

SRUK/CERU Best Paper Awards 2026

The SRUK/CERU Best Paper Awards 2026 celebrate outstanding research published by early-career members of our community.

We will award one prize in each of four research categories, with £250 for each winning paper.

You can apply through the SRUK/CERU Members Zone, under the [Grants and Funding section](#).

Please read the full eligibility criteria below before submitting your application.

Who can apply?

To apply, you must:

- Be a **current Regular Member** of SRUK/CERU. Associate Members / Friends are not eligible.
- Neither members of the SRUK/CERU Evaluation Committee nor the Board of Directors of SRUK/CERU (President, Vice-President, Roving Director, Treasurer, and Secretary) are eligible to apply.
- Be an early-career researcher (ECRs): Master's and PhD students, research assistants, postdoctoral researchers and lecturers, as well as researchers who are within 10 years of submitting their PhD thesis. Applicants at Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor level or above are not eligible.
- Be the **first or co-first author** of the paper.
- If the first author is not a SRUK/CERU member, the **second author can apply**, as long as they meet the other eligibility criteria.
- Have published the paper between **1 November 2025 and 31 October 2026**.
- Submit an original research paper published in a **peer-reviewed journal**. Preprints are not eligible.
- The paper can be published in English or in any of the official languages of Spain.

We will use the **official online publication date** given by the journal to determine eligibility.

Each person can submit **one paper only**, and each paper can be considered in **one category only**.

What about co-first authors?

If two SRUK/CERU members are formally recognised as **co-first authors**, both can apply with the same paper.



If both apply and their paper wins, the £250 prize will be split equally between them (£125 each). If only one eligible co-first author applies, they will receive the full £250.

Research categories

The four categories are:

- **Biomedical & Life Sciences**
Medicine, health, neuroscience, pharmacology, molecular and cellular biology, biotechnology, genetics and related fields.
- **Engineering, Physical Sciences & Technology**
Engineering, physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer science, AI, materials science, astronomy, space science and related fields.
- **Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities**
Social sciences, economics, education, politics, law, history, languages, literature, philosophy, cultural studies, arts and related fields.
- **Environment, Earth & Sustainability**
Environmental and earth sciences, ecology, climate, conservation, agriculture, plant sciences, sustainability and related fields.

Interdisciplinary papers are very welcome. Simply choose the category that best fits the main focus of your research. If we think your paper would be better suited to another category, we may move it before the evaluation.

How to apply

Applications will be open from 5 to 31 October 2026.

The application form will ask for:

- Your name, surname and SRUK/CERU registered email
- Current position and affiliation
- Paper title
- Journal and publication date
- DOI or link to the published paper
- Research category
- A short description of the paper and why the work is relevant (**max. 200 words**)

How will papers be evaluated?

Papers will normally be evaluated internally by members of the **SRUK/CERU Executive Committee**, with additional evaluators invited where necessary and scored out of 10 points. Papers must receive at least 7 out of 10 to be considered for an award:



- **Scientific quality and originality — 4 points**
Quality of the research, methods or approach, and originality of the work.
- **Contribution to the field — 3 points**
How the paper advances knowledge, understanding, methods or practice in its field.
- **Impact and relevance — 2 points**
The scientific, societal, clinical, technological, cultural or other relevant impact of the research.
- **Applicant's contribution — 1 point**
The applicant's contribution to the research and publication.

We want to recognise the **quality of the research itself**, so journal-level metrics will not determine the outcome.

Executive Committee members will not evaluate a paper where there is a conflict of interest.

There is **one prize available in each category**. If we do not receive an eligible paper in a category, or none of the papers reaches the minimum score of 7/10, that prize will not be awarded. **Unused prize money will not be transferred to another category.**

Key dates

5 October 2026 — Applications open
 31 October 2026 — Applications close
 November 2026 — Evaluation
 December 2026 — Winners announced
 January/February 2027 — Winners' research talks

What will the winners receive?

Each category winner will receive a **£250 prize**.

We will also share the winning research through SRUK/CERU's **website and social media channels**, and winners will be invited to:

- Give a **short talk, online or in person, about their research in January/February 2027**.
- Write a short **lay summary for the SRUK/CERU blog**, introducing their research to a wider audience.
- Provide information about the repercussions of the award for their career to use in SRUK/CERU communications. By applying, you agree that, if you win, SRUK/CERU can share your name, affiliation, photograph and information about your research through our website, blog, newsletter and social media channels. Winners also agree to contribute the short research talk and lay summary described above.

