



THE COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

Research Excellence Awards

The College welcomes Award applications or nominations in any area of optometry, optics and vision science research. The judging criteria for the Awards is below.

Although some of the eligibility criteria include time limits, extenuating circumstances will be considered. Members of the College's Research Committee are not eligible to apply or be nominated for an Award, although they may nominate someone else for an Award.

1. Awards and eligibility

Name: **The President's Research Medal**

Summary: This Medal is for outstanding contribution to research and recognises a lifetime's career in optometric/vision science research. The Medal will be awarded every two years rather than every four years starting in 2026, and comes with a £2,000 bursary.

Eligibility: Nominees do not have to be College Members. Nominees have made an outstanding and lifetime's contribution to research in optometry, optics, eye health or vision science. The recipient may be invited to present a lecture or write a paper as part of the Award.

**Year
available:** 2026

Name: **The Arthur Bennett Prize**

Summary: For outstanding research undertaken anywhere in the world, this Prize is awarded every two years and comes with a £1,000 bursary.

Eligibility: Nominees/applicants must be mid-career researchers from all over the world whose work has been published within the last three years.

**Year
available:** 2025

Name: **The Neil Charman Medal for Research**

Summary: For outstanding research, this Award is given annually. The Medal is to honour any research being undertaken at a level above postgraduate and comes with a £750 bursary.

Eligibility: Nominees/applicants must be College Members, although they can be nominated by non-members, and the research must have been published within the last three years.

**Year
available:** Every year

Name: **The Philip Cole Prize**

Summary: For outstanding practice-based research, this Prize is awarded annually and comes with a £500 bursary. The Prize is to honour the important contribution that practising optometrists continue to make to the optometric evidence base.

Eligibility: Nominees/applicants must be College Members, although they can be nominated by non-members, the research must have been published within the last five years and nominees/applicants must have been practising as an optometrist during the course of the research project.

**Year
available:** Every year

Name: **The George Giles Postgraduate Research Prize**
Summary: For outstanding postgraduate research, this Prize is awarded annually and comes with a £500 bursary. We welcome nominations or applications from all PhD or Masters research projects.
Eligibility: Nominees/applicants must be College Members, although they can be nominated by non-members, and the research must have been published within the last three years.
Year available: Every year

Name: **The Giles Van Colle Memorial Award**
Summary: For outstanding published or unpublished research or clinical case work relating to paediatric optometry, this Award is given every two years. If the work being submitted has not yet been published, authors are encouraged to consider submitting for publication either in parallel with this nomination or soon after. The College will work with the Award recipient to find routes to getting their research or case work published.
Eligibility: Nominees/applicants must be College Members, although they can be nominated by non-members.
Year available: 2026

Name: **The Frank Petticrew Award for Contact Lens Research, Practice or Education in Optometry**
Summary: For outstanding research or clinical case studies relating to contact lenses in optometry, this prize is awarded annually and comes with a £500 bursary. Recipients will be invited to give a presentation at a College event, or online as a webinar. If the recipient prefers, a podcast may be developed as an alternative to the presentation.
Eligibility: Nominees/applicants must be College Members, although they can be nominated by non-members. Nominees/applicants may be optometrists working in any clinical or academic setting where they have undertaken research or clinical case work relating to contact lenses. Nominees for clinical case studies must be registered UK optometrists and must have published their case studies in an established journal. The research or case studies must have been published within the last five years. Both research and case studies should be free from restrictions that would prevent their presentation in person or via internet events.
Year available: Every year

2. Judging Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the Research Excellence Award Selection Panel to select award winners (please note, the weighting of the categories will vary depending upon the award being made):

1. Quality:

- How original, novel or important were the research questions?
- How sound is the research methodologically?
- Did the research involve innovative methodological or analytical approaches?
- How convincing are the research's conclusions?

2. Productivity:

- Does the research represent a notably large amount of work?
- Has the research been disseminated to a large or wide audience?
- Has the research produced a variety of outputs (i.e. beyond published papers or conference presentations)?
- Did the research involve an exceptional number of partnerships or collaborators, or an innovative collaboration?

3. Outcomes and impact:

- What has changed as a result of the research being undertaken, either within the field of research or clinical practice?
- Has the research answered or resolved a long-standing or prioritised research question?
- What impact have any changes had on the field of research or on patients/clinical care?
- Have changes caused by the research had a particular impact on under-served groups?