

Lyn Thomas Impact Medal Guidelines

1) Introduction

The Lyn Thomas Impact Medal is awarded annually for the academic OR research which best demonstrates both novelty and real-world impact, backed up by evidence. Impact can be of many forms including societal, economic, cultural, entertainment, health related, political, quality of life, etc.

2) Eligibility

The underpinning research should have been undertaken in the previous ten years and the impact itself must be demonstrable within the past two years. All academic researchers who are members of the Society and work at UK universities are eligible to enter.

3) Entry

Candidates must submit to the Head of Professional Services, carol.mclaughlin@theorsociety.com, a description of their research work and the impact that it has generated. The total page limit is three pages of A4 including references. This document must be accompanied by letter(s) of support on headed paper written by research user(s) who are in a position to confirm the accuracy of the submission and the contribution, impact or benefit of the research outputs. A maximum of five letters of support can be provided. Referees could potentially be approached by the Awards Panel to further corroborate claims. No more than one Lyn Thomas Impact Medal may be awarded in any year.

The deadline for entries is 31 July.

4) Selection

The award will be advertised starting from November each year in Inside OR and on The OR Society website. The closing date for the receipt of submissions is 31 July. Members of the Awards Panel may be required to stimulate the submission of entries through scientific journals of The OR Society, the annual Conference Organising Committee, and through other appropriate channels such as COPIOR and the Regional Societies.

The judging sub-panel will be a subset of the Awards Panel and will consist of both academics and practitioners. Additional members may be temporarily co-opted if the sub-panel considers further specific expertise is required. One member of the sub-panel may be asked to act as a point of contact to answer queries from potential applicants or referees. The sub-panel will evaluate the entries submitted and may seek further information from referees before the autumn meeting of the Awards Panel. The award will be presented at the Blackett Lecture.

5) Assessment Criteria

Entries will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. The quality and novelty of the underpinning OR research, evidenced by publications, theses, conference presentations, working papers or other outputs directly related to

the research. The threshold for research quality and novelty will be fairly low: the main focus of this award is on the impact. However, standard applications of existing OR methods are not eligible.

2. The reach of the research impact, indicated by how widely it has been felt, the number of beneficiaries, etc. It is important to note that reach is a relative concept: like market share, it refers to the proportion of all possible situations where the solution could be used in which it actually has been used. The absolute size of the “market” for the impact is relevant, but is not the main criterion for assessing reach.
3. The significance of the research impact, indicated by how transformative it has been.
4. The estimated longevity of the research outputs and the sustainability of the impact.

All types of impact listed in the Introduction section are considered equally important, but higher ranking will be given to submissions with reliable evidence of the impact. Evidence may include indicators of impact or contribution and references to external sources of verification. The indicators do not need to be quantitative or financial. However, they should be auditable. References to external sources of verification include external reports or other publicly available information, or contact details of research users that could potentially be asked to corroborate claims.

Proposed Awards Panel Practice

1 August: the Head of Professional Services forwards all submissions to the sub-panel. Each reviewing sub-panel member then rates each application on a 1 – 5 scale under criteria 2-4 above. Criterion 1 is a “hygiene factor” which may be used either to eliminate invalid submissions (eg standard applications of known methods, or research that is not really OR) or as a tie-breaker if submissions cannot be separated on the other three criteria.

The scores are aggregated by the sub-panel chair to obtain an initial ranking, which is then discussed by the sub-panel in order to arrive at a final ranking. If the discussions between the sub-panel members cannot be concluded satisfactorily, the debate is opened up to the full Awards panel.

Autumn meeting: The Awards panel reviews the rankings and determines a winner. A citation is prepared by the sub-panel chair and forwarded to the chair of the Awards Panel and then to the Head of Professional Services, together with the name(s) of the winner(s). The Research & Publications Coordinator orders medals for presentation at the Blakett Lecture.