

Research Committee HDR student representative – candidate statements

Candidate 1 – Nusrat Subah Binte Shakhawat

Hello, fellow HDRs! I am Nusrat, and I am honored to nominate myself as a candidate for this election. Currently, I am pursuing a PhD in Engineering in Mt Helen campus with a research focus on enabling flexible microgrids with energy storage, a topic related to the future of sustainable energy and resilient power systems. I am from Bangladesh where I completed my undergraduate studies from BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology). I had the privilege of serving as Chairperson of the IEEE BUET Student Branch. I have organized numerous technical and professional development events, fostered collaboration with industry partners, and gained valuable experience in leadership, teamwork, and advocacy.

Moreover, I have represented my peers as a batch representative and contributed to BUET Brain Teaser Club, experiences that strengthened my ability to listen to diverse perspectives and work collectively toward common goals. I believe that I comprehend the importance of creating inclusive spaces where every voice matters.

As a PhD candidate, I understand the challenges HDR students face, from academic progression to wellbeing and professional development. If elected, I will actively represent our needs on the committee and work to ensure that every HDR student feels supported and valued.

Candidate 2 – Rebecca Farnell

I aspire to contribute to the research committee by bringing a strong foundation in academic excellence, research experience and stakeholder engagement. As a current PhD candidate developing diagnostic surveillance tools for problematic parasitic worms in sheep, I work closely with farmers and industry stakeholders to ensure my research outcomes are relevant and applicable. Prior to commencing my PhD, I completed Honours research investigating the function of important immune cells in horses suffering from a common endocrine disease.

My research contributions and academic excellence have been recognised and supported by various scholarships and funding schemes. Additionally, I have presented at multiple conferences, and actively engaged in knowledge translation through teaching, community outreach and engagement opportunities. Examples include being a demonstrator in university courses, student ambassador, student mentor, and participating in scientific outreach events – such as Day of Immunology, educating the public on parasites at Auckland Zoo and communicating my research to sheep farmers.

I am committed to supporting the collaborative, forward-thinking and exciting research culture at Federation University. I would highly value the opportunity to contribute to the strategic priorities of the research committee through utilisation of my strengths in scientific communication, stakeholder engagement and academic leadership.

Candidate 3 – Jessy Benny

My name is Jessy Benny, with over 10 years of academic experience and a strong foundation in research, I am excited to nominate myself for the Research Committee. I hold three Master's degrees, including a recent Master of Health (Research Practice) from Federation University and I am currently pursuing my PhD (Second Year). My academic journey has deepened my understanding of the research landscape — from proposal development and ethics to data analysis and knowledge translation.

I am passionate about research that makes a real-world impact and believe students should play an active role in shaping the research culture of our university. If elected, I will ensure student voices are represented in discussions about research policies, resources, supervision quality and opportunities for collaboration.

Having been both a researcher and a mentor, I understand the challenges students face — whether it is navigating funding, balancing workload or accessing support. I will advocate for transparency, equity and innovation in all research-related matters.

Your research matters — and your voice should be heard. Vote for me please to represent your interests, raise your concerns and help create a more supportive, inclusive and forward-thinking research environment.

Currently I am on study leave from the workplace. Therefore, I will have ample time to concentrate on this matter.

Best Regards

Jessy Benny