

Presidential Awards for Scientific Research (PASR): Criteria and Selection Process Over the Years

1. Background

The Presidential Awards for Scientific Research (PASR) are awarded by the National Research Council (NRC) to recognize outstanding scientific contributions made by Sri Lankan researchers. Over the years, the criteria and methodology for selecting awardees have evolved to align with international standards and ensure the recognition of high-quality research output.

2. Evolution of Selection Criteria

2.1 Criteria Applied During 1999–2009

During this period, the selection of awardees was based on publications indexed in the Science Citation Index (SCI).

The following criteria were applied:

- Publications listed in the SCI for a given year were considered if they included a Sri Lankan institutional address, either fully or partially.
- Non-research and trivial publications were excluded from the analysis.
- An index value of 2.0 was assigned to publications with exclusively Sri Lankan institutional affiliations.
- An index value of 1.5 was assigned to publications that included both Sri Lankan and foreign institutional affiliations.
- The assigned index value was equally divided among all co-authors to determine the Individual Author Index.
- The Individual Cumulative Index was calculated as the sum of all Individual Author Indices over the specified evaluation period.

2.2 Criteria Applied During 2010–2015

- Awards presented to Sri Lankan scientists with Sri Lankan institutional affiliations who published in journals indexed in the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE).

- Selection was based on either of the following criteria:
 - A publication in the top 10% of SCIE journals ranked by Impact Factor within the relevant subject category,
 - OR
 - Two or more publications in SCIE journals with an Impact Factor of 1.0 or above within the given year.

2.3 Criteria Applied in 2016

- Awards continued to be presented to Sri Lankan scientists with Sri Lankan institutional affiliations who published in journals indexed in the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE).
- The selection criteria were revised as follows:
 - The publication appeared in the top 15% of SCIE journals ranked by Impact Factor within its journal category;
 - OR
 - The publication appeared in an SCIE journal with an Impact Factor of 3.5 or greater during the relevant year.

2.4 Criteria Applied from 2017 to Present

- Awards are presented annually to:
 - Each of the top 150 papers published in journals with the highest SCImago Journal Ranking (SJR), provided that 20% or more of the authors are Sri Lankan scientists with Sri Lankan institutional affiliations;
 - OR
 - Each international patent (published or granted) based on a scientific innovation awarded during the relevant year to Sri Lankan scientist(s) with Sri Lankan institutional affiliations.

2.4.1 Selection Process

- Obtain the publication database from Scopus in Excel format for the relevant award year.
- The dataset includes all publications with contributions from authors using Sri Lankan institutional affiliations.
- The dataset contains publication details such as publication type, title, authors, affiliations, publication year, source title, ISSN, Source ID, ASJC classifications, CiteScore, SNIP, SJR, citation count, and FWCI.
- Filter the dataset according to the PASR eligibility criteria (Section 2.4) by:
- Sorting the dataset in descending order based on the SJR value.
- Calculating the percentage of Sri Lankan citizen authors using Sri Lankan institutional affiliations by dividing the number of such authors by the total number of authors in the publication.
- Identifying publications in which at least 20% of the authors are Sri Lankan citizens using Sri Lankan institutional affiliations.
- Cross-checking the nationality and institutional affiliations of the identified authors against the author names and affiliations reported in the original research article.
- Verifying the publication type and considering only original research articles for the awards.
- Referring publications such as systematic reviews, meeting abstracts, editorials, letters, corrections, notes, newspapers, book chapters, conference proceedings, case reports, correspondence, and communications to the NRC-appointed expert panel for a decision on their eligibility.
- Finalizing the top 100 eligible publications for further action.

2.4.2 Patent Awards

Applications are invited through newspaper advertisements published in all three national languages.

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Applicants must be Sri Lankan scientists with Sri Lankan institutional affiliations.
- Applicants must have obtained an international patent (published or granted) for a scientific innovation during the relevant award year.

2.4.3 NRC Merit Awards

In addition to the Presidential Awards, the NRC annually presents Merit Awards.

Merit Awards are granted for:

- Each of the second 100 papers published in journals with high SJR rankings, where at least 20% of the authors are Sri Lankan scientists with Sri Lankan institutional affiliations.
- Each national patent (published or granted) awarded during the relevant year to Sri Lankan scientists with Sri Lankan institutional affiliations.

2.5 Research Database Procurement

The research databases used for the selection process have changed over time as follows:

Period	Database Provider
1999–2014	Thomson Reuters
2015–2016	Clarivate Analytics
2017–2021	Elsevier B.V.

2.6 Database Purchase Costs

Year	Cost (USD)
2013	3,750
2014	4,125
2015	5,800
2016	6,500
2017 to 2021	The database has been obtained from Elsevier BV, with access provided free of charge. Elsevier has agreed to provide the annual dataset free of charge, thereby waiving the list price of USD 10,000

2.7 Timeline of Criteria Formulation and Implementation

Criteria Formulated	Criteria Implemented
2001	Awards for 1999–2009
2014	Awards for 2010–2015
2018	Awards for 2016
2018	Awards from 2017 to Present