

How to Write a Winning Learning & Teaching Award Application

OFFICE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

There are many reasons why you, as a successful university teacher, should apply for an award.

- You deserve due recognition for your efforts and achievements.
- Awards are excellent evidence for academic promotions applications.
- Your university will benefit from having award-winning teachers, and thereby attract high calibre students.

Overall, when evaluating a Learning & Teaching Award Application, assessors want to know ...

Who are your students? i.e. Cohort characteristics.

What is the context of your teaching, within and beyond the University? e.g. Discipline, degree, industry characteristics.

What problems, challenges or opportunities did you observe for these particular students? e.g. High drop and fail rates.

What outstanding contributions to student learning, and contemporary approaches to teaching, did you design,

develop and use to address these matters? Over what time frame? For how many students? Be specific and give detailed examples of student activity.

How do you know that these contributions and approaches worked? i.e. What changed? What was the impact on students and graduates? Relate the outcomes back to the specific challenges you described.



Here's how to write an award-winning application.

Come on – Spin the Wheel and use these tips as a checklist.

Problem, Solution, Impact (PSI)

Structure your application/narrative in response to three questions. What problem or challenge was occurring for your students? What did you do to resolve this challenge, and what did you have your students do? How do you know that your approach worked?

Outstanding & Innovative (OI)

Good teaching is a given. When applying for an award, you need to persuade the assessors that your approach and contributions were outstanding. Whether in an emerging or traditional context, your approach to facilitating learning needs to be innovative, and thus stands above and beyond what other university teachers are doing. Use relevant and substantive published references as support (e.g. National Good Practice Reports). Demonstrate that your approaches were informed by the published theory/research/scholarship.

Sandwich Presentation (SP)

At the top of your document, include a clear, plain-language, contextualised 25-word summary and then a short paragraph that provides a synopsis of the whole document. Make it compelling, with a hook. Use the exact headings and order of presentation as indicated in the guidelines. Leave room at the end for a closing summary. In this summary, include your next steps. Leave space between sections.

Categories & Criteria (CC)

Carefully align your application with the guidelines. Use the exact wording of the categories and criteria (and some of the dot-points beneath) and then contextualise. Provide specific examples and evidence of how you met each of these conditions. Ensure that you have provided longitudinal evidence that you have sustained these approaches for at least the time specified in the guidelines.

Students, Students, Students (SSS)

Keep the focus on your students and their learning. Remember that you teach students and not curriculum. Watch for overuse of the word "I" which indicates you are over-focusing on you and your teaching. Through your approaches and contributions, what do your students DO to learn? Be specific, descriptive, and provide compelling examples of student learning activity.

Evidence, Evidence, Evidence (EEE)

Provide evidence of the problem/challenge (e.g. student cohort data), and evidence of how you know your approach worked (e.g. learning analytics). Ensure that these two features align (i.e. connect the dots). Provide evidence that your approaches have been recognised by your colleagues and university. Include evidence that you have shared your approaches and that they have been adopted by others.

Student Evaluation of Courses & Teaching (SECT)

One of the expected forms of evidence comes from the surveys completed by students. Ensure that the selected questions support your case and include the question wording. Present in a table, including the mean score, likert scale, number of students enrolled and number of students responding to the survey (response rates). Provide comparative data (e.g. Faculty averages that you have well-exceeded).

Student & Graduate Quotes (SGQ)

Another good source of evidence is direct quotes. Use only specific quotes that support your case. i.e. Do not use "The best teacher I ever had." Do not 'block list' or 'cluster' quotes. Contextualise, make your point and then embed the quote in the narrative so that it clearly evidences your point.

