

Recognition for Research Excellence: Most cited researchers at international level

1 Background

The Institutional Committee for Research and Innovation of the NWU suggested that recognition should be given to high-quality research outputs from NWU staff members. For this purpose, awards will be made to those researchers who are highly cited within their subject fields at international level. A similar award for researchers making an impact at national level will be developed as soon as suitable selection criteria can be identified.

2 Nomination Process and Adjudication

A call for nominations will be issued annually. Researchers who are considered to have an impact at international level, and who have not been recognised in the past 3 years, can be nominated by completing the appropriate nomination form. Candidates are recognised and honoured at an annual NWU function where excellence in research is celebrated. The NWU may at its own discretion award candidates a honorarium to be used exclusively for support of the participation in international Research and Advisory organisations.

The most cited researchers will be selected based on the impact their research has made in the past number of years. A calculation will be made, based on the following:

1. All research outputs indexed in the Web of Science (which includes the International subsidy-bearing journals and more than 60 local journals) will be considered. This will ensure that these researchers indeed have an international profile.
2. All citations of the outputs mentioned in 1 above will be considered.
3. Cases of self-citation will be removed from the calculation.
4. This number of citations will give an indication of the specific researcher within the field he / she works in. This number cannot be used for comparisons across research fields.
5. The average number of citations for all researchers of all research outputs in the specific field will be calculated, and the number mentioned in 4 above will be divided by this average.
6. The number calculated in 5 above would then be an indication of the standing of the researcher within the field, normalised for the field. A number of 1 indicates that the researcher has an average impact, a number larger than 1 indicates an above average impact, and a number smaller than 1 indicates a lower than average impact.
7. The number in 5 above will be calculated for all nominees, and the nominees will be ranked according to this number.
8. An adjudication panel, convened by the DVC: Research, Innovation and Technology will then determine the most cited researcher. This panel will form their decision based on the ranking as described, but can also consider other factors, such as the average output of each candidate vs the average outputs of all researchers working in the same field.

The software InCites™, developed by ThompsonReuters will be used by the Institutional Director: Research Support to do the calculation.