McPherson Eye Research Institute
Distinguished Paper Award Guidelines

A competitive award funded by the McPherson Eye Research Institute’s Cycle for Sight event, given annually to McPherson ERI member trainees. Recipients will receive a small gift as well as the ability to cite the award on their CV.

**PURPOSE/RATIONALE:**

1. To recognize and reward the outstanding work of our research trainees.
2. To highlight the breadth of research activities within the Institute.
3. To assist in career development.

**ELIGIBILITY:**

1. Applications will be accepted only from trainees whose direct principal investigator mentors are members of the McPherson Eye Research Institute at any Wisconsin institution.
2. Trainees invited to submit include undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and medical or veterinary students.
3. In order to receive an award, the trainee must be, or must become (prior to receiving the award), a Trainee Member of the McPherson Eye Research Institute (trainee membership is not required if the applicant is an undergraduate).
4. An applicant may re-apply but is only eligible for one paper award per training period (e.g., graduate school training, postdoctoral fellowship, etc.).

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. The submission of a full-length paper or scholarly product published within the last eighteen months.
2. Applicant must be the first author or co-first author of the paper and have written the majority of the paper.
3. The paper must be a primary research article (preferred) or review article written by the student (not the PI).
4. The paper must be published in a peer-reviewed journal or peer-reviewed conference proceedings, or published online in early view.
5. For other scholarly products, please contact us first for approval to apply.

**TIMELINE:**

Applications open: **October 19, 2022**
Submissions due: **November 21, 2022**
Recipients announced: **January 2023**
Submit grant applications to Chris Lacey: chris.lacey@wisc.edu

**APPLICATION FORMAT:**

1. Complete the application on the provided fillable form using single-spaced text, Arial font no smaller than 11 point, and page margins of 0.5 inches. The form must be signed by both the trainee applicant and their principal investigator.

   a. Please note that the lay description of your paper should be written in language that a person not in your field can understand. Your application will be judged in large part on this lay description as the review panel is
comprised of researchers from several different scientific fields, including psychology, neuroscience, computer science, ophthalmology, etc. Make sure you convey the purpose and importance of your paper so that a researcher from any school, college, or department can understand it. **Your lay description should include a discussion of (1) why the paper is outstanding in its field and (2) the specific contributions of the applicant in conducting the research and writing the manuscript.**

b. Indicate (by checking the appropriate box) the broad field of research to which the paper primarily belongs: Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, or Arts & Humanities.

c. By applying, the trainee grants permission for the McPherson ERI to publish their submitted lay-written paper description on the McPherson ERI website.

2. **A PDF copy of the paper / scholarly product.**

3. **A CV or biosketch for the applicant** (two-page maximum).

4. **A statement from the PI** indicating the contribution/role of the student on the paper/scholarly product and the impact/importance of the work.

**AWARD:** Recipients will receive a small gift as well as the ability to cite the award on their CV. The gift must be picked up by the awardee at the McPherson ERI office (9431 WIMR), unless the awardee is at a non-UW–Madison location.

**PROPOSAL REVIEW:** Applications will be reviewed relative to other applications in the same broad research field by members of the McPherson ERI Education and Leadership Committees, who come from varied departments across the UW–Madison campus and who have expertise in a wide range of research fields, most of which will be outside your own. Thus, aim to communicate clearly in your lay description (of note, this is an important skill to have throughout your career). **Review criteria** include meeting the requirements listed above and fully completing the application form with particular attention to (1) the lay description of the paper (i.e., why is the paper outstanding?) and (2) the specific contributions of the applicant to the overall study and the writing of the manuscript.