



Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award

Background

In 1995 Tilburg University decided to introduce a Human Rights Award for academic publications in the area of human rights, with a view to draw more attention to this field of study in academic education and research. In 2002 the award was renamed the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award in honour of the Dutch Minister of State, first OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and former UN Rapporteur on human rights in Iraq, Mr. Max van der Stoel. In 2019, it was decided that the Tilburg Law School and the Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (NNHRR) will jointly organise the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award on a bi-annual basis starting in 2019.

Nominations for this award can be submitted by all faculties linked to universities in the Netherlands and the Flemish community, as well as the Asser Institute (as the coordinator of the NNHRR).

Eligible candidates

The award is conceived as an incentive award for junior researchers, and the nominations are limited to graduate, pre-doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. Senior academic staff cannot compete. Awards are presented in two categories:

- Category 1 for the best doctoral dissertation; and
- Category 2 for the best Master thesis.

Each faculty can nominate only one candidate in each category. The total prize money is € 4,000, to be distributed as indicated by the jury.

Criteria

'Human rights' are conceived of in a broad sense, to include such traditional human rights as the

right to free speech and the right not to be tortured, as well as social and economic rights, such as the right to food, housing, education, and health care. Publications may also look at human rights enjoyment by specific groups, for instance through the lens of gender, age or ethnicity, or human rights in specific situations, such as emergencies and during or after violent conflicts. Studies can focus as well on human rights procedures, institutions, and other forms of implementation, monitoring and enforcement. They may be theoretical in nature or based on empirical research.

To be eligible for nomination, doctoral dissertations must have been defended between **1 June 2023 and 1 June 2025**; manuscripts in the second category, Master theses, must have been defended **1 September 2023 and 31 August 2025**. Only manuscripts written in Dutch or English will be considered.

Submission Procedure

Candidates or nominators must inform their faculty board of their intended submission in due time. **Each faculty can nominate only one candidate in each category and nominations will be made according to the faculty's internal procedures.**

Requirements for doctoral dissertations:

- Each applicant must submit a PDF version of their dissertation, together with a nomination letter signed by the relevant authority at the faculty level **by 1 July 2025** via email to nnhrr@asser.nl, with the subject heading "PhD Nomination: Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award 2025". The thesis or letter of nomination should clearly indicate the names of the doctoral supervisor(s) and dissertation committee, as well as the contact details of the candidate.
- The Prize organizers reserve themselves the right to request printed copies of the dissertations at a later stage. Faculties and nominees will be informed about the procedure for this around the beginning of September 2025.

Requirements for Masters theses:

- Each applicant must submit a PDF version of their masters thesis, together with a nomination letter signed by the relevant authority at the faculty level **by 1 October 2025** via email to nnhrr@asser.nl, with the subject heading "Masters Nomination: Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award 2025". The thesis or letter of nomination should clearly indicate the names of the thesis supervisor(s), as well as the contact details of the candidate.

- The Prize organizers reserve the right to request printed copies of the dissertations at a later stage. Faculties and nominees will be informed about the procedure for this second submission around the middle of October 2025.

Category	Defence	Submit before
Doctoral dissertations	Between 1 June 2023 and 1 June 2025	1 July 2025
Master theses	Between 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2025	1 October 2025

Jury

All manuscripts will be evaluated, and the award winners selected by an international jury that has been assembled by Tilburg University and the Steering Committee of the NNHRR. This year's members of the jury are:

- Prof. Koen Lemmens (Chair) KU Leuven
- Dr. Gerhard van der Schyff (Tilburg University)
- Dr. Antenor Hallo de Wolf (Groningen University)
- Dr. Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh (University of Amsterdam)

Presentation

The ceremony of the Max van der Stoel Human Rights Award 2025 will take place on **10 December 2025** at Tilburg University.

Additional information

For more information, please contact nnhrr@asser.nl.