

Dr. Janet McMahon Rising Star Award

The Rising Star Award is presented to an individual demonstrating exceptional promise in the field of distance education. “Distance Education” includes online, hybrid, asynchronous/synchronous modalities, and related digital learning environments.

No more than 5 years of post-qualification experience relevant to distance education. Part-time or consultancy work counts toward experience if the work is in the field.

Criteria	10 – Strong	5 – Medium	1 – Weak
Impact in Distance Education (0–10)	Clear impact: Demonstrates tangible, measurable improvements (e.g., learner outcomes, access, engagement) attributable to their work. Scope of impact: Reach across courses, programs, institutions, or learner populations; national or international relevance preferred. Sustainability/Scalability: Initiatives that can be scaled or sustained beyond a single project.	Clear impact: Demonstrates some tangible, measurable improvements (e.g., learner outcomes, access, engagement) attributable to their work. Scope of impact: Reaches across some courses, programs, institutions, or learner populations; national or international relevance preferred. Sustainability/Scalability: Initiatives that can be somewhat scaled or sustained beyond a single project.	No impact: Does not demonstrate tangible, measurable improvements (e.g., learner outcomes, access, engagement) attributable to their work. Scope of impact: Does not reach across courses, programs, institutions, or learner populations.. Sustainability/Scalability: Initiatives can’t be scaled or sustained beyond a single project.

Promise and Leadership (0–10)	Leadership potential: Evidence of initiative, vision, and the ability to lead teams or collaborate across disciplines. Mentorship/Community building: Involvement in mentoring peers or building communities of practice. Professional trajectory: Clear plan for continued growth and contributions to the field.	Leadership potential: Weak evidence of initiative, vision, and the ability to lead teams or collaborate across disciplines. Mentorship/Community building: Some involvement in mentoring peers or building communities of practice. Professional trajectory: Loosely defined plan for continued growth and contributions to the field.	Leadership potential: No evidence of initiative, vision, and the ability to lead teams or collaborate across disciplines. Mentorship/Community building: No involvement in mentoring peers or building communities of practice. Professional trajectory: No clear plan for continued growth and contributions to the field.
Innovation and Creativity (0–10)	Novelty of approach: Innovative methods, tools, or pedagogies addressing real needs in distance education. Problem-solving effectiveness: Demonstrated ability to overcome barriers (access, equity, technology, scalability).	Novelty of approach: Some innovative methods, tools, or pedagogies addressing real needs in distance education. Problem-solving effectiveness: Some demonstrated ability to overcome barriers (access, equity, technology, scalability).	Novelty of approach: No use of innovative methods, tools, or pedagogies addressing real needs in distance education. Problem-solving effectiveness: No demonstrated ability to overcome barriers (access, equity, technology, scalability).

Scholarship, Research, and Evidence (0–10)	Research quality or scholarship: Quality outputs such as studies, assessments, or reflective practice disseminated to relevant audiences. Evidence-informed practice: Use of data, evaluation, or analytics to inform decisions and demonstrate impact.	Research quality or scholarship: Some quality outputs such as studies, assessments, or reflective practice disseminated to relevant audiences. Evidence-informed practice: Some use of data, evaluation, or analytics to inform decisions and demonstrate impact.	Research quality or scholarship: No quality outputs such as studies, assessments, or reflective practice were disseminated to relevant audiences. Evidence-informed practice: No use of data, evaluation, or analytics to inform decisions and demonstrate impact.
Collaboration and Community Engagement (0–10)	Cross-institutional or cross-disciplinary collaboration: Partnerships that broaden reach or enhance impact. Community and stakeholder engagement: Involvement with learners, instructors, administrators, or policy makers; responsiveness to stakeholders.	Cross-institutional or cross-disciplinary collaboration: Some partnerships that broaden reach or enhance impact. Community and stakeholder engagement: Some involvement with learners, instructors, administrators, or policy makers; responsiveness to stakeholders.	Cross-institutional or cross-disciplinary collaboration: No partnerships that broaden reach or enhance impact. Community and stakeholder engagement: No involvement with learners, instructors, administrators, or policy makers; responsiveness to stakeholders.