

Suggestions from assessors and award committees from 2022-23 on writing a successful nomination:

Preparing your nomination

- Start early - very early! Make sure you have a plan for your initiatives, and that you can justify and evaluate them. This really helps to show you're on a journey to improve learning and student experience.
- Plan ahead and collect evidence - it often takes years to be an overnight success! Your evidence is incredibly critical to the success of your nomination. Plan your evaluation program so you can provide strong evidence for the impact of your work.
- Continually reflect on your teaching practice and evaluate your work methodically, regularly and comprehensively.
- Evaluate new initiatives from the first iteration and track results, as well as how you address feedback. Ask yourself how you will know the impact of what you've 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 for an award.
- Share your practice outside your discipline – national and international sharing is needed.
- Seek mentoring from a colleague who is experienced as an AAUT assessor or reach out to one of the [Mentors listed on the AAUT website](#). They have gone through the process before and will have valuable wisdom to share.
- 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?
- Seek feedback from your institution and others who understand the AAUT process/requirements, or carefully read the AAUT resources. It may take a few years to prepare and submit a successful submission, so be patient and treat it as a long-term project - good luck!

Writing your nomination

- Pay 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.
- Structure your nomination effectively. Utilise the nomination templates provided and use visuals/graphs to break up the text. Reading large walls of text is very difficult for assessors to wade through and find the relevant evidence to support your claims.
- Focus on one theme in your nomination.
- 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: illustrate the contribution, link activities to quality and impact on the wider community. Tell a coherent story through evidenced-based persuasive writing rather than description.
- 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.
- Understand that passion and solid reviews from students are a given for nominees at the national level, so consider how you're going to best use the real estate in a nomination to show what makes you beyond exceptional.
- Ensure all the important information is included in the nomination. Some previous nominees had too much information in the appendices or websites.
- 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.
- Recognise that the process/context of awards and/or recognition from your discipline may need some explanation to maximise their impact for your nomination.
- 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 the 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 your claims

- Look at the assessment matrix and broaden your understanding of what constitutes evidence when compiling your nomination.
- Don't proceed with your nomination 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.
- Consider the three-legged stool approach: 1. Make a claim (with a persuasive narrative). 2. Give evidence for that claim. 3. Tell us about the impact of that claim.
- Always ensure that your claim is backed up with evidence that is linked to student learning outcomes. Evidence of learning impact is KING!
- If you cite some educational theory or approach, make sure it is evident in what you have actually achieved.
- Ensure the nomination engages with contemporary scholarship of teaching literature. Reference to only one or two scholars is not showing wide engagement with the pedagogical literature.
- Provide evidence for breadth of influence and impact. Make sure you include evidence of esteem from the wider sector. It's great to include quotes and data to show successful application outside of your institution.
- 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.