



HEC Research Awards 2026

Call for Applications Guidance

**Deadline for Application Submission: Saturday October 31, 2026 (11:59 pm)
Pakistan Time**

I. General Information

HEC invites Pakistani researchers/scholars to submit applications for HEC Research Awards competition. The purpose of HEC Research Awards is to recognize and reward excellence in research, contributions to intellectual development and social welfare and promote publications with higher impact. The award includes a certificate and a cash prize.

A. Award Categories and Disciplinary Domains

Separate awards shall be given in three broad disciplinary domains:

- a. Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Law, Education, Management and Public Policy
- b. Physical Sciences, Engineering, Technology, Computer Science, Statistics and Mathematics
- c. Life Sciences, Biological Sciences, Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences

There are three categories of awards in each disciplinary domain:

- a. Best Researcher: A cash prize of Rs. 500,000/-
- b. Best Young Researcher: A cash prize of Rs. 500,000/-
- c. Best Publication: A cash prize of Rs. 1,000,000/-

Applicants, if eligible for both categories a) and b), can apply for only one category.

B. Description

i. Best Researcher:

Best Researcher Award aims to recognize and reward the researchers for their research contribution judged to be of highest quality. The potential awardees under this category will be the researchers who have contributed the most to intellectual and social development through their writings (i.e., not simply through their formal titles or positions). As such, while this is an award for a lifetime of achievement rather than a single

publication or contribution, it does not preclude recognizing a single publication with a huge impact. On the other hand, the lifetime of achievement should be characterized by outstanding publications with demonstrated major impact.

ii. Best Young Researcher

Best Young Researcher Award is presented to the early researcher under the age of 40, who is judged by the scientific panels to show the most promise of stimulating further research, addressing or resolving social problems, and enhancing the quality of research in Pakistan. The objective of this award is to recognize both the contribution and future potential of early career researchers in terms of their research and publications. Here, too, selection should place due weight on particular outstanding and impactful discoveries and publications.

iii. Best Publication

Best Publication is awarded to the publication i.e., scholarly book or journal article, that is judged by the scientific panels as likely to produce the greatest impact on human welfare, either by stimulating and opening up new areas of further research, or by contributing to the resolution of a critical problem facing Pakistan and the world at large. The objective is to recognize and reward the publication that has produced a lasting impact on future research as well as socio-economic development in the country.

C. Applicant Eligibility

General Eligibility

- ✓ The applicant has never been blacklisted by HEC
- ✓ The applicant/publication has not received the same award earlier
- ✓ None of the publications on Applicant/Authors' credit is plagiarized as per HEC plagiarism policy

a) Best Researcher

- i. The applicant must be resident of Pakistan for at least three years on 1st January 2026

b) Best Young Researcher

- i. The applicant must be under 40 years of age on 1st January, 2026
- ii. The applicant must be resident of Pakistan for at least one year on 1st January 2026

c) Best Publication

- i. The publication must be a scholarly book or journal article.
- ii. The publication must not be more than three years old on 1st January 2026
- iii. The publication must be written by no more than three authors
- iv. All authors must be residents of Pakistan for at least three years on 1st January 2026
- v. Research article published in an HEC recognized W-category journal are eligible
- vi. Research article must have a minimum citation count of 100

- vii. Publication (including extended version of a paper) that has previously been submitted for the same category of award is not eligible for resubmission
- viii. Book must be published by a recognized/renowned academic press

D. Due Date

- Application must be submitted to HEC by **Saturday October 31, 2026.**

II. Application Submission Instructions

A. Basic Guidance

- All applications must be submitted through the HEC online portal by the applicants.

B. Submission

- Applicant must complete each section of the application for individual award categories and submit via HEC online portal <https://research.hec.gov.pk/> along with the requisite documents

III. Evaluation and Selection Process

The selection of awards will be made through an open, rigorous, transparent, competitive and merit-based process. All applications submitted in response to this Call for applications will be evaluated by respective review panels.

The Evaluation process consists of two sequential steps: Administrative Screening and Panel Evaluation of all eligible applications.

A. Administrative Screening

For the administrative screening, the Higher Education Commission will ensure that the applications are eligible for the award competition as per prescribed eligibility criteria and all documentary requirements are duly submitted.

If the application meets the eligibility criteria, duly complete in all respect, the application will be forwarded for further evaluation as described below. For those applications that are deemed incomplete/ineligible for the Research Awards, the applications will be rejected.

B. Technical Assessment and Selection

The applications will be assigned to the Review Panels in the respective broad disciplinary domain for evaluation. Review Panels are comprised of distinguished individuals having breadth of understanding, knowledge and expertise in the disciplinary domain. The Panels may engage external reviewers to assess contributions in different disciplines or sub-disciplines depending on breadth and number of applications. No Conflict of Interest will be ensured in the review process

in accordance with the HEC Policy for research grants and panel members/ external reviewers will have to submit a Conflict-of-Interest declaration prior to evaluation of applications.

There will be two rounds of evaluation process a) Shortlisting of applications; b) Detailed Review of shortlisted applications

In the first round the applications will be shortlisted by the respective Panels to screen out potential proposals for further detailed review. Each panel will conduct short review of the applications keeping in view clarity and quality of the statement of contribution, draft citation and video/ documentary clip. The panel will assign a score and provide written comments to justify the score. Applications that could not achieve a scoring threshold will be rejected.

In second round detailed review of only shortlisted applications will be conducted. Shortlisted applications will be assigned by the respective panel to two reviewers having relevant subject expertise for independent evaluation. The panel may obtain additional reviews where required. The applications in each award category will be assessed according to scoring rubrics supported with written justification/ comments.

Following the independent review, each application will be collectively assessed in comparison to other applications to determine the best application under respective award category/discipline by the Panel. Applications recommended for award must achieve a scoring threshold as determined by the panel to ensure quality. However, the Commission has the right to reject the recommendations if the work is not considered to be up to the mark or for any reason to be recorded in writing. For the successful applications, the Panels will edit the draft citation for the Awards where necessary.

IV. Websites

Updated information of Research Awards will be available at the Program's website <http://www.hec.gov.pk/site/HRA>

Questions regarding the HEC Research Awards may be directed to; hra@hec.gov.pk