



australasian cognitive neuroscience society

ABN 15 847 011 482 | ARBN 665 262 288

ACNS Emerging Researcher Awards

Aim

The awards aim to recognise two outstanding researchers working in the field of cognitive neuroscience in Australasia at the very early stages of their careers. Consideration will be given to career disruptions (e.g., parental leave, relocation, illness, etc.). Diversity is a key value of the ACNS and guides our selection process.

The submission deadline for these awards is by close-of-business on **Friday 21st August 2026 (AWST)**. All nominations must be submitted electronically – please see below for details. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the ACNS Awards Policy found [here](#).

Eligibility

- Working in any area of cognitive neuroscience (broadly defined).
- No more than two years from the receipt (date of letter of conferral, not graduation) of their doctoral degree as of 1 July 2026 (not including career disruptions).
- Current membership of the Australasian Cognitive Neuroscience Society.
- Currently employed (at least 0.5FTE) at a university or research institution within the Australasian region. Researchers currently based in Australasia who completed their PhD internationally are also welcome to apply.

Career Disruption

The committee will consider career disruptions when determining an applicant's eligibility and assessing achievements. A career disruption involves a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work. This can include (but is not limited to): pregnancy/parenthood/adoption; major illness or injury; carer responsibilities including parental leave and care for immediate family (e.g., spouse, children or parent); time spent out of the academic environment (e.g., employment in industry, periods of unemployment); natural disasters directly impacting research productivity (e.g., closure of research facilities due to flood, fire, earthquake, pandemic, etc.). Teaching, clinical and administrative loadings within academic positions are typically *not* considered career disruptions for the purposes of this award. For example, 40/40/20 (teaching/research/administration) or 80/20 (research/clinical) academic roles would not be considered disruptions.

Applicants should clearly outline the career disruption as part of their application. It is up to the applicant the level of detail provided. Applicants should provide a corrected time since PhD estimation, and the details behind the correction (e.g., dates, FTE fraction, etc.) should be provided, as well as an estimated impact on productivity.

The ACNS Awards Review Panel will first assess the career disruption to determine eligibility of the application. If the application is assessed as *eligible*, the panel will then take into account the impacts of the disruption on track record in their assessment.

Please note that in the interests of fairness, the ACNS Executive cannot provide guidance on the eligibility of an application with career disruption prior to the meeting of the Review Panel.

Assessment Criteria

Demonstration of a significant scientific contribution to research in cognitive neuroscience (relative to opportunity), broadly defined as the biological or brain foundations of mental/cognitive processes and behaviour. The committee will consider:

1. The quality of publications and presentations, particularly focusing on the applicant's nominated publication and their contribution to it.
2. Research experiences and expertise (e.g., lab visits and talks).
3. Evidence of emerging independence, including recognition of independence through awards, fellowships and grants.
4. Past or current involvement in ACNS, including conference attendance and service, will be looked upon favourably but is not an eligibility criterion.

Applications will be assessed by the ACNS Awards Review Panel following the ACNS policy.

Award

Invitation to present a talk at the 2026 Australasian Neuroscience Alliance Conference; conference registration, including conference dinner costs (if applicable). A \$500 cash prize will be provided to contribute to costs of travel if attending face-to-face.

Application

All applications are self-nominated. The following components are required:

- Contact information for the nominee (name, institution, position and email).
- The nominee's CV (max 2 pages) including:
 1. Academic qualifications.
 2. List of current and previous positions.
 3. List of any awards, fellowships and grants (internal and external).
 4. Indications of emerging independence, such as lab visits and talks, invitations to present at conferences and invitations to review papers or grants.
 5. Contributions to open science practices, including preprints, data sharing, code sharing, contribution to software packages.
- Summary of the nominee's current research interests, particularly highlighting research achievements or significant outcomes (max 300 words).
- A copy of one significant publication representative of the nominee's work. Preprints should not be included in this section.
- A short statement (max 300 words) outlining the significance of the selected publication to the field and the nominee's contribution to the work.
- Full publication list attached as additional pages (only in press/published, conference abstracts). Preprints should not be included in this section.
- Statement outlining career disruption (if applicable; max 1 page). Please estimate the impact this may have had on your track record. All applicants are encouraged to outline the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their research. Sensitive information should not be included as part of the career disruption statement. This section is about estimating the impact of the disruption, not the details of the disruption itself.

- Equity statement (if applicable; max 1 page). See Diversity Statement in the [ACNS Awards Review Policy](#).

Submit all components in one pdf and send to acns@acns.org.au.

If you have any questions about the application and selection process, please email awards@acns.org.au.

Version Control

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Version 4 19/07/2024

Version 5 24/06/2025

Version 6 9/06/2026