

AWARD OBJECTIVES

The ARMA Awards aim to:

- Enhance the profession of research management by showcasing excellence and demonstrating innovation within the profession undertaken by individuals and teams.
- Celebrate, congratulate and showcase the achievements of ARMA members and share best practice with a growing, global professional community.
- Recognise pioneering approaches to research management and disseminate that information through provision of case studies and other materials based on nominations for the Awards.
- Enhance ARMA members' team and/or organisation's profiles and reputations.
- Raise the general profile of ARMA throughout the profession and the wider research sector.

THE 2026 AWARD CATEGORIES

This year, there are six categories, each reflecting the range of expertise within our profession. We recognise that the research management profession encompasses a broad field of expertise and functions, including rapidly evolving areas such as Trusted Research, due diligence and sustainability. In addition it involves leveraging emerging tools and techniques such as artificial intelligence. We are encouraging nominations to all the awards from across this breadth of expertise and from all backgrounds and types of research organisations.

Each category provides an opportunity to showcase some of the best practice that is influencing the development of research management:

- ARMA Volunteer of the Year
- Collaboration in Research Management
- Innovation in Research Management
- Outstanding Contribution to Research Management
- Research Culture in Research Management
- Research Management Team of the Year

1. ARMA Volunteer of the Year

Volunteers are an integral part of the Association and its activities for the membership. This award recognises an individual volunteer for outstanding services to the Association. It is open to all ARMA volunteers within the last two years, who have actively contributed to ARMA activities.

In general, nominees will have demonstrated outstanding commitment and enthusiasm for their role as a volunteer. They will have succeeded in what they have done for ARMA and made a significant difference in an ethical, respectful and inclusive manner. Specifically, the nominees of any career stage will have demonstrated one or more of the following attributes, with careful thought about demonstrating due regard to EDI:

- Made a demonstrable contribution to the Association and the research management profession through volunteering and demonstrating ARMA values
- Undertaken meaningful actions that have created impact and measurable outcomes for the Association
- Devised, developed and/or implemented creative, inclusive, innovative strategies, or solutions to address the needs of the membership and priorities of the Association
- Positive influence, motivated and inspired others to join or support an initiative or activity of the Association.

Judges will particularly look for evidence of significant and sustained commitment cases of a volunteer, demonstrating dedication and a drive to make a difference.

2. Collaboration in Research Management

Collaboration amongst research management professionals is an important part of research, whether it occurs across organisations, sectors, or on national and international levels. This award celebrates a project or initiative that has significantly benefited from a collaborative approach to research management, identifying challenges and opportunities and their resolution, and enhancing the ability of researchers to work across disciplinary, organisational, sector or global boundaries.

This award would normally recognise a team within a research organisation or collaboration across an organisation or between multiple organisations.

In general, nominated collaborations will have demonstrably contributed to the research enterprise of the respective organisation(s). Specifically, the nominees will have demonstrated one or more of the following attributes, with due regard to EDI:

- Made a demonstrable contribution to excellence or the practice of research management through successful techniques or approaches in developing, fostering and maintaining collaboration

- Evidence of engaging interested parties or policymakers in an ethical, respectful and inclusive manner
- Devised, developed and/or implemented techniques and approaches for collaborating that can be readily replicated by others
- Influenced the practice of research management directly or indirectly at the local, national or international level
- Facilitated enhanced quality, quantity or impact of research
- Evidence of meaningful engagement and/or bringing collaborators together resulting in measurable outcomes and positive change, including for unrepresented groups
- Enhanced the reputation and/or success of the partner organisations.

Where relevant, judges will look for effective collaboration between professionals in research management and other professional services, academics and/or project partners. Judges will particularly look for techniques for stewarding relationships and fostering and maintaining collaborations that can be replicated and therefore have potential wider benefits if adopted elsewhere. They will also look for collaborations that led to a positive change and/or effective use of practices learned or adopted from sectors or professions outside research management.

3. Innovation in Research Management

Innovative approaches can enhance service delivery in research management. Showcasing innovation to promote or advance research management, this award recognises an individual or team that has invented, modernised or transformed new or existing approaches to further and enhance their organisation's work in the breadth of our professional areas.

In general, nominees will have contributed to their organisations' research endeavour through development and implementation of innovative practices, systems or approaches, including through innovative use of artificial intelligence in any aspect of research management. Specifically, the nominees of any career stage will have demonstrated one or more of the following attributes, with due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI):

- Made a demonstrable contribution to the practice of research management through innovation
- Devised, developed and/or implemented innovation that can be readily replicated within other departments and/or research organisations
- Innovation that promotes equity of opportunity
- Influenced the practice of research management directly or indirectly at the local, national or international level
- Facilitated enhanced quality or quantity of research

- Devised, developed and/or implemented innovative strategies, campaigns, or solutions to address the needs and priorities of a particular research management group or the wider research management community
- Achieved excellence beyond the scope of their primary professional role.

Judges will particularly look for an initiative that has transferability or addresses emerging challenges and opportunities and therefore has potential wider benefits if adopted elsewhere. They will also look for effective use of practices learned or adopted from sectors or professions outside research management.

4. Outstanding Contribution to Research Management

This award recognises an individual whose contributions to research management are of such significance and/or span a significant part of a career that special recognition is warranted.

It is awarded every two years to a member who does not hold or been appointed to the office of ARMA chair at the time of nomination, for outstanding contribution to the profession.

In general, nominees will have demonstrated an exceptional impact on the enhancement of the research management environment at the local, national or international level. Specifically, the recipient will have demonstrated one or more of the following attributes:

- Substantially enhanced the reputation of the profession
- Substantially enhanced the quality, standards and professionalism of research management and administration
- Made a demonstrable contribution to the practice of research management through publication, development of new procedures, contribution to professional development, or other leadership
- Committed to continuous improvement as shown by engagement in the ongoing development of research management best practices
- Achieved excellence in the profession beyond the scope of their primary professional role
- Substantially influenced the practice of research management at the local, regional, national or international level.

An “outstanding contribution” does not automatically equate to seniority or to longevity in post or the profession.

5. Research Culture in Research Management

Research culture is an integral part of successful research, be it cross-organisation, pan-sector or across sectors, nationally or internationally. This award celebrates a project or initiative that has made a significant and positive impact to research culture, identifying

challenges and opportunities and their resolution and enhancing the current culture across their organisation, sector or research ecosystem.

In general, nominated projects or initiatives will have demonstrably contributed to a positive, inclusive and creative research culture. Specifically, the nominees of any career stage will have demonstrated one or more of the following attributes, with due regard to EDI:

- Made a demonstrable contribution to research culture through successful techniques or approaches
- Devised, developed and/or implemented processes, policies, strategies and action plans for research culture that promote equity of opportunity and can be readily replicated by others
- Influenced the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes of the individuals, career stages and/or underrepresented groups working in research directly or indirectly at a local, organisational or sector level
- Promoting a positive research culture that supports and actively engages under-represented groups
- Facilitated enhanced quality of research undertaken through positive impact to research culture
- Demonstrated an inclusive approach to culture strategy
- Demonstrated a substantial positive impact on the reputation and success of the research organisation.

Where relevant, judges will particularly look for techniques and approaches across our profession in fostering and maintaining a positive research culture, as well as benchmarks and accreditations from other allied organisations that can be replicated and therefore have potential wider benefits if adopted elsewhere. They will also look for effective use of policies and practices learned or adopted from sectors or professions outside research management.

6. Research Management Team of the Year

Research management comprises an increasingly diverse range of activities and requires a broad mix of talent, knowledge and skills in order to work well. This award celebrates a research management team of any shape, size and/or scope that has succeeded in working as a robust, cohesive and effective unit, resulting in a significant positive impact on their organisation's research endeavours, within or beyond the organisation.

In general, nominees will have demonstrated an exceptional positive contribution to their organisation's research endeavour but specifically, the nominees will have demonstrated one or more of the following attributes:

- Created and managed strong and sustainable relationships with partners and customers, inside and/or outside the organisation
- Implemented successful approaches to promoting positive and effective internal communications
- Devised effective methods for harmonising different aspects of research management
- Demonstrates joined up research management across organisations, central and/or departmental offices as appropriate, responding to the unique circumstances of each environment
- Modernised or transformed processes for engaging with and responding to the requirements of the organisation's leadership and/or academic community
- Highlight the use of successful practices for integration, harmonisation and/or communication
- Demonstrated a substantial positive impact on the success of the research organisation
- Responsiveness to the changing external landscape.

Judges will particularly look for cases that can be replicated and have currency and relevance within the last year and therefore have potential wider benefits if adopted elsewhere.