Research Awards Selection Policy

3–6 December 2026 • Approved Policy

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a transparent, fair, impartial and merit-based process for selecting recipients of the Brain Informatics 2026 (BI 2026) Research Awards. It ensures consistent assessment against defined criteria and accountable, documented decisions.

2. Scope and Award Categories

This policy governs four awards:

• Best Paper Award: Highest overall standard of originality, technical excellence, scholarly significance and potential impact.

• Best Paper Award Runner-up: Second-highest overall assessment in the general paper category.

• Best Student Paper Award: Highest-ranked eligible student-led research paper not already awarded in the general category.

• Best Student Paper Award Runner-up: Next highest-ranked eligible student-led research paper not already awarded.

3. Research Awards Selection Panel

Member	Conference role	Panel responsibility
Professor Xiaohui Tao	BI 2026 General Chair	Panel Chair
Professor Ning Zhong	BI Steering Committee Chair	Panel Member
Professor Yan Li	BI 2026 Program Committee Chair	Panel Member
Professor Maryam Doborjeh	BI 2026 Program Committee Chair	Panel Member
Professor Jimmy Huang	IEEE TCII Chair	External Panel Member

The Panel shall oversee the evaluation and selection process. The Panel Chair shall coordinate assessments, facilitate deliberations and maintain the decision record.

4. Guiding Principles

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

Academic merit. Awards reflect research quality, originality, rigour, significance and potential impact.

Fairness and impartiality. Institutional affiliation, geography and professional relationships shall not influence outcomes.

Independence. Members assess papers independently and disclose conflicts of interest.

Collective accountability. Final decisions are based on recorded assessments and Panel deliberation.

Confidentiality. Individual scores, deliberations and unpublished results remain confidential.

5. Eligibility and Shortlisting

5.1 General eligibility

Only accepted full research papers in the BI 2026 main technical program are eligible. All such papers may compete for the general Best Paper awards.

5.2 Student paper eligibility

A paper is classified as a student paper if its lead author is identified as a student in the official BI 2026 paper submission system. That recorded classification is the authoritative basis for student award eligibility and shall be applied consistently.

5.3 Shortlisting

The Program Committee Chairs shall shortlist candidates based on the original peer-review outcomes, reviewer recommendations and scholarly quality. Papers with a weighted review score of 4.0 or above shall be included in the shortlist. Eligible student papers may appear on both general and student shortlists.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Originality and Innovation	25%
Technical Quality and Rigour	30%
Significance and Research Contributions	25%
Clarity and Presentation	10%
Potential Impact	10%
Total	100%

Each criterion shall be scored from 1 (poor) to 5 (outstanding). Weighted scores support comparative assessment. Original review reports may be considered as supplementary evidence, provided the approach is consistent across candidates.

7. Selection Procedure

7.1 Independent assessment

Each non-conflicted Panel member shall independently assess the shortlisted papers and record criterion scores and relevant comments in the designated assessment spreadsheet before Panel deliberation.

7.2 Consolidation and deliberation

The Panel Chair shall consolidate eligible assessments and circulate the results. The Panel shall review the comparative academic merits of the papers, with particular regard to originality, methodological rigour and contributions to Brain Informatics.

7.3 Award allocation and single-award restriction

Awards shall be allocated in this order: (1) Best Paper Award; (2) Best Paper Award Runner-up; (3) Best Student Paper Award; and (4) Best Student Paper Award Runner-up. Each paper may receive no more than one award. A student paper selected for a general award shall be excluded from subsequent student award allocation.

7.4 Final determination

The Panel shall seek consensus. Failing consensus, an award shall be decided by simple majority of eligible, non-conflicted Panel members, each with one vote. The Panel Chair shall have no additional casting vote. A tie shall prompt further deliberation and reassessment. At least three non-conflicted members should ordinarily participate; where necessary, an independent replacement shall be appointed.

8. Conflict of Interest

Members shall disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts, including authorship, recent collaboration, supervision, close professional relationships or relevant personal, institutional or financial interests. A conflicted member shall not score, discuss or vote on the affected paper. Where the Panel Chair is conflicted, a non-conflicted member shall manage that decision. Declarations and mitigation measures shall be documented.

9. Transparency, Records and Announcement

The Panel shall retain the shortlist and nomination basis, individual and consolidated scores, conflict declarations, a summary of deliberations and the final decision rationale. Records shall be securely maintained by the Conference Organising Committee. Award criteria and procedures may be published through official conference channels; individual scores and confidential deliberations shall not be disclosed. Recipients shall be announced through official BI 2026 channels.

10. Final Provisions

The Panel may withhold an award where no eligible paper meets the expected standard, with documented justification. Procedural concerns shall be referred to the Panel Chair or, where the Chair is implicated, another non-conflicted member. Any departure from this policy requires documented justification and majority approval of non-conflicted members.

Policy authority: BI 2026 Research Awards Selection Panel
Responsible officer: BI 2026 General Chair
Status: Approved