

iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition

Drafted: 2012.03.22

Updated: 2013.03.12; 2013.08.27; 2014.01.07; 2014.05.09; 2015.01.07; 2015.04.27; 2016.04.14;
2018.01.16

Overview

Each year, the iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Chairs shall invite nominations for the iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition. The Chairs look for outstanding dissertations in the information field that have been completed during the period of July 1, to June 30, and will select the best dissertation for the year. A single additional runner-up will be designated. The awards will be given out at the annual iConference.

For administrative purposes, the annual Dissertation Award is treated as an official track of the iConference. For more information, contact iSchools Director of Communications Clark Heideger (clark@ischools.org).

Committee and Jury

Each year, two Dissertation Award Chairs will be named to serve as iConference track chairs. These chairs are nominated by the iConference Chairs, and must be approved in advance by the iSchools Executive Committee. The chairs shall in turn identify a jury representing a diverse range of disciplines. Ideally, the jury will reflect the international makeup of the iSchools organization, and not be too heavily weighted on one particular region.

Eligibility

Each iSchool member school can nominate one applicant for the award. The applicant should have successfully defended the doctoral dissertation and completed the doctoral degree (including all final revisions, if any, and all final paper work) within the academic year from July 1 to June 30. (To clarify: The award given on February 14, 2013 at iConference 2013 was in honor of work done in the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.) The dissertation research can be on any topic in the information field, broadly defined, and use any methodology.

Submission Materials for each Nomination

The following three items should be submitted. Note that item #1 (summary paper) and Item #2 (letter) must be submitted in English. Item #3 (complete dissertation) may be submitted in its original language, with the understanding that an English translation may be requested later, as explained under Review Process below.

1. A summary paper of the dissertation research, in English. The summary paper should be up to 10 double-spaced pages with 12 point Times New Roman font and at least one-inch margins (excluding the title page and the references), and should consist of three sections: Title Page,

iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition

Body, and References. The Title Page should contain the title of the dissertation, author name, email, phone number, address, current institution, advisor name and contact information, degree granting institution, and dissertation completion date. The Body of the summary paper should provide a comprehensive summary of the dissertation, introducing, for instance, the topic, the research context and questions, the theoretical or contextual framework, the methodology and methods, and the findings. The summary paper should be written for blind review; hence, all identifying information should be removed from the body of the paper and, as necessary, the references. The first page of the Body should include title, an abstract for up to 200 words, and a list of keywords. Tables and figures can be embedded in the text or attached at the end; they count toward the 10-page limit. The References section should include a list of references formatted in any appropriate style.

2. A letter, in English, from the dissertation chair or the Doctoral Program Director of the degree granting institution. The letter attests that, (a) the summary paper is authored by the applicant only and is based on the applicant's dissertation; (b) the applicant is eligible for the award (see Eligibility); (c) the dissertation is regarded by the dissertation committee and the degree granting institution as being representative of the best level of their doctoral work; and (d) the name and contact information of an individual at the school who will assist in the review of Awards submissions. This can be the Doctoral Program Director, or any faculty member that the degree-granting institution warrants is qualified to serve on the jury.
3. A PDF version of the complete dissertation, in its original language.

Submission Instruction

Nominations should be submitted by a deadline to be identified by the Chairs. Nominations will be submitted via the iConference submission system. All submission materials should be named with the iSchool's name and the applicant's name. For example, Syracuse-Jackson.zip is for the applicant Jackson from Syracuse University. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered. The candidate's dissertation chair or the Doctoral Program director should submit the nomination; candidates cannot self-nominate. An iSchool can submit only one nomination per year. Additional submissions from the same iSchool will be rejected without being considered.

Receipt of each nomination is automatically acknowledged by the submission system.

Review Process

The review process has two rounds. During the first round, the jury will review each summary paper in a blind review process. Their evaluation comments and numeric ratings will be used to select a smaller group of finalists that merit more detailed assessment as final candidates for the awards. In the second round, the finalists' summary papers and the entire dissertations will be reviewed. Depending on finalists and the makeup of the jury, an English translation of complete dissertations may be requested from submitting schools at this time; the submitting school is responsible for the cost of translation, if necessary. The ultimate selection will be made in this 2nd round. No reviews will be provided to the candidates or the nominators.

Criteria for evaluation

1. Significance of the research problem
2. Scholarly contribution to the information science literature
3. Rigorous and appropriate research methods
4. Clarity and organization.

Additional criteria may be identified by the Chairs; for an example, see the Dissertation Award webpage: <http://ischools.org/the-iconeference/program/dissertation-award/>

Announcement and Honorarium

The winner and runner up will be notified as soon as the Chairs' decisions are finalized; they will be immediately announced on the iConference website. The winner and runner up will also be honored at during one Awards events at the iConference.

The winner will receive a certificate/plaque and up to \$2,500.

The runner-up will receive a certificate/plaque and up to \$1,000.

Starting with iConference 2015, the winner and runner up also began receiving a travel allowance to help offset the cost of coming to the conference to collect their award. This policy was updated in Jan. 2018. Summary of the travel reimbursement policy follows:

- **Policy through 2017:** Reimbursement for registration fee + air fare + lodging for Winner and Runner up, capped at a maximum of \$1K each.
- **2018 only:** Reimbursement for registration fee + air fare for Winner and Runner up, capped at a maximum of \$1K each (i.e. lodging not covered).
- **2019 and onward:** Reimbursement for registration fee + air fare *for Winner only*, capped at a maximum of \$1K; also, Reimbursement for registration fee for Runner up. *The 2019 policy is predicated on an understanding that future nominators agree to help fund their nominees in the event they are selected winner or runner up; this expectation should be noted in all future calls.*

Although participation in the iConference is strongly encouraged, it is not mandatory for honorees to attend in order to receive their award.

Timeline

The following timeline is recommended in order to facilitate an orderly process. It is important to allow sufficient time reviews, decisions, notification and logistical integration of the Award in the annual iConference.

- Identify Competition Coordinating Committee 12 months prior to iConference
- Draft and circulate Call for Participation 8 months prior to iConference
- Name jury 6 months prior to iConference
- Submission deadline 5 months prior to iConference

iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award Competition

- Reviews complete and decisions announced
- Travel allowance disbursement
- Prize money disbursement

3 months prior to iConference
immediately following iConference
immediately following iConference