

Celebrating the winners of our first Research Impact Awards

ACADEMIC

ACHIEVEMENTS

RESEARCH

Colleagues across Brunel are recognised for the impact of their work around the world

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From saving billions through improved global transport networks, increasing Greece's minimum wage to taking an intelligence-led approach to protecting elephants and rhinos, work by colleagues across Brunel has had a huge impact across the world.



Although we weren't able to meet face-to-face, it was felt necessary to take the earliest opportunity to celebrate some of the best efforts of our dedicated community of professionals.

Our Research Impact Awards are a recognition of the efforts of those colleagues who have been particularly effective in generating excellent research of great impact, ensuring that its benefits are harnessed to the optimal improvement of how we live, work and learn, making the many challenges of the world more manageable.

These awards are a celebration of outstanding achievement in the translation of research potential into significant academic, economic, social and cultural impact and are an important contribution to helping us deliver, more effectively, our commitment to our wider communities, locally, nationally and within the international domain.

The Awards seek to celebrate Brunel's research excellence in all its rich diversity, illuminating good practice and sharing it as widely as possible.

Organised into eight areas of impact, the awards highlight how our research is addressing the needs of governments, industry, business, the NHS and the not-for-profit sector across the world.

The judges – Professor David Galleary, Professor Akram Khan, Professor Geoff Rodgers, Professor Christina Victor, Teresa Waller, and Professor Hua Zhao – faced the tough task of selecting winners, and gave additional commendations to reflect the excellence of the research.

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Prof Akram Khan, who was joined by Provost Prof Rebecca Lingwood and Vice-Provost Prof Geoff Rodgers to present the winners, said: "It has been a particular pleasure to illuminate so much that normally stays hidden behind disciplinary boundaries or that is locked-up within communities of practice, but which is relevant to us all as ethically engaged human beings. I cannot but feel grateful for the privilege of being allowed to learn so much about what otherwise I would've remained innocent, and that will be an inspiration to us all."

Winner of the Policy Impact award Professor Louise Mansfield, whose work into community sport programmes has seen an increase in activity levels across England said: "I am honoured and humbled to receive this award. It really is the result of a collective endeavour in research impact and I am thankful to all those at Brunel and across our partnerships in the sport and physical activity sectors who have supported my work."

Congratulations to everyone who took part, you can watch a video of the ceremony [here](#) and below is a full list of the winners.

Academic Impact – For research that has made a demonstrable contribution to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application.

Winner – Zidong Wang – Professor of Computing

For world-leading research on complex networks and networked systems. Since joining Brunel in 2002, Zidong has published 593 papers and has had 81 highly cited papers, making up 32% of the 257 from Brunel.

Special commendation – Jun Xia – Senior Lecturer in Advanced Mechanical Engineering

For developing high-fidelity prediction capabilities for combustion emissions in close collaboration with leading groups in China and France.

Cultural Impact – For impactful and engaged research where the outputs generated significant cultural impact either through a specific media, to a particular audience or within a specified culture or geography.

Winner – Max Kinnings – Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing

For the Latvian English language feature film, The Pagan King, disseminating the story of King Namejs of 13th century Semigallia, and its cultural legacy in the Baltic region. The Pagan King makes a considerable contribution to the reinforcement of Latvian national identity as a public and cultural good.

Special commendation – Mike Wayne – Professor of Media

For bringing research-led insights into the public domain around the causes and consequences of class stratification in the cultural industries, with a particular focus on barriers for working class origin actors.

Economic Impact – For impactful and engaged research where the outputs generated significant economic impact at local, regional, national or international scale.

Winner – Tatiana Kalganova – Reader of Electronic and Computer Engineering

For Tatiana's work with Ivars Dzalbs and Anthony Grichnick in optimising global transportation networks using meta-heuristic approaches. Integrated into GEMSTONE (Generation and Evaluation of Manufacturing, Supply and Transportation Optimisation for Networks technology), the work translated into approximately \$1.5 billion savings during the first deployed year.

Special commendation – Philip Davis – Professor of Banking and Finance

Commissioned by the International Monetary Fund to undertake work on enabling calculation of financial health and stability indicators for pension policy in five Caribbean countries, Philip's work has contributed to the overall welfare of the vulnerable old-age population group in these five developing countries.

Special commendation – Andreas Georgiadis – Reader in Economics

For raising the minimum wage in Greece. In 2018, the Minister of Labour appointed Andreas as an adviser on minimum wages, as the Government was looking for solutions to address low wages caused by the long-term recession. His research has since resulted in the increase of minimum wages in Greece – by 11% for those aged 25 and above and 27% for those under 25.

Educational Impact – For impactful and engaged research where the outputs have contributed to the quality of education either at Brunel or more widely within the education sector.

Winner – William Spurlin – Professor of English

For research activities in Queering Holocaust Studies. For a long time, lesbian and gay victims of Nazi atrocities were ignored or marginalised in Holocaust research, William's research continues by offering new frameworks for understanding the politics of sexuality under National Socialism and the ongoing effects of Nazi homophobia in contemporary society and culture.

Special commendation – Dr Mariza Dima, Prof Alexandra Xanthaki and Dr Thaleia Deniozou

A multidisciplinary team from the School of Law, Games Design, and the Network of Children's Rights (NCR) in Athens, Greece came together to design and develop The Rights Hero. A game to help displaced children learn their rights and help them navigate situations that jeopardise these rights and hinder their integration into host societies.

Environmental Impact – For impactful and engaged research where the outputs delivered significant environmental benefits at local, regional, national or international scale.

Winner – Kristian Gustafson – Senior Lecturer in Social and Political Sciences, in collaboration with Luke Townsend and Touko Sandström

For research that has led to a major improvement in the preservation of endangered species in Africa. Kristian was invited to examine how intelligence-led approaches could assist conservation organisations, such as African Parks Network to reduce the devastating loss of rhino and elephant in their parks. As well as significantly reducing poaching, his work has improved relationships with park residents across Africa, as well as convinced the UK government to make several very large grants to African parks to develop their intelligence-led combat-tracking.

Special commendation – Evina Katsou, Reader in Civil and Environmental Engineering with Ali Mousavi, Reader in Computer Science

For delivering sustainable wastewater services, to validate and to address to the market a portfolio of eco-innovative solutions (the SMART solutions) that can renovate and upgrade existing municipal wastewater treatment plants to water resource recovery facilities and pave the way to deliver circular economy by inter-sectorial value chains.

Special commendation – Hussam Jouhara – Professor of Thermal Engineering

For three research activities that have addressed heat transfer and reduced environmental impact. Projects include innovation in Brazil's traditional Mate tea industry, an EU Horizon 2020 project to recover more than 40% of the waste heat from energy intensive industries by the use of heat pipe heat exchanges, and improving power battery cooling technology.

Global Impact – For impactful and engaged research where the outputs have generated impact benefitting one or more developing countries.

Winner – Simon Taylor – Professor of Computer Science

Through the long term support of African e-Infrastructure development and the creation of the FAIR Open Science Platform, Simon's research has enabled African nations to develop their own e-Infrastructures, develop national e-Infrastructure services for Open Science, African scientific communities to begin to benefit from Open Science, and, is changing scientific practices at national and regional levels across Africa.

Special commendation – Peggy Froerer – Reader of Anthropology

Peggy has provided a set of policy recommendations to the government of Chhattisgarh in India and successfully influenced government discussions about how to improve primary and upper primary school education in marginalised rural areas. Her ethnographic research has resulted in viable interventions, which aim to reduce the attainment gap between young people in rural India and the city.

Special commendation – Javaid Rehman – Professor of Law

Javaid's academic and advocacy work highlights discrimination and persecution of religious minorities of Pakistan and has led to significant changes in law in Pakistan. In January 2020, the Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology issued a joint statement with him, declaring that forced conversions and forced marriages are prohibited within Islam. In February 2020, the Punjab Ministry of Human Rights and Minorities Affairs decided to introduce a 2% minority education quota in provincial higher education institutions, following his recommendations.

Policy Impact – For impactful and engaged research where the outputs have made a clearly identified impact on an area of policy at a local, national or international level.

Winner – Louise Mansfield – Professor Sport Health and Social Sciences

Louise and colleagues' research on community sport for public health and well-being has changed national policy and guidance on evaluating community sport for Sport England, transformed evaluation behaviours of community sport for health projects funded by Sport England and informed UK Government policy on sport for well-being through evidence-led decision making (e.g. DCMS). The work has significantly benefited the health and well-being of least active people in England by raising physical activity levels through community sport design and implementation.

Special commendation – Justin Fisher – Professor of Social and Political Sciences

Justin's research has shaped the campaigning strategies of political parties, delivered important findings for and influenced the approach of the Electoral Commission, overseas commissions and informed the media on the conduct, administration and regulation of elections.

Special commendation – Robin Jarvis – Professor of Accounting and Finance

Investigating the payday lending business model, Robin also assessed the consumer detriment in payday loans, subsequently making recommendations – at a Roundtable in the House of Lords – to change regulation to protect consumers and impose an interest rate cap on pay lending. Since the changes in regulation in 2018, ex-customers have received £400,000,000 in compensation from the biggest payday lender alone, and the number of payday lenders has dropped by 80%.

Public Engagement – For impactful and engaged research where either the impact of the research has been significantly enhanced through two-way dialogue with a particular public, or the research has been communicated effectively with the wider public through innovative or inspirational methods.

Winner – Dr Inge Dornan – Senior Lecturer in Politics and History

For a series of public engagement activities on 'Unlocking the Secrets of Britain's Slave Past' as part of the nationwide Being Human Festival. Inge, in collaboration with Dr Holly Maples (now Essex University), Dr Alison Carrol, Archivists Mandy Mordue and Phaedra Casey, Sebastian Jenner and Thomas Ryan (RSDO), delivered an archival exhibition, led walking tours of the local connection to slavery and abolition, devised a theatrical performance based on an abolitionist meeting, and hosted a public lecture with BBC's Professor David Olusoga.

Special commendation – Eleanor Van den Heuvel and the Brunel Older People's Reference Group

The Brunel Older People's Reference Group was established in 2009 by Eleanor and colleagues to support the research undertaken by the then Brunel Initiative in Ageing Studies and subsequently the Ageing Studies theme. Under Eleanor's leadership, passion and creativity, the Group has grown to a membership of more than 250 local older people who support and have become integral to the success of ageing research in Brunel.



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