



2026 UNC Network for Research Professionals Awards

Overview

The UNC Network for Research Professionals (NRP) is excited to announce the creation of awards recognizing the achievements of its members in the past year. These awards are intended to celebrate the diverse achievements of our members and inspire others to strive for excellence in their research endeavors. We are currently seeking nominations for the following potential awards:

- Rising Star in Research
- Excellence in Human Subjects Research
- Collaborative Research Leadership
- Research Communication Excellence
- Impact
- Lifetime Achievement

Nominations are submitted via [a Qualtrics survey](#). Eligibility criteria are detailed below. **The deadline for submitting nominations is Monday, April 20th at 11:59pm.** All nominations must be received by the deadline. Incomplete submissions will not be considered. Awardees will be announced during the 2026 UNC NRP Research Conference on May 20, 2026. Please contact nrp@unc.edu with any questions.

Award Details

Rising Star in Research Award

The **Rising Star in Research Award** is designed to recognize a UNC NRP member who has demonstrated outstanding promise and exceptional potential in the field of research, despite having less than two years of full-time paid work experience. This award aims to celebrate individuals who have shown remarkable growth, initiative, and a passion for advancing the field of research based on their early contributions to the field in their research role at UNC in the past 12 months.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Member of the UNC Network for Research Professionals.
2. Full-time permanent employee at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (SHRA or EHRA non-faculty) or UNC Health.

3. Less than 2 years of full-time paid work experience in research (including non-UNC/UNC Health research experience).
4. Demonstrates exceptional analytical skills, attention to detail, and a commitment to high-quality research standards.
5. Exhibits proactive problem-solving, initiative, and a strong capacity for learning.
6. Contributes positively to the team environment and fosters collaboration.
7. Have made a significant contribution to research at UNC.

Excellence in Human Subjects Research Award

The **Excellence in Human Subjects Research (HSR) Award** is dedicated to recognizing a UNC NRP member who has consistently demonstrated exceptional performance, innovation, and collaboration in the field of human subjects research at UNC within the past 12 months, with a minimum of two years of full-time paid work experience. This award is intended to celebrate a team member who consistently exceeds expectations, contributes significantly to the success of research projects, and embodies the highest standards of HSR practices. Whether through outstanding study management, exemplary teamwork, or meaningful contributions to advancing research outcomes, this individual has shown the kind of excellence that elevates the entire team.

Eligibility

1. Member of the UNC Network for Research Professionals.
2. Full-time permanent employee at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (SHRA or EHRA non-faculty) or UNC Health for at least one year.
3. At least 2 years of full-time paid work experience in research (including non-UNC/UNC Health research experience).
4. At least 12 months (1 year) in a full-time paid research professional position at UNC or UNC Health.
5. Actively contributes to the advancement of the HSR field through innovative approaches or groundbreaking results.
6. Have made a significant contribution to research at UNC.

Collaborative Research Leadership Award

The **Collaborative Research Leadership Award** celebrates UNC NRP members who have demonstrated exceptional leadership in the field of research, making significant contributions to advancing knowledge and innovation at UNC in the past 12 months. They provide mentorship and guide the professional growth of others, fostering a nurturing and supportive research environment.

Eligibility

1. Member of the UNC Network for Research Professionals.
2. Full-time permanent employee at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or UNC Health for at least 2 years.
3. Significant contributions as an outstanding leader at UNC in the past 12 months.
4. Proven commitment to mentoring and developing future research professionals.

Research Communication Excellence Award

The **Research Communication Excellence Award** is intended for UNC NRP members who have effectively communicated their research findings to a wide audience, making complex topics accessible and engaging through various media.

Eligibility

1. Member of the UNC Network for Research Professionals.
2. Full-time permanent employee at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (SHRA or EHRA non-faculty) or UNC Health for at least the past 1 year.
3. Effectively communicated their research findings to a wide audience in the past year.

Impact Award

The **Impact Award** is open to UNC NRP members who have effectively translated their research findings or research role at UNC into tangible benefits for larger audiences, influencing policy, practice, or public awareness.

Eligibility

1. Member of the UNC Network for Research Professionals.
2. Full-time permanent employee at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (SHRA or EHRA non-faculty) or UNC Health for at least the past 1 year.
3. Translated their research findings or research role at UNC into tangible benefits for the larger audiences, influencing policy, practice, or public awareness.



Lifetime Achievement Award

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** is for UNC NRP members who have made sustained and impactful contributions to their field over their entire career, leaving a lasting legacy in research.

Eligibility

1. Member of the UNC Network for Research Professionals.
2. Full-time permanent employee at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or UNC Health for at least the past 10 years.
3. At least 15 years of work experience in a full-time paid position as a research professional.
4. Made sustained and impactful contributions to research at UNC and the UNC NRP over their career, leaving a lasting legacy as a research professional.