarding at the presentation ceremony.

(35) Recipients and nominators will be invited to attend the presentation ceremony. Travel for a recipient (to and from their local campus to the presentation ceremony location) to attend the presentation ceremony will be covered by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President (OVCP). Travel will be in the form of domestic economy airfares and one night of accommodation, if required, subject to the presentation ceremony timing. Travel costs for nominators will be at their own expense. For teams, travel costs for one member of the team will be covered by the OVCP, with the suggestion that a team celebration to recognise the recipient's award could be undertaken by the team leader post the presentation ceremony.

(36) All recipients will be recognised by the awarding of a certificate and a customised plaque. A medal is presented to the recipient/s of the Vice-Chancellor's Medal. In receiving an award, recipients agree to be interviewed via video for a series of articles profiled in the ACU Staff Bulletin, ACU website and annual report. Photos of the recipients with the Vice-Chancellor and President are taken at the presentation ceremony for various promotional purposes.

Section 8 - Selection Process

(37) The Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal Selection Panel (The Panel) is comprised of:

- a. Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair).
- b. Nominee of the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
- c. Nominee of the Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- d. Nominee of the Vice President and Director, Identity & Mission.
- e. Nominee of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).
- f. Nominee of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- g. Nominee, First Peoples.
- h. Nominee, People and Capability.

(38) The Panel is accountable to the Vice-Chancellor and President for fulfilling the terms of reference.

Section 9 - Terms of Reference

(39) The Panel:

- a. considers nominations for the Vice-Chancellor's Awards and recommends to the Vice-Chancellor and President the number of awards to be granted and the recipients of the awards;
- b. provides advice to the Vice-Chancellor and President on policy and procedural matters relating to the Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal;
- c. the Selection Panel reserves the right to not recommend a category winner if the submissions received are judged to not have been met to a sufficiently high standard; and
- d. the Selection Panel's decision is final and no further deliberation will be entered to.

Section 10 - Tenure and Frequency of Meetings

(40) Terms of office for Selection Panel members is two years and The Panel meets on an annual basis.

Section 11 - Reporting

(41) The Selection Panel reports to the Vice-Chancellor and President annually, in conjunction with recommendations for Awards.

Section 12 - Dissemination of Outcomes

(42) Recipients and unsuccessful nominations are advised in writing by the Chair of the Selection Panel.

Section 13 - Administration of the Awards

(43) Administration and coordination of the Vice-Chancellor's Awards is undertaken by the OVCP. This includes liaison with Directorates, departments, Faculties, Schools and Institutes, providing secretariat support for the Selection Panel, updating the Policy and administering the annual timeline.

Section 14 - Nomenclature Table

Name	Format
Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal	Vice-Chancellor's Awards
Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence	Vice-Chancellor's Medal
Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal recipient	Recipient
Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal Selection Panel	Selection Panel

Section 15 - Awards and Medal Nomination Form

(44) [Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards and Medal Nomination Form](#).

Section 16 - Review

(45) Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Section 17 - Associated Information

(46) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	30th January 2024
Review Date	21st July 2024
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	30th January 2024
Expiry Date	11th September 2024
Responsible Executive	Margriet Wooldridge Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President
Responsible Manager	Margriet Wooldridge Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President
Enquiries Contact	Stella Contos Executive Officer <hr/> Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President