IAS Award 2025
Institute for Advanced Studies Luxembourg

Call description and guidelines for candidates

Contact: ias@uni.lu
Dr Sylvie FROMENTIN and Véronique SCHAFF

Call templates: Documents - University of Luxembourg I Uni.lu

Timeline 2025 Call:

Call opening	Submission deadline	Selection Committee Meeting	Communication of results
01 Oct 2025	15 Dec 2025 @2pm CET	27 March 2026 (indicative)	April 2026

For any information request, one email address: **ias@uni.lu.**

Description and application guidelines

The IAS Award recognizes outstanding and independent scientific achievements by early-career researchers (ECRs) at the University of Luxembourg (**affiliated or not with the Institute for Advanced Studies Luxembourg**). Successful projects must demonstrate exceptional scholarly quality and societal relevance and/or impact. This award highlights the importance of individual initiative and intellectual independence in advancing innovative research.

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1. Description of the call

1.1 Purpose and goals

The IAS Award aims to recognize and support outstanding ECRs at the University of Luxembourg (UL) who have demonstrated exceptional promise in advancing knowledge, fostering interdisciplinarity, and contributing to scholarly, societal, or industrial impact.

The Award is designed to:
- Promote Excellence: Celebrate and incentivize outstanding academic achievement and originality among ECRs at UL.
- Support Interdisciplinary Research, a key aspect of Luxembourg's research and innovation strategy: Encourage the integration of diverse disciplinary approaches, fostering innovative thinking that transcends traditional academic boundaries.
- Strengthen Research Culture at UL: Enhance the visibility of ECRs and reinforce a culture of excellence, collaboration, and ambition within the university.
- Foster Career Development: Provide awardees with recognition that can serve as a catalyst for future academic advancement, collaboration opportunities, and international visibility.
- Encourage Societal and Industrial Impact: Highlight and support work that not only contributes to academic advancement but also addresses real-world challenges in society, policy, culture, or industry.

Ultimately, the IAS Award seeks to position UL as a hub for pioneering, interdisciplinary research by empowering its emerging talent to take bold steps in their academic journeys.

1.2 Structure of the call

The IAS Award call is organized in a manner to ensure a transparent, competitive, and merit-based selection process. It is structured as follows:

- **Launch of the call:** The call is officially launched by the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS). It will be widely disseminated across the university's faculties, interdisciplinary centers, and administrative units to ensure inclusivity and visibility.

- **Eligibility verification:** Interested applicants must ensure they meet all eligibility criteria outlined in the call document, including early-career status, UL affiliation, and valid employment contract at the time of application.

- **Submission of applications:** Applicants are required to submit a complete application package via the designated submission portal or email address by the specified deadline. The application must include:
    1. A completed application form
    2. A curriculum vitae (max. 2 pages)
    3. A motivation letter (max. 2 pages)

- **Evaluation process:** All applications will be assessed by the Evaluation Committee of the IAS composed of 6 members of the UL (https://www.uni.lu/research-en/ias/governance/). The evaluation will be based on:
    - Independence
    - Scientific quality
    - Interdisciplinarity of the research
    - Originality and Innovation

- Societal Impact and/or Relevance

- **Selection and notification:** Successful applicants will be selected based on merit and the strategic goals of the IAS. Awardees will be notified in writing and publicly announced through UL/various communication channels.

- **Award ceremony and follow-up:** Selected recipients will be formally recognized during an official IAS Award Ceremony. Awardees may be invited to present their work at IAS events or participate in interdisciplinary initiatives supported by the IAS.

1.3 Call timeline

The key milestones of the call are the following:

➜ Call opening: **01 OCT 2025 @ 9am CET.**

➜ Proposal submission deadline: **15 DEC 2025 @ 2pm CET.**

➜ Evaluations submission deadline: **20 MAR 2026 @ 2pm CET.**

➜ Selection Committee meeting: **27 MAR 2026** (indicative).

➜ Notification to candidates: April 2026 (indicative).

➜ Award Ceremony: April-May 2026 (indicative).

1.4 Eligibility

- **Eligibility**: Applicants must be ECRs affiliated with the University of Luxembourg (UL), having successfully defended their doctoral thesis ≤ 7 years prior to 1 January of the year of the call. The eligibility period is calculated from the date of the successful defense (viva) of the first PhD or equivalent doctoral degree.

- **Definition of Early-career Researcher**: ECRs are individuals in the transitional phase between completion of their PhD and securing a more senior academic position. At UL, this includes Postdoctoral Researchers, Research Scientists I and II, and Research & Development Specialists. Professors are excluded from this category.

- **Institutional affiliation**: Applicants from across the entire University of Luxembourg are eligible to apply, not only those affiliated with the IAS Luxembourg. Applicants must be formally affiliated with a Faculty, Interdisciplinary Center, or other relevant department within UL.

- Applicants must hold a valid employment contract with UL at the time of application submission.

- Applicants should demonstrate a strong record of excellence, interdisciplinary work, and scholarly depth in research.

1.5 Exclusion condition

Applicants who have already received an award are not eligible to reapply. Those who were not selected may reapply the following year, subject to eligibility requirements.

2. Application

2.1 Candidate to an IAS Award

Candidates for the IAS Award are expected to demonstrate academic excellence, a commitment to interdisciplinary engagement, and alignment with the missions of the IAS. Specifically, candidates should:

- **Meet eligibility criteria:** Fulfill all eligibility requirements as outlined in Section 1.4, including being an early-career researcher affiliated with UL and actively engaging with the broader Luxembourg research community.

- **Engage in public outreach:** Commit to promoting their research to a broader audience by organizing or participating in at least one public-facing event (e.g., public lecture, workshop, discussion panel) at UL or a partner institution during their award period.

- **Uphold research excellence and institutional values:** Ensure the scientific integrity and quality of the proposed project while clearly contributing to the joint strategic objectives of IAS Luxembourg. These include:
    - Advancing bold, high-impact, and interdisciplinary research at the cutting edge of science and scholarship;
    - Representing and promoting the core values of excellence, interdisciplinarity, and international engagement;
    - Building meaningful connections between academic research, international visitors, and the wider public;
    - Supporting the attraction, integration, and retention of top international talent within the research ecosystem.

2.2 Benefits for the awardees

The IAS Award offers awardees a unique combination of recognition, resources, and opportunities to advance their research, broaden their impact, and strengthen their academic career. Key benefits include:

- **Monetary prize**
    - Each year, **three (3) awards** will be granted to recognize individual excellence and support the awardee's professional growth.
    - Each award comes with a **personal monetary prize of €1,000**.
    - The prize is awarded directly to the individual and is not tied to project or institutional spending.

- **Prestigious institutional recognition**
    - Formal acknowledgment by the IAS and the University of Luxembourg as a recipient of an IAS Award, enhancing the researcher's academic profile and visibility within and beyond UL.
    - Recognition as a contributor to the university's strategic mission of excellence, interdisciplinarity, and societal engagement.

- **Enhanced research visibility**
    - Promotion of the awardee's work through IAS and UL communication channels (e.g. press releases, newsletters, social media, website features).
    - An article highlighting the candidate and their research will be published by Research Luxembourg (TBC).

- - Opportunities to present research to diverse audiences within the UL community and to the general public.

- **Integration into the IAS community**
  - Inclusion in the vibrant intellectual network of the IAS, with access to seminars, workshops, and interdisciplinary events.
  - Engagement with international visiting scholars and potential for collaborations across disciplines and institutions, including IAS partner organizations.

- **Support for interdisciplinary initiatives**
  - Possibility to receive logistical and/or financial support for interdisciplinary activities such as organizing symposia, initiating cross-faculty collaborations, or hosting guest researchers.

- **Career development opportunities**
  - Strengthened academic CV and profile for future competitive funding, fellowships, or academic appointments.
  - Mentorship and networking opportunities through connection with senior academics, IAS Distinguished visitors and IAS fellows.

- **Public engagement platform**
  - Dedicated support to design and host at least one public event (e.g. lecture, dialogue, panel discussion), allowing the awardee to amplify the societal relevance of their research.

3. Practical application to the call

3.1 Key rules

- Proposals must be written in English. Refer to the application templates for further instructions.

- Application forms must be completed in Arial, font 11, single space and 1.5 cm top/bottom/left/right margins.

- All proposals for the call must be sent by email to ias@uni.lu.

- No modification after the deadline will be accepted. Incomplete proposals and those received after the deadline will not be processed.

- Creating an ePAS is unnecessary in this call.

- No institutional validation will be conducted for this call.

3.2 Application process

The application process involves **2 steps.**

Step 1: Complete the application form

- Download the application form (see Documents - University of Luxembourg I Uni.lu).

- Standardize the file name: "IAS-AWARD-2025_PI LastName_PI FirstName".

- In the application form, fill in the requested information. Save the completed form as a PDF file.

Step 2: Send the project proposal, together with the CV and motivation letter, by email to the IAS team at ias@uni.lu.

3.3 Application form

Applicants should address the following criteria clearly and thoroughly in their applications. The guidance below outlines what evaluators typically look for under each category.

1. Description of the achievement and its main results *(max. 2 pages)*

2. A brief statement addressing each evaluation criterion *(max. 2000 <u>characters</u> per following criterion. A character count includes letters, numbers, punctuation, and spaces)*

a. Independence

Applicants should demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research and to develop original research ideas. Indicators of independence may include:
- Leadership in the conceptualization and design of the proposed research;
- A clear distinction from the work of former supervisors or collaborators;
- Evidence of intellectual ownership of prior research outputs;
- Experience in supervising students or research staff, where applicable.

b. Scientific quality

Applicants should present research that demonstrates academic rigor, clarity, and methodological soundness. Specifically, applications should:
- Articulate clear and coherent research questions and objectives, demonstrating a focused and purposeful line of inquiry;
- Employ robust and appropriate methodologies, aligned with the research aims and disciplinary standards;
- Demonstrate critical engagement with relevant literature, situating the proposed work within the current state of knowledge;
- Identify potential limitations or challenges, along with well-considered strategies to address them.

c. Interdisciplinarity of the research

Proposals should demonstrate meaningful integration of concepts, theories, or methodologies from different disciplines. Applicants are advised to:
- Explain the added value of their interdisciplinary approach to the research problem;
- Clarify how different disciplinary perspectives were combined or synthesized;
- Outline any past, present or future collaboration across disciplinary boundaries and justify its necessity.

d. Originality and Innovation

Applicants must clearly articulate the novel aspects of their research. This includes:
- Innovative research questions, frameworks, or methodologies;
- The potential to advance the field or open new areas of inquiry;
- A departure from conventional approaches or solutions;
- A clear statement of what distinguishes the proposal from the extant literature.

e. Societal Impact and/or Relevance

Proposals should describe the potential contribution of the research beyond the academic community. Applicants should consider:
- The relevance of the research to societal needs, challenges, or public interest;
- Potential beneficiaries or stakeholders outside academia;
- Planned pathways for impact, such as dissemination strategies, policy engagement, or

knowledge transfer;
- How the research may influence practice, contribute to innovation, or inform public understanding.

The IAS applies the following definition of **Interdisciplinary research**: A mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.

3. Project references *(max. 0.5 page)*

- List references used in the document.

4. Curriculum vitae of the candidate *(max. 2 pages, free format).*
- To be added at the end of the application form or sent separately.

5. Motivation letter *(max. 2 pages, free format).*
- To be added at the end of the application form or sent separately.

4. Selection process

The evaluation and selection process of the application documents consists of two steps:

1. The IAS Evaluation Committee ranks the proposals based on the written proposals. Each of the criteria will be evaluated on a 5-point rating scale for the written document:

Score 5	**Outstanding** The presented work is bold, original, and at the forefront of international research. It is expected to make a substantial and transformative contribution to science globally.
Score 4	**Excellent** The work is highly significant and demonstrates strong potential to advance the field. It is nationally leading and likely to have international relevance.
Score 3	**Very Good** The work is competitive at the national level and shows promise for contributing meaningfully to international research. Solid and well-conceived, though not field-leading.
Score 2	**Good** The work is methodologically sound but lacks novelty or impact. It adds incremental value to existing knowledge but is of lower priority compared to higher-rated proposals.
Score 1	**Not Competitive** The work is flawed in concept or execution, lacks originality, or duplicates existing work. It is not considered worthy of support.

The selection criteria are:
    a. Independence (5 points)
    b. Scientific quality (5 points)
    c. Interdisciplinarity of the research (5 points)
    d. Originality and Innovation (5 points)
    e. Societal Impact and/or Relevance (5 points)

The resulting weights will be the basis for the final discussion of the members of the IAS Evaluation Committee and the ranking proposed to the Head of IAS.

2. The final decision is communicated to the candidates by the Head of IAS.

The Evaluation Committee of the IAS consists of six internal experts from the University of Luxembourg. For more information about the structure of the IAS Luxembourg and the responsibilities of its members, please refer to the IAS Organisation and Governance page.

5. Award ceremony

Award recipients will be formally recognized at an official IAS Award Ceremony, which serves to honour their achievements and share their contributions with the broader academic and research community.

Attendance is expected, as the ceremony provides a platform to celebrate excellence, foster visibility, and inspire peers and emerging researchers.

Details regarding the date, venue, and format of the ceremony will be communicated to recipients in due course.