

ACM CRC HDR Student Prize 2026

The Pitch: Backing the Next Generation of Composites Entrepreneurs

Call for Submissions / Expression of Interest - Open to all ACM CRC HDR Candidates

Overview

The ACM CRC HDR Student Prize recognises outstanding academic and industry-focused research from our Higher Degree by Research (HDR) cohort, celebrating excellence in research, innovation and engagement aligned with the goals of the CRC.

For 2026, the format has a new twist. Rather than presenting a traditional research summary, candidates will deliver a Shark Tank-style pitch, framing their technology as a commercial proposition. The goal is to build entrepreneurial thinking across our next generation of PhDs, and to sharpen the skills needed to communicate research impact to industry, investors and government stakeholders.

A shortlist of finalists will be selected from all submissions to pitch live at the ACM CRC Partner Meeting 2026, in front of industry partners, university leads and the ACM CRC Board. The winner will be announced at the event.

What You're Submitting

A written pitch document of 2-5 pages covering the technology you are developing and its commercial and national potential. Submissions should be pitched at a partner/investor audience, not a technical peer-review panel - clear, confident and jargon-light.

Your pitch document should address:

- **The Technology** - what it is, the problem it solves, and what makes it novel or differentiated
- **Technology Readiness Level (TRL)** - current TRL, supporting evidence, and the pathway to the next stage
- **Total Addressable Market (TAM)** - the size and structure of the market opportunity, with credible sourcing
- **Relevant Sectors** - industries and value chains that stand to benefit or adopt the technology
- **Benefit to Australia** - sovereign capability, workforce, environmental or social value created
- **Economic Impact** - the commercial and economic potential your PhD research can unlock, including realistic next steps to get there

Who Can Apply

Open to all current ACM CRC HDR candidates.

As part of your involvement with the CRC, all HDR students are expected to participate in the ACM CRC HDR Student Prize.

Selection Process

- Written pitch submissions (2-5 pages) are reviewed by the ACM CRC assessment panel.
- Finalists are selected and invited to deliver a live pitch at the ACM CRC Partner Meeting 2026.
- Finalists present to partners and the Board; the ACM CRC HDR Student Prize winner is announced at the event.

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Assessment Criteria

Criteria	What We're Looking For
Innovation & Differentiation	Genuine novelty in the technology and a clear point of difference from existing solutions.
Technical Credibility	Realistic, well-evidenced TRL assessment and a believable pathway to further development.
Commercial Potential	A credible market opportunity with a defined pathway to adoption or commercialisation.
National & Economic Impact	Clear articulation of the benefit to Australian industry, sovereign capability and the economy.
Pitch Delivery (finalists)	Clarity, confidence and persuasiveness in communicating the opportunity to a partner/investor audience.

Prize

The winner of the ACM CRC HDR Student Prize will be announced live at the ACM CRC Partner Meeting 2026, with recognition across the ACM CRC partner network. Full prize details will be confirmed with finalists.

How to Submit

- Prepare your 2-5 page written pitch addressing the criteria above.
- Submit your pitch document, along with your name, university, supervisor and ACM CRC project number, to projects@acmcrc.com.
- Submissions will be acknowledged by the ACM CRC team, and finalists will be contacted directly with presentation details for the Partner Meeting.

Key Dates

Milestone	Date
Call for submissions opens	3 July 2026
Submission deadline	24 July 2026
Finalists notified	31 July 2026
Live pitch - ACM CRC Partner Meeting 2026	19-20 August 2026

Questions & Contact

If you have any questions about the process, the pitch format, or would simply like to talk through your idea before submitting, get in touch with the ACM CRC team:

Email: projects@acmcrc.com

Research Portfolio Manager: Dr Puneet Garg, ACM CRC

If you haven't registered to attend the event, please click [here](#).

We look forward to seeing how you'd pitch the future of Australian composites manufacturing.