

Suggestions from the 2022 assessors and award committees on writing a successful nomination:

## Preparation

- Plan ahead, collect evidence - it often takes years to be an overnight success!
- Continually reflect on teaching practice and evaluate your work methodically, regularly and comprehensively.
- Evaluate new initiatives from the first iteration and track results, as well as what you do in response to feedback, for the next time. Ask yourself how you will know the impact of what you have done and determine how you will proactively evaluate from the outset, so that you have three years of evidence and development by the time you apply.
- Share your practice outside your discipline – national and international sharing is needed.
- Start early! Nominations take a lot of time. And don't hesitate to reach out to one of the [Mentors listed on the AAUT website](#).
- Be clear in your teaching philosophy - make sure that your innovations are evidenced-based and tethered to key scholarly literature.
- Think carefully about the award that you are nominating for - do you have enough material for a Teaching Award or just a Citation at this stage?

## Writing your nomination

- Pay very close attention to the assessment matrix and other material that is provided to assist you. Get some professional support to help you write, such as some editing support and a critical friend with experience in this area that can advise you.
- Read all the info; Have multiple reviewers who are not close friends and will give you an objective view.
- Argue persuasively. Make sure there is a clear narrative.
- Think about the narrative, provide illustration of contribution, link activities to quality and impact to wider community. Tell a coherent story through evidenced-based persuasive writing rather than description.
- Understand that passion and solid reviews from students are a given for nominees at the national level, so consider how you are going to best use the real estate in a nomination to show what makes you beyond exceptional.
- Give equal weight to each of the four criteria. Tell a story - show how your program, initiative or practice has developed and improved over time (with evidence demonstrating sustained impact). Ensure your focus is on the students and the impacts on them.
- Ensure all of the important information is included in the nomination. Some previous nominees had too much information in the appendices or websites.
- If you are basing your nomination on past submissions, such as an application for an internal award, make sure you examine how each sentence contributes to the criteria for these awards, and rewrite vigorously.

- Focus on one theme in your nomination.
- Put achievements in context. Some actions might be great in one domain but seem ordinary in another. Make it easy for the assessors to see why you are fabulous.
- Consider the audience doesn't know your discipline area - if something you are doing is new or innovative for your discipline, mention it! Make sure the context of your work is clear - your discipline, institution. Do not presume an understanding of your context, or use generic language (e.g., 'course' means different things).
- Ask someone completely outside your field to read your nomination before you submit it to check if they understand it - this helps with clarity and communication.
- Scholarship of Learning and Teaching is fundamental to frame nominations. Make sure you place your nomination/innovation in context of the literature.
- Reporting prior recognition in your nomination is great, but it should never be a substitute for explaining what you are doing.
- Lots of academics engage in wonderful and innovative teaching, but the award should focus on the impact of that teaching, rather than the teaching itself.

### **Providing evidence of the claims**

- Use the assessment matrix as your first step when compiling your nomination. Don't proceed if you don't have enough evidence of the types advised. It doesn't matter how good your program/teaching/activity is – if you can't evidence it to demonstrate this at a national level, your nomination won't succeed. Instead, concentrate on gathering your evidence and put forward your nomination in a future year. And ask a colleague if you can read their successful nomination.
- Focus on triangulating your claims with multiple forms of evidence - we want to see a methodical approach to demonstrating what works and why. Provide as much supporting documentation/references as possible – the more the better, including outside your immediate sphere of influence.
- Look at the assessment matrix and broaden your understanding of what constitutes evidence.
- If you cite some educational theory or approach, make sure it is evident in what you have actually done.
- Link the evidence to claims and consider/extend the reach of the program. Provide narrative around data.
- Provide evidence for breadth of influence and impact. Make sure you include evidence of esteem from the wider sector.
- Always ensure that your claim is backed up with evidence that is linked to student learning outcomes. Evidence of learning impact is KING!
- Quotes are illustrative and not quantitative evidence!
- Demonstrate evidence over time and do not claim something is continuous improvement when relying on evidence that is a few years old.