
Guidelines for the 2026 ESACT Innovation Award

Purpose

The ESACT Innovation Award is intended to recognize outstanding **innovators and contributors** to the field of Animal Cell Culture Technology. For the purpose of this Award and the avoidance of doubt, ESACT defines “Animal Cell Culture Technology” as follows:

Applied science, technologies, systems and processes that enable, facilitate or improve the use of cultured animal cells in research, diagnostic and therapeutic applications

The Award nominations will be judged according to the criteria described further below.

The Award

The ESACT Innovation Award is presented at the discretion of the ESACT Award Committee. The value of the Award will be a sum of € 5000 together with a commemorative plaque. The Award will be presented to the recipient at the ESACT bi-annual Scientific Meeting. The award recipient will be invited to present the ESACT Innovation Award Lecture at the ESACT Scientific Meeting immediately following the award selection. The invitation to attend the ESACT Meeting will include all travel expenses, accommodations during the Meeting and a waiver of registration fees.

The Award was established in 2018 and the first one was awarded at the 2019 ESACT meeting in Copenhagen.

Eligibility

Nomination for the Award is open to all researchers and practitioners in the Animal Cell Culture Biotechnology field as defined above.

It is expected that the Award recipient will fully attend the ESACT Meeting following the award selection and will deliver personally the Innovation Award Lecture. Inability to participate in the specific ESACT Meeting for any reason other than medical reasons will automatically disqualify the selected individual. The Award will then be given to the runner-up who becomes subject to the same eligibility criteria as outlined above. Not eligible for the Award are ESACT Executive Committee members as well as Award Committee members during the term of their respective Committee membership and for a two-year period thereafter.



Criteria

Nominees will be judged based on two criteria:

1. **PRIMARY CRITERION:** Originality, value and impact of a specific invention, technology, concept or idea in the field of Animal Cell Culture Technology, realized by the nominee (or group of nominees) **in the last 15 years**, as evidenced by a granted patent and/or relevant publications and high degree of adoption by the community/industry.
2. **SECONDARY CRITERION:** Overall involvement in the Animal Cell Culture Biotechnology community through educational and mentorship contributions, publications and active participation in relevant scientific meetings and societies, including ESACT.

Evaluation

Nomination packages will be evaluated by the Award Committee established by the ESACT Executive Committee.

Nomination Package

The nomination package must consist of the following items:

- 1) A nomination cover page.
- 2) A nomination statement/letter of no more than 800 words, highlighting the specific invention, technology, concept or idea in the field of Animal Cell Culture Technology that was realized by the nominee in the last 15 years, backed up by appropriate evidence of adoption by the Animal Cell Biotechnology community.
- 3) Proposed AWARD CITATION: No more than 25 carefully edited words that reflect the specific achievements of the candidate.
- 4) A resume including publications by the nominee (*limited to 8 pages*);
- 5) A maximum of three (3) brief supporting letters* from individuals in the field. Each letter should be no longer than 600 words.

*If nominator is from the same institution/company as the nominee, no letters should be from the same institution/company. Otherwise, no more than one letter from the same institution/company as the nominee, and no more than one letter from any one institution/company.

The nomination cover page should contain the following information:

- 1) Name of nominee
- 2) Present position (exact title)
- 3) Mailing address, telephone and email
- 4) Education
 - a) Institution
 - b) Degree received and year of each degree



- c) Major or field
- 5) Positions held
 - a) Company or institution
 - b) Position or title
 - c) Time period
- 6) Role or relation of the nominee to ESACT (if any)
- 7) Important academic and/or professional honors and awards
- 8) Technical and professional society memberships and offices held
- 9) Nominator's name, address, telephone number and email
- 10) Nominator's signature and date

The ESACT Executive Committee recognizes that specific innovations and technological breakthroughs do not always result from the invention or idea of single contributors. In cases where, for a specific innovative technology, invention or idea, not a single inventor can be identified, then the following applies:

It is possible to nominate two or more specific contributors (Joint Nomination) or nominate an entire academic/industrial group (Group Nomination). In such cases the nomination package is modified as follows:

JOINT NOMINATION

- Separate nomination cover page for each of the contributors to the invention/concept/idea. Unless otherwise indicated it will be assumed that all nominees have contributed equally.
- Separate resumes for each of the nominees
- The (up to three) letters of support should be supportive of the joint nomination and recognize the contribution of all nominees
- Joint Awardees will share the Award money equally (unless otherwise specified), will each receive a commemorative plaque and will be expected to share the Award Lecture. Ideally all award recipients will be able to attend fully the ESACT Scientific Meeting following their selection, but for the purpose of eligibility to receive the award it is sufficient if one among them can attend fully the ESACT Meeting and deliver the Award Lecture.

GROUP NOMINATION

- Nomination cover page to name the group, list its key members and identify one person as the principal investigator/ leader of the group. All further information requested should focus on the principal investigator.
- The resume included should be that of the principal investigator.
- The up to three letters of support should be supportive of the group to be recognized as well as to the principal investigator of the group.
- In the case of a Group Award, the award money will be paid to the Principal Investigator who will then decide how it will best benefit/reward the group. The commemorative plaque will be naming the group and its principal investigator. The Award Lecture will be delivered by the principal investigator or his/her delegate member of the group. For the purpose of eligibility, it is sufficient if the principal investigator or one delegate member of the group will attend fully the ESACT meeting and deliver the Award Lecture.



How to submit & due date

Nomination packages are due on **January 15, 2026**

THE COMPLETE NOMINATION PACKAGE should be submitted in an electronic form **AS A SINGLE PDF FILE (no larger than 10 Mb) WITH THE NAME OF THE NOMINEE**, and should include the scanned, signed letters of support.

The package should be sent by email (**email subject line: Nomination of "fill in the nominee name" for 2026 ESACT Innovation Award**) to the Chairman of the Selection Committee:

E. Terry Papoutsakis

Unidel Eugene DuPont Chair Professor in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering,
University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19711, USA

Email: epaps@udel.edu