



# Good Research Practice Awards

University of Edinburgh - Edinburgh Research Office

*Rewarding Good Research Practice: The University of Edinburgh shows respect for the work of researchers, beyond their publications and results.*

When surveying its members as part of its annual Research Culture Survey, the University of Edinburgh's Research Office found significant room for improvement when it came to the university's promotion of good research practices and the perceived level of value it attached to them.

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*"Research careers are predominantly judged by academic contribution, grants applied for and awarded, papers published and research impact, with the quality and integrity of the research produced often being overlooked." - Professor Malcolm Macleod, Academic Lead for Research Improvement and Research Integrity*

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In response to the survey results, the Edinburgh Research Office has set up Good Research Practice Awards, as part of a wider week-long celebration of good research practices within the university, to attempt to shift the understanding of successful research towards culture and practices.

## Good Research Practice Awards

The Research Office set up the Good Research Practice Awards to introduce a different approach to conventional recognition of academic achievement. The awards are intended to recognise and celebrate nominees that provide leadership and act as role models for good research practice. Award winners can reference their achievements when communicating their good research practice for promotions or other career developments. The award nominations are invited in 4 categories:

1. Good Research Citizenship

2. Responsible Research

3. Open Research Award

4. Positive Disruptor Award

The awards are open to all and any University of Edinburgh staff member or student can be nominated, either as an individual or as part of a team. People are encouraged to self-nominate or can be nominated by colleagues and peers. The applicants communicate their good practice and why they are deserving of an award. Nominations are then considered by a panel, including senior members of the University, alongside others including research professionals and early career researchers, and a winner is chosen. Candidates can attend the Good Research Practice Awards evening where the winners are announced and good research practices celebrated. As a prize, each category has first prize to the value of £400. Runners up receive a prize to the value of £100.



## Support for Career Progression

The University of Edinburgh recognised that when staff apply for promotions, they often do not focus on, or struggle to communicate, their good research practice capabilities and promote their range of professional ability. The awards highlight the value of good research practice and encourage applicants to communicate their strengths and share their experiences. In order to support more staff and students in this area, the nominations for the awards are shared as exemplars, primarily to help people improve their own communication, but also to promote and teach people about good research practices and celebrate them.

## The impact of the awards

In the year following the inaugural awards, the Research Office saw improvements in survey responses on promotion and the level of attention given to good research. Staff report feeling more comfortable and happier within the research ecosystem and its culture.

*"The award has played a crucial role in shifting the focus away from solely publication and data. It recognises that good research practice goes beyond scholarly outputs or measurable metrics. Winning the Good Research Practice Award in the category of Positive Disruptor has instilled within me a profound sense of pride and validation as a Woman of Colour scholar, affirming the significance of my work and the activist values that underpin it. With this recognition, I feel better prepared to undertake greater responsibilities and leadership roles within the academic community and fields of my research pursuits. Moreover, it has further strengthened my dedication to driving social change, my commitments to empowering students from minority backgrounds, and promoting anti-oppressive pedagogies and a more inclusive, equitable, and inspirational educational environment."*

**DR NINI FANG, WINNER OF THE POSITIVE DISRUPTOR AWARD**

*"Working in such a fast-paced R&D environment, and supporting such a huge range of activities, means that establishing useful, efficient - and ethical - processes is really necessary to keep on top of things. This is the work, though, that people external to the project rarely see. Our commitment in Creative Informatics has always been to make our processes as transparent as possible, and it's a core ethos of the project. We weren't expecting to win a prize for this - and we didn't do this in order to win a prize - so having our work acknowledged and congratulated was really important to the team. It showed that people had noticed, but also that research integrity, transparency, and a spirit of openness is something that we should continue to work towards in research. It has helped to highlight our good practices (as well as specific policies, such as our data ethics checklist) to other projects, encouraging their reuse. I'm delighted that the team's hard work has been recognised in this way: encouragement and support really matter to wellbeing as well as ambition, and academia often forgets to say "well done" to the people excelling in this way"*

**PROF MELISSA TERRAS, CO-DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE INFORMATICS,  
WINNERS OF THE RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AWARD**

Although the awards are a recent initiative, the University is already seeing benefits and is encouraging by the greater dialogue around good research practice within the university. They continue to monitor the feedback and impact through annual surveys.