



Joint Winners Announced for the HKSS - John Aitchison Prize in Statistics 2025/26

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The Hong Kong Statistical Society (HKSS) has announced the joint recipients of the HKSS - John Aitchison Prize in Statistics 2025/26, awarded in recognition of excellence in PhD research in statistics and related disciplines.

Established in 2022 in honour of Professor John Aitchison (1926-2016), founder and first President of the HKSS, the prize recognises outstanding research as demonstrated through a published paper.

This year's prize has been awarded jointly to Dr Youqian Gao (pictured on the right), a 2025 PhD graduate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Dr Zhiwei Wang (pictured on the left), a 2025 PhD graduate of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Dr Gao was recognised for his paper, *Word-Level Maximum Mean Discrepancy Regularization for Word Embedding*, which introduces a novel framework for improving the robustness and generalisation of word embedding models in natural language processing.

Dr Wang received the award for *A Unified Framework for Identification of Cell-Type-Specific Spatially Variable Genes in Spatial Transcriptomic Studies*, which presents an innovative statistical framework for identifying spatial gene expression patterns and advancing understanding of complex traits and diseases.

Following careful consideration, the adjudication panel concluded that both papers represented significant methodological advances with strong practical applications, making them worthy joint recipients of the 2025/26 prize.

Our warmest congratulations go to both awardees.