

PhD research excellence Prize

The SPA research committee will offer a PhD excellence prize, of cash value £500, to be awarded every two years to reward an outstanding PhD thesis. The prize will reward excellence at a level that clearly exceeds the average level of research performance for successful PhDs in the SPA.

The nomination for the prize will consist of

1. A report from the PhD supervisor, approximately 2 pages (3 pages maximum), giving clear evidence that the research performed by the nominee in the completion of the PhD stands out above normal expectations. This can include, for instance, evidence that the thesis convincingly solves a long outstanding problem, that it is based on submitted papers that have led to unusually high numbers of citations in a short time, that it has had outstanding international impact evidenced by invitations to high profile workshops or conferences. When the thesis is based on joint papers, an indication of the level of technical and creative contributions of the student as well as their independence and initiative will be expected.
2. A 1-2 page report from the external examiner explaining why they think the research in the thesis meets the excellence criterion of the prize.
3. A 1-2 page report from another academic member of the SPA explaining why they think the nominee deserves the excellence prize.

In addition to the quality of the research, the reports may also describe the contributions of the nominee to the research environment of the SPA, e.g. running journal clubs or tutorials on areas closely or broadly related to their research. The committee will look at evidence the candidate's contributions have been clearly over and above the normal expectations of a PhD student.

The first nominations will be received by the secretary of the research committee in September 2015. Nominees will have graduated no more than 2 years prior to the nomination deadline date, i.e. no earlier than September 2013. The nominations will be discussed in a research committee meeting in the first semester of 2015/2016. Subsequent to the first award, the prize will be considered annually, although there is no commitment to awarding a prize every year. Prizes will only be awarded when a majority of members of the research committee agree that the criteria for excellence have been met.

Process

The PGR Administrator will send this prize information to the external examiner and ask them to consider writing in support of a prize for the student being examined. This will happen as soon as the supervisor becomes aware of the viva date and communicates it to PGR administrator. The reports from the supervisor, additional SPA academic and external are expected to be submitted to the PGR office within one month of the submission of the

final form of the thesis to the Research Degrees Office, with all corrections subsequent to the viva incorporated. The supervisor letter of support will include the date of submission of this final form of the thesis.