



Lens of *Discovery*

Photography Competition



Scan for details



Lens of *Discovery*

Welcome

Lens of Discovery is a competition that recognises excellence in research at the University Melbourne as creatively visualised through photography.

Lens of Discovery challenges researchers to create an engaging photographic image that visualises their research and its impact, and encapsulates the 2026 theme: ***Advancing the Boundaries of Knowledge***.

Before entering, we encourage you to take the time to read through these guidelines or access the FAQs on the competition website (details below). If you require further information or have any questions, please reach out to the Lens of Discovery team at research-impact@unimelb.edu.au and we will get back to you promptly.



Lens of Discovery website

[/research.unimelb.edu.au/strengths/research-impact/lens-of-discovery/](https://research.unimelb.edu.au/strengths/research-impact/lens-of-discovery/)



Submission Form

<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/t9e2>



Talent Release Form

<https://go.unimelb.edu.au/59e2>

Competition Guidelines

Eligibility

The *Lens of Discovery* photography prize is **open to all staff and all students** at the University of Melbourne.

Staff includes academic and professional employees at the University of Melbourne, including contract and casual staff, and honoraries.

Students includes those currently enrolled in any undergraduate or graduate (coursework or graduate research) course at the University of Melbourne.

Competition Theme

Entrants are expected to submit an entry that best creatively illustrates and visually expresses the 2026 theme: ***Advancing the Boundaries of Knowledge***.

Prize Overview

Seven winning prize entries will be selected across the following submission and discipline categories:

Entries	We are seeking photographic image entries: analog or digital, but excluding AI-generated images. Staff and students can submit up to five entries, but each entry can only be entered once. Photographic images can only be submitted by the image owner. Each year's prize will have a thematic focus, and the inaugural 2026 theme is <i>Advancing the Boundaries of Knowledge</i>. Each prize winner will receive a cash prize (outlined below) and will also be presented with a physical high-quality digital print of their winning entry. The judging panel will initially select a shortlist comprising of up to 5 'Finalists' across each discipline and entry categories (a total of up to 30). Entries will be assessed on: ○ The research the photographic image represents including the potential for impact or significance beyond the academy ○ How the photographic image interprets the yearly theme ○ The creativity, originality, aesthetic and technical merit of the photographic image.	
Staff	'Staff' is defined as academic and professional staff, including contract and casual staff, and honoraries.	THREE PRIZES* (Each prize valued at \$500) 1. Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) 2. Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) 3. Health Medical Sciences (HMS) *For the entries showcasing research impact excellence, creative skill and quality, and original interpretation of the 'theme' for the prize year.
Students	'Students' is defined as those currently enrolled in any undergraduate or graduate (coursework or graduate research) course at the University of Melbourne	THREE PRIZES* (Each prize valued at \$500) 4. Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) 5. Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) 6. Health Medical Sciences (HMS)

		* For the entries showcasing research impact excellence, creative skill and quality, and original interpretation of the 'theme' for the prize year.
All	This prize is open to both Staff and Students, from photos selected as 'Finalists' by the judging panel. Public voting for this prize will occur during a specified period with a public digital exhibition.	'PEOPLE'S CHOICE' PRIZE (Prize valued at \$1000) 7. A final 'People's Choice' prize will be awarded to the photographic image popularly voted from amongst the selected 'Finalists'.

- The Prize winners will include promotion of the event via multiple digital screens across UoM campus and in Melbourne Connect, plus included in an exhibition activation site during the annual August Open Day event.
- Entries will be judged by a convened panel consisting of academic experts in research and impact, communication, imagery, photography, and administered and overseen by Chancellery (Research and Enterprise) with assistance from the Strategic Communications (Research) team. The judging panel and academic chair will recommend the prize recipients of the award to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for endorsement. Professional staff panel members may be co-opted onto the judging panel as required.

Competition Timeline

DATE	EVENT
2 March 2026	COMPETITION OPENS
31 May 2026	COMPETITION CLOSES • Competition will be open for 3 months.
15 June 2026	Up to 5 Finalists in each category will be selected by the judging panel.
18-29 June 2026	'People's Choice Award' Voting Open • All selected finalists will be curated on <i>Pursuit</i> • Links from Staff News Hub, social media channels, etc.
1-5 July 2026	Judging completed with winners selected, confirmed, and notified.
8-12 July 2026	Prizes announced and winners promoted on <i>Pursuit</i> , Staff Hub, and social media channels.
August 2026	Promotion of winners at Open Day exhibition activation 2026.

Competition Details

1. Who runs the competition

- This competition is convened by Chancellery Research and Enterprise, The University of Melbourne.

2. Who can enter the competition

- To enter this competition, an Entrant must be either an Academic or professional staff member (including contract and casual staff), or a student currently enrolled in any undergraduate or postgraduate (coursework, graduate research, postdoctoral) course at the University of Melbourne.
- Entries submitted for other University of Melbourne or Faculty photography prizes are not excluded from entry into this competition. Additionally, Faculties and other divisions of the University may choose to offer additional prizes for entries from staff and students from their areas.
- To submit an Entry, entrants must submit a photographic image:
 - Taken by yourself while conducting research at the University of Melbourne in the last two years either domestically or internationally.
 - That encapsulates research impact excellence.
 - That creatively showcases and interprets the yearly theme (for 2026 'Advancing the Boundaries of Knowledge').

3. How to enter

- To enter this competition, all Entrants must submit their submission via the designated link to the online Form. Please complete the relevant fields, which will include the following:
 - A little bit about you: Name, contact details, and faculty/school/course affiliation.
 - The names of any other people captured in the photographic image.
 - Including, an accompanying *talent release form* if there are other identifiable people in your image to confirm that each person has consented to the use of their image for the purposes of the Competition and publication.
 - Agreement to competition terms and conditions.
 - Short text describing:
 - What the photographic image portrays: including location (plus Traditional Land if image was captured on Australian Country), and date.
 - The research the photographic image represents, and the impact or significance (may be social, cultural, health, environmental, and economic) beyond the academy. ([UoM's definition and research impact framework](#)). Please also include (where relevant) the name of the research project or university subject in the case of students.
 - How the photographic image interprets the yearly theme.
- The competition is open for Entries between 00:01 AEST on 2nd March 2026 and 23:59 AEST on 31st May 2026.

- Entries should be high-resolution jpg files (with a minimum resolution of 220 mm at 300 dpi or dots per inch).
- Limited digital adjustments that maintain the integrity of the Entry photographic image are allowed. Entrants may not make any material physical changes to their Entry. This includes, for example, adding or removing objects or people. Digital adjustments including tone and contrast, burning, dodging, cropping, sharpening, noise reduction, minor cleaning work, HDR, stitched panoramas, focus stacking and multiple exposure taken at the same location at the same time (as a continuous sequence) are permitted.
- Entrants must declare via the submission form that no GenAI assistance was used during the photographic image process, as any entries created wholly or substantially using generative artificial intelligence are void.
- Staff and students can submit up to five entries, but each entry can only be entered once. Photographic images can only be submitted by the image owner.
- We accept no responsibility for any Entries that are incomplete, illegible, corrupted, or fail to reach us by the closing date for any reason. Proof of emailing or sending is not proof of receipt. Entrants should keep a copy of their Entry as we will be unable to return Entries or provide copies.
- Any photographic images submitted can be used across all University channels – including marketing, communications, social media, EDMs and on the website – and in external channels as part of University promotion. However, we will aim to ensure you (the photographer and image owner) will always be credited.
- Winning and shortlisted entries may also be shared on digital screens across all University of Melbourne campuses. If you are shortlisted as a 'Finalist' and therefore eligible for the People's Choice Award, we may share your image on our social media channels for voting.

4. The prize

- The prize for the Competition consists of the following:
- **Seven winning prize entries** will be awarded in total from a judged and selected curation of up to five '**Finalist**' entries from each category.
- All submitted entries will be renamed with an anonymous code and presented to the judging panel.
- Six prizes consisting of a **\$500 payment** will be awarded for each of the following tripartite discipline fields for both a 'Staff' and 'Student' entry:
 - (i) Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)
 - (ii) Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)
 - (iii) Health Medical Sciences (HMS), for the entries showcasing the most creative and original interpretation of the 'theme' for the prize year.
- The **seventh** prize consisting of a **\$1000 payment** will be awarded to the photographic image popularly voted from amongst the selected 'Finalists' for a '**People's Choice**' award. Voting will occur during a specified period with a digital exhibition displayed via *Pursuit*.
 - The 'Finalists' will be curated for the 'People's Choice Award' via *Pursuit* and public voting accessible and promoted via Staff News Hub, and social media channels.

- The 'People's Choice' prize of \$1000 will be awarded to the highest number of public votes from among the selected 'Finalists' (as chosen by the judging panel) during the digital exhibition phase of the competition via the *Pursuit* online magazine.
- The Prizes will be decided within the four weeks following the close of the Competition. The winners will be notified via email.
- Winners will be selected by a panel of judges, at least one of which will be independent from the Competition, with judging criteria based on photographic image merit and quality, creativity, thematic fidelity, and research impact exemplification.
 - Full names of the judging panel will be available on request.
 - The judging panel reserves full editorial discretion in choosing winners, and may decide to award more than one Prize or no Prizes in a particular category.
 - Any decision will be final, and no further communication will be entered into in relation to it.
- All Winners will be provided with a high-quality digital print of their 'Entry' as an additional prize component at the earliest opportunity.

5. Notifying the winners.

- The winners of the Competition shall be contacted by email, no more than four weeks after the Competition closes. We will use reasonable endeavours to contact the winner, but reserve the right to disqualify any Entry where the Entrant cannot be contacted.
- The winners of the Competition will be expected to accept their prize and confirm their attendance at an event in which the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research (or representative) will publicly present the winning awards and prizes. If physical attendance at the prize ceremony is not possible, then an accommodating prize presentation will be scheduled at a later date in accordance with respective availabilities.

6. Intellectual property rights

- Entrants will retain copyright in their Entry photographic images. By entering the Competition, Entrants warrant they are the sole copyright owners of their Entry or have been authorised by any additional copyright owner to grant the licence(s) in these Terms.
- By entering the Competition, each Entrant grants UoM an enduring non-exclusive license to publish, reproduce, distribute, make available, display their Entry in all forms of media of expression in the context of marketing, communications, social media, EDMs and on the website – and in external channels as part of University promotions.
- In addition, the winners agree to exclusivity in the licence to UoM for a period of 12 months, starting from the date the winners confirm acceptance of the Prize. Beyond this, winning entrants are free to share, licence or otherwise monetise their Entry.
- With any photographic images submitted we will aim to ensure that 'you' the photographer and image owner will always be credited.

7. Warranties

- Entrants warrant that their Entry is their own original work; is not defamatory, obscene and does not infringe any laws, including privacy laws, whether of Australia or elsewhere, or any rights of any third party; that no other person was involved in the creation of their Entry; that they have the right to give the University of Melbourne permission to use it for the purposes specified herein; that they have the consent of anyone who is identifiable in an Entry or the consent of their parent, guardian or carer if they are under 18 (or the applicable age of majority); that it is lawful for them to enter the Competition, and they agree not to transfer files which may contain viruses or any other harmful programs.

8. Data privacy

- All personal data submitted by Entrants is subject to and will be treated in a manner consistent with the university's Privacy Policy accessible at [Privacy Policy \(MPF1104\)](#). By participating in this Competition, Entrants hereby agree that the university may collect and use their personal information for the purposes of the competition only and acknowledge that they have read and accepted the Privacy Policy.

9. Liability

- The University of Melbourne hereby excludes all liability for any loss, damage, cost and expense, whether direct or indirect, howsoever caused in connection with the Competition or any aspect of the Prize. All activities are undertaken at the Entrant's own risk. An Entrant's statutory rights as a consumer are not affected.

10. Questions

- If anyone has any questions about the Competition or these Terms, or need these Terms in a different format for accessibility reasons, please direct any queries to Chancellery Research & Enterprise via the mailbox: research-impact@unimelb.edu.au.