SUGGESTIONS ON WRITING A SUCCESSFUL AWARD APPLICATION

Below are some suggestions from the 2021 assessors and awards committees on writing a successful application:

1. Preparation
   - Think about the evidence and write up well ahead of the deadline. These applications can take a long time to put together. Make sure you collect evidence early and often. Commit to iterative evaluation and continual improvement.
   - Read the criteria carefully, spend time planning your application and ensure you have depth and spread of evidence supporting your application.
   - Make sure that the application has been read and reviewed by multiple eyes! Seek advice from former recipients. Seek advice from home university support.
   - Take advantage of the AAUTN mentor scheme. Seek a mentor who has gone through this process before and attend as many information sessions and workshop as possible.
   - Don't nominate for 'business as usual'. An award is for 'above and beyond'. Make sure you show what the above and beyond are and do it clearly.
   - Awards are very different to a CV, it is not about what you did, rather the impact of what you did. It is important to contextualise data in the same way that you would in a journal publication, whether it is qualitative or quantitative, you should acknowledge limitations and highlight importance.
   - Applying for an award is in itself a reflective journey. Start collecting your evidence early and show how you have grown as a result of this reflective process.

2. Application Writing

Do's	Don'ts
Think of the writing process as a three-legged stool. Firstly, make the claim. Secondly, tell us about the impact. Thirdly, give us the evidence.	Don't be afraid of writing to things that didn't go well. Pollyanna (good news only) stories are not usually accurate stories.
Find a hook for your work, create a narrative but use data to bring it to life. Be certain to present a theorised cause and effect argument sustained by adequate evidence.	Don't have evidence only in one section. Embed evidence throughout the whole of your application.
Engage with the literature and underpin your application with an evidence base. • Applications should indicate how the activity is drawing upon the scholarship and literature of university teaching and learning in your discipline and higher education more broadly. • Show examples of contributions to scholarship of teaching and learning (e.g., present conference papers and write peer reviewed journal articles) to share the practices.	Don't leave it to your referees to flag achievements such as collaboration and dissemination within Schools/Faculties/University etc.
Focus on the problem or opportunity you are dealing with, provide a clear argument as to why it matters (re the literature) - and then explain the how and evidence.	Don't neglect and or spend too much time of the background/ need for innovation. Too much description can weaken the application (e.g., explaining the theory used and then not spending much time explaining the innovation in teaching).
Tell a good story which flows and demonstrates resourcefulness and passion for enhancing teaching practices and students learning experience.	Don't waste too much valuable space talking about the actual innovation. Focus on evidence against the criteria.
Proofread again and again. Make sure any images with words in are large enough to be read.	Don't assume why particular approaches are innovative. Provide clear statements and arguments.

Use headings in the application that correspond with the rubric of assessment.	Don't recycle material you have used for previous applications at your institutions. Please look critically at each paragraph to ensure it gives the perspectives that are needed to make this application.
The best nominations are those which really give you a sense of the nominee as an educator, what makes him or her unique. While staying within the context and criteria, make sure it is 'your' story that is being told.	Don't presume insider knowledge. You should write to inform your reader - context context context - try to step outside your discipline, institution, faculty and imagine what an outsider needs to know in order to judge the uniqueness and special contribution you are claiming.
Be precise in your application as to what you are submitting. Make sure you select the best category for your application.	Don't refer to many initiatives, which can dilute the submission. Focus on major initiatives.
Make sure you have clear evidence of impact (qualitative and quantitative).	Don't retrofit a metric/equity group/outcome to the data. Be truthful in your application and tell your story in a meaningful way.

3. Provide evidence of the claims

- Impact evidence is not the same as outcome evidence. Try to provide evidence of the impact of your initiative/s in teaching and learning, beyond student satisfaction scores in standard evaluation instruments. For example, a map of achievement in grades in a task that has been developed and assessed over time; comments from other teachers who have been involved in teaching the subject about how student learning is impacted by the initiative based on their observations and reflections over time (so looking for other sources of evidence of impact).
- Try to focus more on the impact of activities and innovations you make on other's practice and dissemination of your work beyond your immediate context.
- The most challenging thing to evidence is impact over time. Think about contributions in light of the scale and scope of the impact (e.g., What is the sustainability of your innovations are you mentoring other so they can be carried on within the institution?)
- Ensure you have a systemic evaluation strategy and that you present evidence from several sources over the required number of years. Consider how you will demonstrate impact on others' educational practice.
- Evidence in the form of feedback - if evaluation has occurred that is over and above the standard institutional feedback, make this clear - it distinguishes extra commitment to monitoring quality.
- Claims have to be supported with evidence, but that evidence needs to be a balance of student feedback (quantitative and qualitative), institutional peer awareness and adoption, and internal and external recognition that focuses on the value of the work.

Do's	Don'ts
Support your initiatives with a breadth and depth of quality evidence	Avoid anecdotal evidence
Value of triangulating the claims; use of mixed-mode of data - quantitative data supported by qualitative analysis	Don't rely on student quotes, comments, and evaluations
Get good and frank peer review comments from a number of stakeholders	Don't overuse one type of evidence
Be specific and try to use recent examples wherever possible.	Don't be afraid of sharing not so good results in order to identify challenges and show impact of innovations.
Think about alternate sources of evidence, student comments are not enough but ask peers for feedback, send a report on your innovation to colleagues at other universities and get their feedback, ask employers about their feedback on your students - be creative in looking for feedback.	Don't use the same referee or data source more than once.