

BPA Prizes 2027: Guidelines

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The BPA seeks to award annual prizes to promote and celebrate the best of philosophy in the UK to a wider audience. The award winners in 2026, their first year, can be seen [here](#).

Prize categories

This year, nominations are open for prizes in the following categories:

- Philosophy in the community
- Teaching philosophy in schools
- Contribution of research beyond the academy
- Public communication of philosophy
- Public Engagement (PhD student)
- Service to the profession
- Service to UK philosophy (not by prof academic philosophers)
- Philosophy trade book of the year
- Philosophy department of the year

Timeline

Call opens	Monday 2 November 2026
Submission deadline	Monday 11 January 2027
Shortlisting announcement	Monday 8 February 2027
Award ceremony (online)	Friday 19 March 2027, 4.30-5.30pm

Process

Applications are welcomed from a nominator for each award. Candidates cannot nominate themselves, except in the case of the awards for 'Philosophy Department of the Year' and 'Service to UK Philosophy (not by professional academic philosophers)', in which case nominations are welcome either from a nominator or the candidates themselves.

Nominators should seek the consent of their nominee in advance. The nominee should be made aware of the terms and conditions of the awards and in particular the condition that, if shortlisted, they provide a photo of themselves for publicity purposes and consent to the details of the application be made public. (Confirmation that these conditions are met is required on the nomination form).

The application should include:

- A completed online nomination form (see the individual prize pages).
- A reference, from someone other than the nominator, of no more than 300 words. This should be sent by the referee to admin@bpa.ac.uk by the nomination deadline.

Enquiries

Enquiries should be made to Helen Beebee, h.beebee@leeds.ac.uk.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Eligibility

With the exception of the awards for 'Philosophy Department of the Year', 'Teaching Philosophy in Schools' (which is also open to schoolteachers), 'Public Engagement (PhD student)' and 'Service to UK Philosophy (not by professional academic philosophers)', candidates for an award must either be employed as a philosopher by a higher education institution in the UK, or be retired from such a post, or, if not, have worked in such a post within the last three years and that must be their last academic employment.

Current members of the Executive Committee of the British Philosophical Association may not be nominated.

Individuals should not be nominated for more than one prize in any one year (but they may also be a member of a department that is nominated for Philosophy Department of the Year). Individuals, departments and organisations should ensure that they give consent to only one application that nominates them for an award.

A past winner of an award may not be nominated again for the same award.

Procedures & consent

Nominators and nominees consent to the details of the application being made public on the BPA website, social media, and in other places, to promote and celebrate the awards.

Candidates agree to provide a photo of themselves if they are shortlisted, and consent to that photo being made public on the BPA website, social media, and in other places, to promote and celebrate the awards.

The above consents extend to the BPA advertising the awards by releasing details of who is on the shortlist, and details of the applications (with the exception of the referee reports), and other information that they deem fit, in advance of announcing the winners.

For the 'Trade book of the year' prize, nominators must supply a copy to the judging panel, e.g. as a hard copy or as a pdf of the final proofs.

Shortlists may not be announced in every prize category, if there is not a suitable pool of candidates. Nonetheless, a prize winner may still be announced in that category. The BPA reserves the right not to award each category of prize every year.

The winners will be announced at an online awards ceremony run by the BPA, which we hope that nominees, nominators, and many others in the philosophical community will be able and willing to attend.

The prize for all winners will be in the form of a framed certificate.

The BPA will keep a record of those short-listed and the winners made publicly available online for as long as the BPA shall exist.

The BPA's Prize Committee's decisions will be final and no feedback or correspondence will be entered into.

LIST OF PRIZES

PHILOSOPHY IN THE COMMUNITY

The BPA invites applications for its prize for individuals for engaging in philosophy in the community.

In no more than 750 words, applications should explain:

- (1) the community in which the activity has been carried out;
- (2) the activity that has been carried out;
- (3) the positive outcomes of the activity.

This award recognizes excellence in engaging in philosophical activities – which might include teaching or less formal forms of interaction – outside formal education. Communities might include community philosophy clubs, prisoners, refugees, sanctuary seekers, and homeless persons. Evidence of excellence may include (but is not limited to) testimonies from participants, charities, support workers, support groups, and other members of the communities. The reach and impact of the activity should be evidenced along with any contributions to equality, diversity and inclusion.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY IN SCHOOLS

The BPA invites applications for its prize for individuals for teaching philosophy in schools. Nominees must either meet the eligibility criteria for academic philosophers stated in the Terms & Conditions or be employed as (or retired in the last 3 years from) a schoolteacher.

In no more than 750 words, the nominator should explain:

- (1) the teaching in schools that has been carried out;
- (2) the positive outcomes of that teaching.

Nominators should give a brief description of the candidate's teaching activities. Evidence of excellence may come from candidate's teaching, curriculum development, contribution to equality, diversity and inclusion, and training others to teaching philosophy at primary or secondary school levels of education. Positive outcomes seen in students may include, for example, improved achievement, love of philosophy, educational aspiration, behaviour, and self-confidence.

CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH BEYOND THE ACADEMY

The BPA invites applications for its prize for individuals for research contribution beyond the academy.

In no more than 750 words, applications should explain:

- (1) the research on which the contribution drew;
- (2) the activities carried out that made the contribution outside of the academy possible;
- (3) the positive outcomes of the research beyond the academy.

Examples of contributions outside of the academy include, but are not limited to: society, culture, environment, economy, public policy, equality, diversity and inclusion, and quality of life outside academia. The BPA understands this prize to include, but not be limited to, impact as defined in the REF. We define contribution of research beyond the academy as excluding

both the public communication of philosophy and service to the profession, which are covered by other BPA prizes.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION OF PHILOSOPHY

The BPA invites applications for its prize for individuals for outstanding public communication of philosophy.

In no more than 750 words, applications should specify:

- (1) details of the publications, appearances, and/or other contributions;
- (2) the positive outcomes of this work, including an indication of its reach (i.e. which/how many people benefitted).

Public communication of philosophy is taken to include, for example: podcasting and social media; philosophical contributions to journalism and print publications; television and radio broadcasting; research fairs and festivals; other writing, events, and talks intended for non-academic audiences.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (PHD STUDENT)

The BPA invites applications for its prize for public engagement, specifically for PhD students in Philosophy.

In no more than 750 words, applications should specify:

- (1) details of the publications, appearances, community activities, teaching in schools, and/or other contributions;
- (2) the positive outcomes of this work, including an indication of its reach (i.e. which/how many people benefitted).

For the purposes of this prize, we take 'public engagement' to include all of the areas covered in the Philosophy in the Community, Teaching Philosophy in Schools, and Public Communication of Philosophy Prizes, as specified above.

Eligibility: At the time of nomination, the nominee must:

- be enrolled as a PhD student in a UK university (this includes having submitted their thesis and awaiting viva or making corrections);
- be supervised within a philosophy department or cluster (e.g. a political theory cluster within a politics department); and
- be writing a PhD with a substantial philosophical component.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

The BPA invites applications for individuals for its prize for service to the profession.

In no more than 750 words, applications should explain:

- (1) the service to the profession that the candidate has carried out;
- (2) the positive outcomes of that service.

The service can be to philosophical bodies, such as philosophical societies, associations, journals, and similar, but also to academia more generally, going beyond philosophy, such as appointments to grant bodies, service to national and international academies, and academic charities. The case might be made on the basis of a specific activity or set of activities over a relatively short period, or of a wide range of contributions over a long period of time. We define service to the profession as excluding that which would be covered by the BPA prizes for contribution to research outside of the academy and the public communication of philosophy.

SERVICE TO UK PHILOSOPHY (NOT BY PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHERS)

The BPA invites applications for its prize for outstanding service to UK philosophy, which may be awarded to individuals or organisations.

In no more than 750 words, applications should explain:

- (1) the service rendered to UK philosophy that the candidate has carried out in the last five years;
- (2) the beneficiaries of the service in the last five years – such as philosophical societies, associations, journals, academic philosophy more generally, and/or the wider public;
- (3) the positive outcomes of this work.

Service to the profession is taken to include: the public communication of philosophy, promoting, defending, supporting philosophy and philosophers, encouraging understanding and appreciation of philosophy and philosophers, and in all other ways supporting the activities of UK philosophy and philosophers.

Candidates who are individuals must not be currently employed as academic philosophers, or be retired from such a post, or have worked in such a post within the last three years. Organisations cannot be departments of philosophy. Indicative examples of candidates include: politicians, journalists, public figures, civil servants, those working in the educational and charitable sectors, academics in other disciplines.

PHILOSOPHY TRADE BOOK OF THE YEAR

The BPA invites applications for its prize for Philosophy Trade Book of the Year. For this first year of the Prize (2027), the book must have been published in the two preceding calendar years (i.e. during 2025 or 2026).

In no more than 750 words, applications should explain the basic content, and intended benefits of reading, the book. Evidence of take-up (e.g. sales/download statistics) or associated public engagement events may be included but is not required.

Nominators must supply a copy to the judging panel, e.g. as a hard copy or as a pdf of the final proofs.

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR.

The BPA invites applications for its prize for Philosophy Department of the Year to recognise and celebrate the outstanding collective achievements of a philosophy department in a UK university. 'Philosophy Department' is understood broadly to include departments of philosophy, academic units of philosophy within a larger department or school, such as

“subject areas”, or university schools with no named philosophy sub-unit but whose achievements (as specified in the application) clearly relate to philosophical research, teaching, etc.

In no more than 1000 words, applications should describe:

- (1) the department and the features that qualify it for the prize, citing evidence from the last five years;
- (2) the major achievements of the department, in the last five years.

Achievements may be in areas including excellence in teaching, research, impact, and outreach; maintaining or achieving exceptional standards; mentoring and training; establishing and maintaining outstanding departmental academic culture; tenacity and resilience in the face of adversity; contribution to equality, diversity and inclusion. Applications can, but need not, refer to external indicators of performance, such as NSS, QAA, REF, and other scoring systems. They may include testimonies to, and narrative accounts of, the department’s achievements, trajectory, and circumstances. Applications are welcomed from departments (or equivalent units) of any size and age or from a nominator (with the consent of the department).