

ESCM best PhD thesis award

Aim

The aim of the ESCM best PhD thesis award is to recognise the author of the best PhD thesis in composites in Europe every year. The winners of the award are invited to attend and present their research at the following ECCM, where they will receive a certificate or medal for their award, as well as a monetary prize, during the conference dinner.

Assessment criteria

The overall criterion is **research excellence**, which includes:

1. Originality;
2. Rigour; and
3. Significance (to the research community, to society, to industry, to policy makers, etc).

The above will be judged using the following as evidence:

- the PhD thesis (in any language);
- an executive summary of the PhD thesis in English (4 pages);
- the journal papers (published, submitted and in preparation) and patents stemming from the thesis; and
- the nomination from the supervisor.

Assessment process

The assessment process for the ESCM best PhD thesis award on a given calendar year is the following:

1. Before the calendar year (that the award corresponds to), the President of ESCM will appoint an ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee from within the ESCM Executive Committee, with no fewer than four members (covering the widest possible range of research areas and seniority), and will choose a chair for the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee. The ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee will normally act for two years;
2. The chair of the Best PhD Thesis Award Committee will prepare an advert for the award at the start of the calendar year (that the award corresponds to) and disseminate it as widely as possible, including in the ESCM website and ESCM mailing list. The chair will also be responsible for ensuring that the application form mentioned below (point 2 under Application process) is made available on the ESCM homepage;
3. At the start of the following calendar year, the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee will proceed as follows:
 - a. the chair of the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee will forward all applications to the remaining members of the committee;
 - b. each member will assess independently the applications according to the Assessment Criteria, rank them and share their ranked list according to a

- timeline and process defined by the Chair of the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee;
- c. all ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee members must declare any conflict of interest (including, for instance, a joint publication and/or a PhD supervisory role) with an applicant, and abstain from ranking that candidate. If deemed needed by the President of ESCM, additional members may be invited to join the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee;
 - d. for PhD theses written in a language not spoken by a member of the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee, said member will rely on the remaining evidence (papers, etc) but will still verify that the evidence corresponds to work reported in the thesis (by comparing figures, equations, etc);
 - e. the assessment will recognise that different areas within composites may have different typical metrics (e.g. number of papers, number of citations) and hence the assessment will not be reduced to a counting exercise;
 - f. using a web-based meeting or otherwise, the Chair of the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee will promote a discussion between all members to decide the top three candidates including the winner (if not unanimously, then by majority, with the chair having a casting vote in case of draw);
 - g. the chair of the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee will write a small statement motivating their choice and communicate the decision to the President of ESCM, copying the other ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee members;
 - h. the President of ESCM will then inform the successful candidates and all unsuccessful applicants by the 31st of March of that calendar year.
4. Once awarded, the ESCM best PhD thesis award, including the small statement written by the ESCM Best PhD Award Committee chair, will be communicated:
 - a. in the ESCM website; and
 - b. in the programme of the ECCM conference.

Competition rules

The following rules apply:

1. the award is attributed every year;
2. the ESCM Best PhD Thesis Award Committee's decision is final;
3. late or incomplete applications will not be considered;
4. applications with nomination letters exceeding the 1-page limit will not be considered;
5. ESCM is not responsible for ineligible applications;
6. ESCM reserves the right to cancel this prize at any stage;
7. the PhD thesis must have been examined and have achieved a final pass in an official document issued by the university by the application deadline;
8. the PhD thesis must be awarded by a university located in Europe (for clarity, for countries only partially located in Europe, the institution itself must be in Europe);
9. due to the large volume of applications expected, no individual feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants; and

10. the PhD thesis must be focused on any aspect of composites (e.g. synthesis, manufacture, mechanics, etc) and can be experimental and/or analytical and/or numerical.

The award

The top three candidates will receive an invitation to attend the following ECCM conference, with fees waived.

The award for the winner consists of:

1. a framed certificate / medal;
2. an invitation to attend the following ECCM conference, with fees waived, and with reasonable transportation and accommodation costs covered. At the conference, the winners from the two previous years:
 - a. will be invited to give a talk on their thesis; and
 - b. will receive the framed certificate / medal and a monetary prize at the Conference Dinner;

if the winner cannot attend the conference, then a non-framed certificate will be sent by post; note that in this case there will also not be a monetary prize. Application process

The application process is as follows:

1. The deadline for applications will be 31st of December of each calendar year.
2. Applications are to be made sending the required information to the email address indicated in the advert.

Applicants will have to submit the following information, using a form provided in the website:

- a. name of applicant;
- b. name of university awarding the PhD;
- c. date of registration for PhD;
- d. date of submission of PhD;
- e. date of PhD viva/defence;
- f. list of journal publications stemming from work in the thesis:
 - i. for papers already published, including links to their electronic version in the journal's webpage;
 - ii. for papers submitted or in preparation, including a permanent link to a PDF copy or attaching the PDF to the application;
- g. list of conference publications stemming from work in the thesis;
- h. list of patents stemming from work in the thesis; and
- i. for the main supervisor:
 - i. name;
 - ii. affiliation;
 - iii. position; and
 - iv. email address.

Additionally, the applicants will have to attach, or include a permanent link to:

- a. a digital copy of an official document from the university certifying the thesis has passed all assessment requirements, with a date matching the year of the award;
 - b. an executive summary of the PhD thesis in English (4 pages); and
 - c. a PDF copy of the PhD thesis (in any language).
3. Finally, applicants are responsible for ensuring that their main supervisor sends a nomination letter, no longer than one A4 page, to the same address and covering at least the following points:
 - a. what the scope of the PhD thesis is;
 - b. why the thesis is exceptional;
 - c. what the key original contributions contained in the thesis are;
 - d. why the original contributions are significant; and
 - e. how the original contributions are reflected in any journal publications or patents.
4. Applications will only be considered complete once all the above have been submitted. Candidates must ensure that the supervisor is willing to provide a nomination by the deadline, and must also inform them of the 1 page limit; ESCM will not contact the supervisors.
5. The nomination letter, the submitted papers and the papers under preparation will be treated by ESCM as being confidential. ESCM will only release them if it is legally required to do so.