GOVERNANCE / WI-IAT 2026

Research Awards Selection Policy

25th IEEE/WIC International Conference on Web Intelligence and Intelligent Agent Technology
3–6 December 2026 · Brisbane, Australia

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a transparent, fair, impartial and merit-based process for selecting recipients of the WI-IAT 2026 Research Awards. It sets consistent eligibility requirements, assessment criteria, decision-making procedures and accountability arrangements.

2. Scope and Award Categories

This policy applies to accepted full research papers in the WI-IAT 2026 main technical program and governs the following four awards:

Best Paper Award — Highest-ranked paper for overall research excellence.

Best Paper Award Runner-up — Second-highest-ranked paper for overall research excellence.

Best Student Paper Award — Highest-ranked eligible student paper not already awarded.

Best Student Paper Award Runner-up — Next highest-ranked eligible student paper not already awarded.

3. Selection Panel

The Research Awards Selection Panel (the Panel) shall comprise:

Panel member	Conference role	Panel role
Xiaohui Tao	WI-IAT 2026 General Chair	Panel Chair
Jimmy Huang	IEEE Computer Society TCII Chair (sponsoring party)	Member
Ning Zhong	WI-IAT Steering Committee Chair	Member
Xujuan Zhou	WI-IAT 2026 Program Committee Chair	Member
Yang Liu	WI-IAT 2026 Program Committee Chair	Member

The Panel Chair shall coordinate the process, facilitate deliberations and ensure decisions are documented. The Panel collectively bears responsibility for the integrity of the selection process.

4. Guiding Principles

Transparency. Eligibility, criteria and procedures shall be defined in advance and consistently applied.

Academic merit. Decisions shall be based on originality, technical quality, significance and research impact.

Fairness and impartiality. No preference shall be given based on affiliation, geography or professional relationships.

Independent judgement. Members shall assess papers independently and disclose conflicts of interest.

Collective accountability. Final decisions shall be reasoned and documented.

Confidentiality. Individual assessments and deliberations shall remain confidential until official announcement.

5. Eligibility and Shortlisting

5.1 General eligibility

Only accepted full research papers included in the WI-IAT 2026 main technical program shall be eligible. All such papers may be considered for the two general Best Paper awards.

5.2 Student paper eligibility

A paper shall be classified as a student paper if its lead author is identified as a student in the information recorded in the official WI-IAT 2026 paper submission system. This recorded classification shall serve as the authoritative basis for eligibility for the Best Student Paper Award and Best Student Paper Award Runner-up. The criterion shall be applied consistently to all candidate papers.

5.3 Shortlisting

The Program Committee Chairs shall prepare shortlists based on peer-review reports, reviewer recommendations and scholarly merit. Separate shortlists shall be established for the general and student award categories; a student paper may appear on both shortlists before awards are allocated.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Each shortlisted paper shall be assessed using a five-point scale for each criterion (1 = poor; 5 = outstanding). Weighted scores shall support, but not replace, reasoned academic judgement.

Assessment criterion	Weight
Originality and innovation	25%
Technical quality and rigour	30%
Significance and research contributions	25%
Clarity and presentation of the paper	10%
Potential research or practical impact	10%
Total	100%

Peer-review reports may be used as supporting evidence. Any supplementary consideration, including conference presentations, must be applied consistently to comparable candidates.

7. Selection and Award Allocation

7.1 Independent assessment and deliberation

Non-conflicted Panel members shall independently score shortlisted papers before the Panel reviews consolidated results. The Panel shall deliberate on comparative academic merit and record the rationale for its decisions.

7.2 Allocation sequence

Awards shall be determined in the following order:

01 Best Paper Award — Highest-ranked paper on the general shortlist.

02 Best Paper Award Runner-up — Next highest-ranked paper on the general shortlist.

03 Best Student Paper Award — Highest-ranked eligible student paper not previously awarded.

04 Best Student Paper Award Runner-up — Next highest-ranked eligible student paper not previously awarded.

7.3 Single-award restriction

Each paper may receive no more than one WI-IAT 2026 research award. A student paper may initially be considered in both general and student categories, but once selected for an award it shall be excluded from consideration for all remaining awards. The allocation sequence in Section 7.2 shall be followed without exception unless a formally approved amendment to this policy is made before selection begins.

7.4 Final decisions

The Panel shall seek consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority of eligible, non-conflicted members shall determine the outcome. Each member has one vote; the Panel Chair has no additional casting vote. A minimum of three non-conflicted members should participate in each final decision; where this is not possible, an independent replacement member shall be appointed. Ties shall be resolved through further assessment and deliberation.

8. Conflict of Interest

All Panel members shall disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts, including authorship, recent collaboration, supervisory relationships or direct personal or financial interests. A conflicted member shall not score, discuss or vote on the affected paper. If the Panel Chair is conflicted, another non-conflicted member shall lead the relevant decision. Declarations and management actions shall be recorded.

9. Documentation, Transparency and Announcement

The Panel shall securely retain shortlists, evaluation criteria, individual scores, conflict declarations, a summary of deliberations and the rationale for final awards. Eligibility criteria, the general assessment method and award categories may be published for authors; individual scores and confidential deliberations shall not be disclosed. Final recipients shall be announced through official WI-IAT 2026 channels and recognised at the awards ceremony.

10. Final Provisions

The Panel may withhold an award if no eligible paper meets the expected standard of academic excellence, provided the decision and reasons are documented. Procedural concerns shall be reviewed by the Panel Chair or, where the Chair is implicated, a non-conflicted Panel member. Any departure from the policy shall require documented justification and majority approval by non-conflicted members. This policy takes effect upon endorsement by the Panel.

Governance detail	Designation
Policy authority	WI-IAT 2026 Research Awards Selection Panel
Responsible officer	WI-IAT 2026 General Chair
Effective date	Upon Panel endorsement