

ACU Alumni Awards 2026



Nomination guide



ACU Alumni Awards

ACU graduates are empowered with the knowledge, experience and ethical reasoning needed to succeed in their chosen professions.

They are now a community of 152,000 alumni making a difference in communities across the world through their pursuit of knowledge, promotion of human dignity and service to the common good.

The ACU Alumni Awards celebrate their remarkable contributions to human flourishing, thriving communities and an ethical future.

2026 award categories

Indigenous Alumni Award – Celebrates an Indigenous ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and impact in their profession and/or the community in ways that reflect ACU’s mission and commitment to the common good.

ACU Mission Alumni Award – Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the wellbeing of others through community or humanitarian service, reflecting ACU’s mission and values in both action and spirit.

Global Connection Alumni Award – Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in fostering global connection, intercultural understanding and international collaboration, advancing ACU’s vision for a connected and inclusive world.

Innovation and Industry Excellence Alumni Award – Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional innovation, leadership and impact in their professional field or through research, advancing knowledge, driving industry excellence and contributing to the common good in ways that reflect ACU’s mission and values.

Early Career Achievement Alumni Award – Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional achievement and impact in their professional field within the first five years of their career.

ACU Alumni Champion Award – Recognises an ACU graduate who has significantly advanced ACU’s mission through exceptional volunteerism, strategic partnership and/or philanthropic support, demonstrating a deep commitment to fostering community and serving the common good.

Award eligibility and selection criteria

Indigenous Alumni Award

Purpose statement:

Celebrates an Indigenous ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and impact in their profession and/or the community in ways that reflect ACU's mission and commitment to the common good.

Eligibility:

- Be a graduate of ACU or its predecessor institutions.
- Identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. Only nominees who have established Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status will be considered for this award.
- Have made a significant and demonstrable contribution to their chosen field, Indigenous communities or Australian society more broadly.

Selection criteria:

- Indigenous identity: Must be an Indigenous Australian (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander).
- Impact: Must demonstrate significant contribution to their profession and/or Indigenous communities and/or Australian society more broadly.
- Professional excellence: Evidence of outstanding achievement, leadership, creativity or innovation in their career or field.
- Sustainability and reach: Demonstrated long-term impact or influence beyond a single project or initiative.
- Alignment with ACU mission: Ethical conduct, commitment to serving the common good, critical habit of mind, and appreciation of the sacred in life.

ACU Mission Alumni Award

Purpose statement:

Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the wellbeing of others through community or humanitarian service, reflecting ACU's mission and values in both action and spirit.

Eligibility:

- Be a graduate of ACU or its predecessor institutions.
- Have made a significant and demonstrable contribution to the enrichment and benefit of the community.
- Have shown selflessness and resilience in responding to challenges facing individuals or communities.

Selection criteria:

- Impact on wellbeing: Evidence of initiatives or actions that have significantly improved the wellbeing of individuals or communities, locally or globally.
- Community and humanitarian service: Contributions that reflect a sustained commitment to serving others.
- Selflessness and leadership: Demonstrated acts of courage, compassion and leadership in addressing social or humanitarian challenges.
- Sustainability and reach: Demonstrated long-term impact or influence beyond a single project or initiative.
- Alignment with ACU mission: Ethical conduct, commitment to serving the common good, critical habit of mind, and appreciation of the sacred in life.

Global Connection Alumni Award

Purpose statement:

Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in fostering global connection, intercultural understanding and international collaboration, advancing ACU's vision for a connected and inclusive world.

Eligibility:

- Be a graduate of ACU or its predecessor institutions.
- Have made a significant and demonstrable contribution to the international or Australian community, with a focus on global citizenship and social justice.

Selection criteria:

- **Global citizenship and advocacy:** Demonstrated commitment to promoting social justice, equity and intercultural understanding on a global scale.
- **Cross-cultural collaboration:** Evidence of initiatives that build bridges between cultures, foster mutual respect and create opportunities for shared learning and cooperation.
- **International capacity building:** Contributions that strengthen education, health or community development internationally, empowering others and creating sustainable impact.
- **Sustainability and reach:** Demonstrated long-term impact or influence beyond a single project or initiative.
- **Alignment with ACU mission and Vision 2033:** Ethical conduct, commitment to serving the common good, critical habit of mind, and appreciation of the sacred in life.

Innovation and Industry Excellence Alumni Award

Purpose statement:

Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional innovation, leadership and impact in their professional field or through research, advancing knowledge, driving industry excellence and contributing to the common good in ways that reflect ACU's mission and values.

Eligibility:

- Be a graduate of ACU or its predecessor institutions.
- Have made a significant and demonstrable contribution to their profession, industry or research field through innovation, leadership or advancement of knowledge.

Selection criteria:

- Innovation and creativity: Evidence of new ideas, solutions or approaches that have advanced practice, research or industry standards.
- Industry or research excellence: Achievements that have led to measurable impact in their professional field or research discipline.
- Leadership and influence: Demonstrated ability to lead, inspire and influence others in driving progress and excellence.
- Sustainability and reach: Demonstrated long-term impact or influence beyond a single project or initiative.
- Alignment with ACU mission: Ethical conduct, commitment to serving the common good, critical habit of mind, and appreciation of the sacred in life.

Early Career Achievement Alumni Award

Purpose statement:

Celebrates an ACU graduate who has demonstrated exceptional achievement and impact in their professional field within the first five years of their career.

Eligibility:

- Be a graduate of ACU or its predecessor institutions.
- Be within five years of commencing their current career at the time of nomination.
- Have demonstrated a high level of achievement in their profession.

Selection criteria:

- Early career impact: Evidence of significant accomplishments or contributions to their professional field or community within the first five years.
- Professional excellence: Achievements that show dedication to their field and/or service to the community.
- Potential for future leadership: Indicators of capacity to continue contributing meaningfully to their profession or community.
- Sustainability and reach: Demonstrated impact or influence beyond a single project or initiative.
- Alignment with ACU mission: Ethical conduct, commitment to serving the common good, critical habit of mind, and appreciation of the sacred in life.

ACU Alumni Champion Award

Purpose statement:

Recognises an ACU graduate who has significantly advanced ACU's mission through exceptional volunteerism, strategic partnership and/or philanthropic support, demonstrating a deep commitment to fostering community and serving the common good.

Eligibility:

- Be a graduate of ACU or its predecessor institutions.
- Have made a substantial and demonstrable contribution to advancing ACU's mission through volunteer service, strategic partnerships or philanthropic support.

Selection criteria:

- Advancement of ACU's mission: Evidence of actions or contributions that have directly supported ACU's commitment to the common good and Vision 2033 objectives.
- Impact: Measurable effect of volunteerism, partnership or philanthropy on ACU's students, research or community engagement.
- Sustainability and reach: Demonstrated long-term impact or influence beyond a single project or initiative.
- Alignment with ACU mission: Ethical conduct, commitment to serving the common good, critical habit of mind, and appreciation of the sacred in life.

Nomination information

Nomination requirements

Nominators must:

1. Complete the nomination form.
2. Provide a current professional/academic CV for the nominee.
3. Provide a written response to the award selection criteria (maximum 500 words).
4. Provide supporting evidence, such as awards, publications or media coverage of the nominee (limited to two pages).
5. Provide current contact details of one referee who has consented to being contacted for a statement of support.

Eligibility

The ACU Alumni Awards are open to all graduates of ACU and its predecessor institutions, unless excluded by one of the rules below:

- Alumni employed by ACU are not eligible for nomination during the period of employment.
- Members of the ACU Senate are not eligible for nomination during the period of service.
- ACU honorary doctorate/degree recipients are not eligible for nomination unless also an ACU graduate.
- Posthumous nominations will not be accepted.
- Previous ACU Alumni Award recipients are not eligible for nomination unless on the basis of significant new contributions and achievements.

Nominations can be made by any member of the community and self-nominations are welcomed.

Alumni do not have to be working in the discipline from which they graduated.

Alumni who are staff at other universities are eligible for nomination.

ACU will contact nominees to notify them of their nomination and any nominee may request to be removed from the nomination process.

Judging panel

The 2026 Alumni Awards Judging Panel will comprise of representatives from across ACU as appointed by the Vice-Chancellor and President.

The Judging Panel will make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor and President in each award category.

The Judging Panel reserves the right not to award a nomination in any category.

The Judging Panel's recommendation and the Vice-Chancellor and President's endorsement of an award are not subject to appeal or review.

Key dates

Nominations open:	Wednesday 18 February 2026
Nominations close:	Wednesday 1 April 2026
2026 Alumni Award recipients notified:	Early June 2026
2026 ACU Alumni Awards Celebration Evening:	Friday 30 October 2026
2026 ACU Alumni Award recipients announced:	Wednesday 4 November 2026

Award recipient information

Notification

Award recipients will be notified in early June 2026.

Award recipients will be embargoed until the official announcement on 4 November 2026.

Award Ceremony

Recipients will be presented with their awards at the 2026 ACU Alumni Awards Celebration Evening on Friday 30 October in Melbourne.

Recipients and their guest will be invited to attend.

ACU will arrange travel for the recipient to attend the presentation event.

Travel will be in the form of domestic economy airfares and one night of accommodation, as required by the presentation event location and timing. Travel costs for guests will be at their own expense.

The 2026 ACU Alumni Award recipients will be announced following the presentation event via digital communication channels, including on the ACU website, in a media release and on social media.

Filming and publicity

In receiving a 2026 ACU Alumni Award, recipients agree to be interviewed for both a written and video profile.

These will be featured in 2026 ACU Alumni Awards announcement communications, in media releases, on the ACU website and on social media.

Photos of the recipients with the Vice-Chancellor and President will be taken at the presentation event and provided to the recipients and used for various promotional purposes.