



# Enabling Vision

# 2033

## Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards 2026

Nomination Guide



# Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards

The annual Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards celebrate the achievements of ACU staff across all levels of the organisation.

The awards showcase the accomplishments of ACU staff and publicly recognise, reward and encourage excellence in performance, directly supporting the mission of ACU and its 10-year strategic plan, Vision 2033.



## 2026 award categories

Staff are invited to submit nominations across the following six categories:

- **Mission and community impact** – recognises and celebrates staff who have demonstrated excellence in advancing ACU’s mission through service, Church and community partnerships, and initiatives that promote human dignity and the common good.
- **Transformative education and student experience** – recognises and celebrates staff who have demonstrated excellence in delivering holistic, student-centred education that nurtures the whole person and prepares graduates to contribute meaningfully to society.
- **Impactful education-research integration** – recognises and celebrates staff who have demonstrated excellence in integrating research and education to cultivate critical inquiry, scholarly thinking, research capabilities and real-world engagement in students.
- **Research and innovation for the common good** – recognises and celebrates staff who have demonstrated excellence in advancing interdisciplinary, ethically informed research and enterprise activities that address societal challenges and contribute to human flourishing.
- **Local and global strategic partnerships** – recognises and celebrates staff who have demonstrated excellence in building national and international collaborations that amplify our impact across education, research and engagement, and advance ACU’s mission both locally and globally.
- **Institutional and ESG excellence** – recognises and celebrates staff who have demonstrated excellence in strengthening ACU’s institutional foundations to sustain success and growth, through initiatives that deliver measurable improvements in environmental, social and governance outcomes.

# Award categories



## VC Staff Excellence Award for **Mission and community impact**

### Award-specific criteria

An individual or team must demonstrate excellence in the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated excellence in initiatives that express ACU's mission and values through service, interfaith collaboration and community engagement.
2. Evidence of sustained impact that enhances human flourishing by promoting social cohesion, justice and the dignity of the human person.



## VC Staff Excellence Award for **Transformative education and student experience**

### Award-specific criteria

An individual or team must demonstrate excellence in the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated excellence in integrating academic, ethical, spiritual and social development to foster human flourishing in students, through inclusive, values-based education that supports wellbeing, ethical growth and social responsibility.
2. Evidence of innovative pedagogy, including the ethical and effective use of GenAI and other emerging technologies, that enhances learning outcomes, student wellbeing and student engagement across diverse learning contexts.



## VC Staff Excellence Award for **Impactful education-research integration**

### Award-specific criteria

An individual or team must demonstrate excellence in the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated excellence in embedding current, ethically grounded research, including ACU-led research, into curriculum design and delivery to enrich student learning.
2. Evidence of research-informed teaching that builds students' critical thinking, information literacy, applied discipline knowledge and foundational research skills, and prepares them to critically engage with real-world challenges through scholarly enquiry.



## **VC Staff Excellence Award for Research and innovation for the common good**

### **Award-specific criteria**

An individual or team must demonstrate excellence in the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated excellence in research or innovation, including GenAI, that delivers meaningful, ethical and sustainable solutions to challenges affecting human dignity and the common good.
2. Evidence of positive social, cultural or economic impact for individuals and the communities we serve, including initiatives that incorporate research training and HDR support, mentoring or capacity building to empower others in contributing to ethically grounded research and innovation.



## **VC Staff Excellence Award for Local and global strategic partnerships**

### **Award-specific criteria**

An individual or team must demonstrate excellence in the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated excellence in fostering local and global partnerships that support education, research and engagement aligned with Catholic social teaching.
2. Evidence of initiatives that empower communities, promote intercultural understanding and contribute to local and global efforts for human flourishing.



## **VC Staff Excellence Award for Institutional and ESG excellence**

### **Award-specific criteria**

An individual or team must demonstrate excellence in the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated excellence in enhancing ACU's organisational sustainability, governance, financial health, productivity and culture in alignment with its mission and Vision 2033.
2. Evidence of initiatives that deliver measurable improvements in ESG outcomes, such as institutional stewardship, environmental stewardship, social responsibility and ethical governance, contributing to a thriving university community and broader societal impact.

# Nomination information

## Eligibility criteria

The VC Staff Excellence Awards are open to all academic and professional staff members, including full-time or fractional, fixed term, contract, sessional and casual staff, who have completed at least one year of service prior to the date of nomination. Contractors are not eligible.

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).

An individual or team may be nominated by a staff member (nominator) for a VC Staff Excellence Award. Self-nominations, including for a team you are part of, are acceptable.

Team nominations would not normally exceed 10 members, unless exceptional circumstances apply. Please liaise with the Chief of Staff to discuss exceptional circumstances.

A nominee or recipient of a VC Staff Excellence Award is only eligible for re-nomination in subsequent years on the basis that there were significant new achievements or developments to be considered.

## Category winners

Nominees must be employees of ACU at the time of the selection panel's assessment.

To receive prize money, nominees must be on a current contract at the time of the award presentation.

Any award recipient who is no longer employed by ACU at the time of the announcement of the awards will not be entitled to an award prize.

## Nomination process

Nominators must submit the online nomination form available on the VC Staff Excellence Awards website, addressing the unique criteria for each category.

Award selection is based primarily on written statements addressing the selection criteria (detailed in subsequent sections). Therefore, the nominator must clearly demonstrate how the person or team they are nominating has shown significant and outstanding achievement, and a meaningful and lasting impact at ACU.

Additional materials supporting the claims may be included.

However, please note that a maximum of two pages of supporting material will be considered, and the relevance of any such material must be made clear in the nomination application.

Subject to the quality of the nominations for a category, an award may not be made.





## Selection criteria

The nominator must provide:

- 1** A succinct **overview** (maximum 100 words) of the nomination including a description of the contribution, initiative, program, project or activity and how this outstanding and exceptional achievement or success exceeds normal expectations of performance.
- 2** Evidence how this significant and outstanding achievement addresses the **award-specific criteria**, as applicable for each award nomination category (maximum 150 words per criterion).
- 3** A succinct justification for the nomination, demonstrating how the contribution, initiative, program, project or activity supports ACU's **mission** and contributes to the university's strategic plan, **Vision 2033** (maximum 150 words).

Note: 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.

## Selection panel

The VC Staff Excellence Awards selection panel is appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and President. The selection panel will be supported administratively by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President (OVCP).

Staff members who serve on the selection committee are not eligible for an individual or team award during the year they serve. Committee members must declare any conflict of interest in the selection process.

The selection panel's recommendation and the Vice-Chancellor and President's endorsement of an award are not subject to internal appeal or review.

## Nomination process

### 1 Prepare information for completion

Review the online nomination form on the VC Staff Excellence Awards website. It is strongly recommended you prepare your responses in another format (e.g. Word document) and copy them into the online form once ready for submission.

### 2 Complete the online form

Ensure all contact details and statements addressing the selection criteria are completed:

- Contact details for:
  - i. the nominees
  - ii. their supervisor
- 100-word nomination summary
- 150 words addressing each of the award-specific criterion
- 150 words addressing the general selection criteria
- maximum two pages supporting information (optional).

### 3 Endorsement

Endorsement from supervisors of lead nominees will be sought for each nomination.

### 4 Panel review and recommendation

All eligible and endorsed nominations will be reviewed and ranked by the selection panel. The selection panel may consult with the nominee's supervisor to obtain additional feedback on, or statements of support for, a nomination where necessary. A recommendation for each category will be made to the Vice-Chancellor and President.

### 5 Awards ceremony

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.

## Questions

Please email [staffawards@acu.edu.au](mailto:staffawards@acu.edu.au) with any questions about the nomination process.

# Award recipient information



## Benefits and prizes

Successful individual awards receive \$500 and team awards receive \$2,500 per team, with individual awards not exceeding \$500. The Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Excellence awards \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for a team.

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.

Please note, any award recipients no longer employed by, or associated with, ACU will not be entitled to an award nor receive any benefits or attend the presentation ceremony.

## Recognition

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 Staff Excellence Award or Vice-Chancellor's Medal) until awarding at the presentation ceremony.

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 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**.

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 for any 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.

# Key dates 2026

**NOMINATIONS OPEN:**

20 July 2026

**NOMINATIONS CLOSE:**

21 August 2026

**AWARDS CEREMONY:**

11 November 2026



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**[staffawards@acu.edu.au](mailto:staffawards@acu.edu.au)**  
**[vision2033.acu.edu.au](http://vision2033.acu.edu.au)**

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