



AUSTRALIAN AWARDS  
FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING



# AAUT PD Series: Awards for Teaching Excellence

Writing a successful  
Teaching Award  
application

# Acknowledgement of Country

On behalf of those present, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we now meet. I pay my respects to their Elders: past, present and emerging.

I also pay my respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of Australia and hope that the path towards reconciliation continues to be shared and embraced.





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# Meet the AAUT team

Prof Angela Carbone, AAUT Director  
Ms Luana Spadafora, Awards Manager  
Ms Daniele Patterson, Awards Coordinator

# Agenda

**Welcome and Introduction to Teaching Awards**

**How to write a successful Teaching Award nomination**

- Factors that contribute to a successful Teaching Award nomination
- Teaching award subcategories categories
- Tips to effectively address the assessment criteria
- Examples of good forms of evidence

**Advice from two successful 2023 Teaching Award recipients**

**Q & A**

**Nomination timeline**



# Guest panelists



**Emeritus Prof Pip Pattison**

2024 Teaching Awards  
Committee Chair,  
University of Sydney



**A/Prof Zala Volcic**

2023 Australian University  
Teacher of the Year,  
Monash University



**Prof Alexander Maier**

2023 Award for  
Teaching Excellence (Science),  
Australian National University



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# Emeritus Prof Pip Pattison

2024 Teaching Award  
Committee Chair





# KEY FACTORS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TEACHING AWARD APPLICATION



A coherent narrative that:

- Captures *you* and your contribution as an outstanding educator – your philosophy, your aspirations, your approach to reflection and learning, your achievements
- Addresses *all* of the subcategories well and with compelling evidence against each assessment criterion
- Demonstrates *sustained* commitment and excellence

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS



- Start early on honing your reflection/feedback approach
- Gain experience, success with internal award programs
- Reflect early and openly, and start writing early
- Use the process for other purposes (future teaching plans, promotion, this and other awards, scholarly contributions)
- Seek feedback, support, mentoring through your ICO, the AAUTN website and from colleagues – they will be thrilled to help



# Teaching Award Categories

## Discipline categories

- Natural and Physical Science, Agriculture, Environmental and Related Sciences
- Engineering, Information Technology, Architecture and Building
- Health
- Education
- Business, Management and Commerce
- Society and Culture
- Creative Arts
- Multi-disciplinary

## Nomination categories



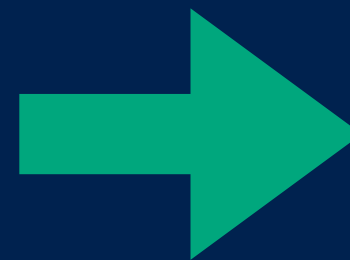
Early Career Award  
(up to 5 years teaching  
experience)



Neville Bonner Award  
for Indigenous Education



Up to nine AAUT Awards for  
Teaching Excellence



One award for Australian University  
Teacher of the Year

# Teaching Award Subcategories



Address all four subcategories:

- Approaches to teaching and/or the support of learning that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn.
- Development of curricula, resources or services that reflect a command of the field.
- Effective assessment practices that bring about improvements in student teaching, focus on academic integrity or digital solutions, or any assessment strategies that bring about change.
- Innovation or leadership that has influenced and enhanced learning and teaching and/or the student experience.

# Teaching Award Assessment Criteria



- A. Positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience for a period of no less than three years.
- B. Gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community.
- C. Shown creativity, imagination and/or innovation.
- D. Drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs and/or practice.



# Effectively Addressing the Assessment Criteria (Part 1)



- It may help in preparing your narrative to summarise what evidence you could provide for each subcategory and assessment criterion
- Evidence is most compelling when it:
  - is consistent, coherent and aligned with the narrative
  - is drawn from multiple and, ideally, some independent sources
  - provides an accurate view that collectively covers all of the assessment criteria for each subcategory

# Effectively Addressing the Assessment Criteria (Part 2)



- Graphs can be succinct and compelling
- A mix of quantitative and qualitative often works well
- Some applications are weaker on subcategory D (“drawing on scholarly literature”) – address *all*
- Seek feedback from colleagues



# Examples of good forms of evidence

In 2013, I was very grateful to receive a [redacted] University Postgraduate Students' Association Online Teacher of the Year Award. Of my five [redacted] teaching awards, this is the most treasured because it was student-nominated. It was a turning point for my teaching – I became motivated to invest in evidence-based evaluation, applying Brookfield's (1995) advice around multiple evidence points. I used feedback from esteemed teachers by participating in a national, multi-institutional trial of a Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme. This really helped me adapt my course delivery without reducing the student experience as student numbers increased from 12 to 60. I also used Brookfield's Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ, 1995) as a lens into students' experiences. I shared my reflections on what I 'heard' with students and adjusted my own teaching transparently and publicly in response. I used a reflective journal assignment as a second 'window' on student experience (Wals, 2014).

*'At first I was very reluctant to do this ... quite overwhelming. However ... I realised it was a great way to really think about everything I had learnt in the course and how that relates to my career'* (student survey, 2014).

Another survey evaluated the ten stages of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991). My data showed all my students went through one stage of transformational learning, and 73% went through 5+ (CV refs 26 & 27). Standardised university Student Feedback on Courses (SFC, /5), show student satisfaction consistently improved over 8 years (Figure 1).

Scholarly evaluation

Explaining the data

Triangulate with student quote – adding depth

Extend and link to research

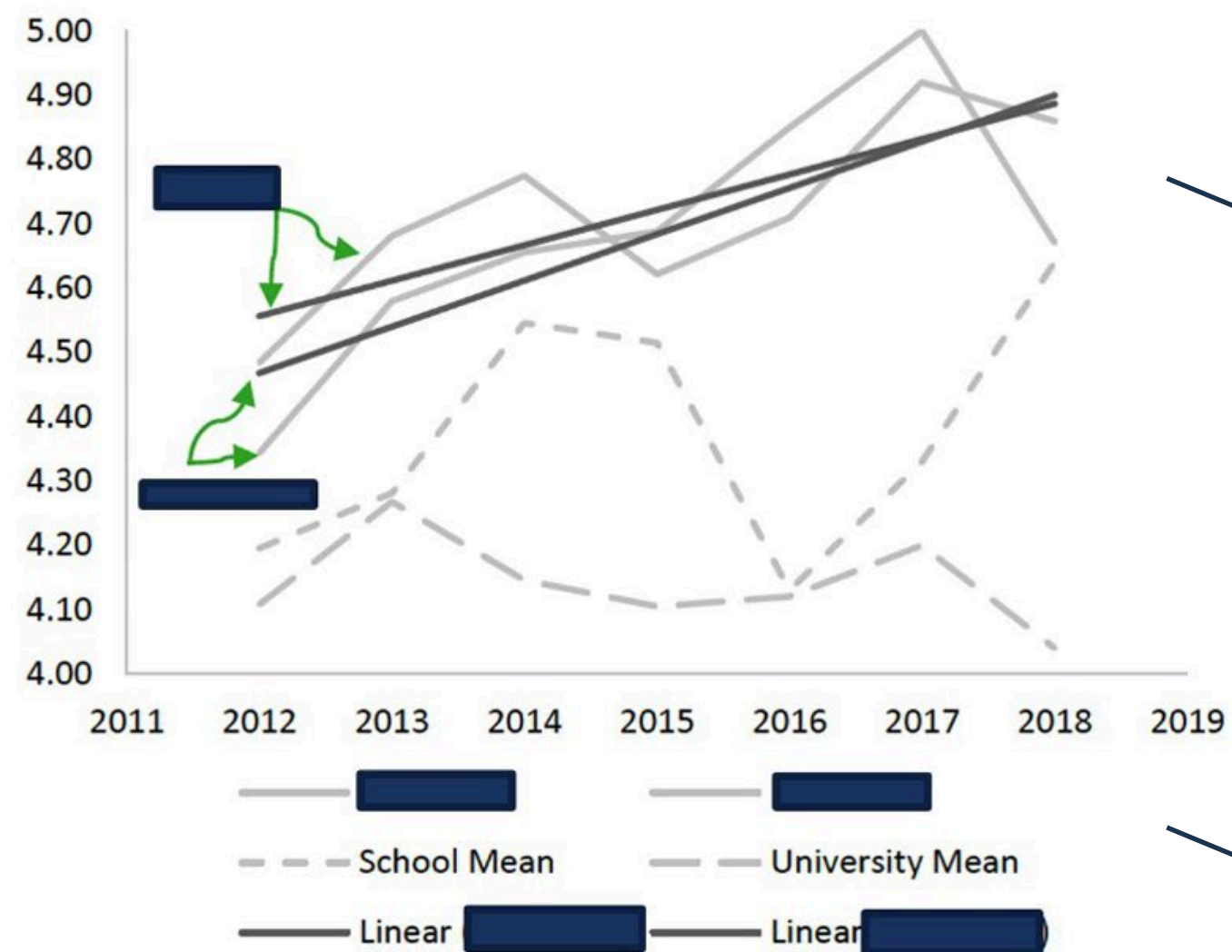
Using Quantitative data

Context and narrative

Graph explained

Outcomes benchmarked

Figure 1. Change in Student Satisfaction 2012-18





# Examples of good forms of evidence



*Descriptive data:  
qualitative and  
diverse*

*My impact was acknowledged by xxxx Faculty Staff Awards for Sessional Academic of the Year... and a Vice-Chancellor's Award for Sessional Staff Teaching Excellence ...I successfully sought funding to design... elective course xxxx Implementing Resilience & Addressing Complexity to replicate my own workplace experience.*

*Recognition via  
awards and  
funding*

*Context and  
narrative*

*I taught this intensive course for xxxx years for small groups of students (up to xxxx students at a time) with average student satisfaction rating of xxxx and won the DVC Academic's Merit List Award for this teaching... The course's success resulted in a second invitation, and associated funding, to design a completely a-disciplinary course xxxx Unravelling Complexity in a new transdisciplinary xxxx Master of Studies program...I really became excited when my graduating students were using their learning to change the world.*

*Student  
feedback*

*Impact through  
students and  
graduates*

*After discussing an idea within a course, one student founded and became the Managing Director of 'xxxx Sustainable Living', winning the xxxx Australian Association of Environmental Education xxxx Environmental Community Educator of the Year Award.*

*Another integrated her coursework learning into her role managing urban cooling for xxxx City Council, winning both a Council 'Shine' Award in 2016 for her Action Plan and the xxxx Government's Premier's Sustainability Award...*

# Supporting Materials

In addition to the 8 pages addressing criteria, nominees must also include:

- Curriculum Vitae
- 2 Reference letters
- Team statement of contribution (if applying as a Team nomination only)
- A 2-3 minute video of publishable quality (mov or mp4 file)
  - This is your opportunity to share spoken testimonials from students and/or colleagues, identifying what sets you apart as an excellent university teacher. You can also include footage of you in action, team members talking about your teaching/program or interviews with students.
- Digital photograph

Nominees can also submit:

- One website – include URL link in your PDF submission

OR

- 10 pages of supporting material in PDF format

# Final things to be aware of



- Panels attend to the coherence of narrative and evidence
- The nomination template greatly assists assessors/award panel to effectively identify how you meet the four assessment criteria. We strongly encourage you to use it, although it is not mandatory.
- Success often comes on a second or later attempt
- Most applicants – including you – ARE excellent teachers: the challenge is to communicate excellence in 8 pages!
- The resources on the AAUT website are excellent
- The process has been honed over some years by the AAUT Awards Team and now yields a high consistency of judgment





# Questions?



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Assoc Prof  
Zala Volcic

2023 Australian  
University Teacher of the  
Year

# Advice from a past award recipient



1. YOUR overall teaching philosophy.
2. Address all the selection criteria, but then **focus on ONE particular theme/concept/approach that is going to connect all your different points. For example, for me, it was a focus on community-building (my compassionate pedagogy)** that responds to the deficits associated with a media saturated environment in which students find themselves spending increasingly significant portions of their day interacting more with devices than each other and their educators.
3. Why and how your teaching is significant and unique? **Qualitative and Quantitative Evidence** from: students/peers/self.
4. Showing creativity, imagination. Think of **all the ways** you are creating spaces of intellectual and emotional belonging for students.



# Experience writing the nomination



**Reach out for support:** profound thanks here to Monash Arts Faculty (including Education Designers, Data Analytics Team; Arts Teaching Support Team); School of Media, Film, Journalism; and Monash Education Academy.

AAUT resources extremely rich and helpful.



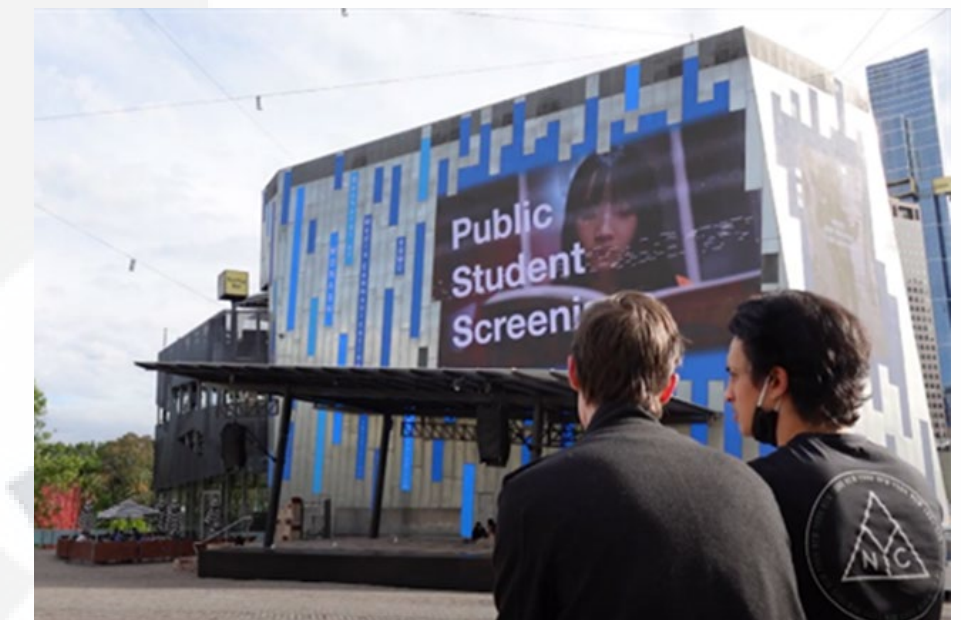
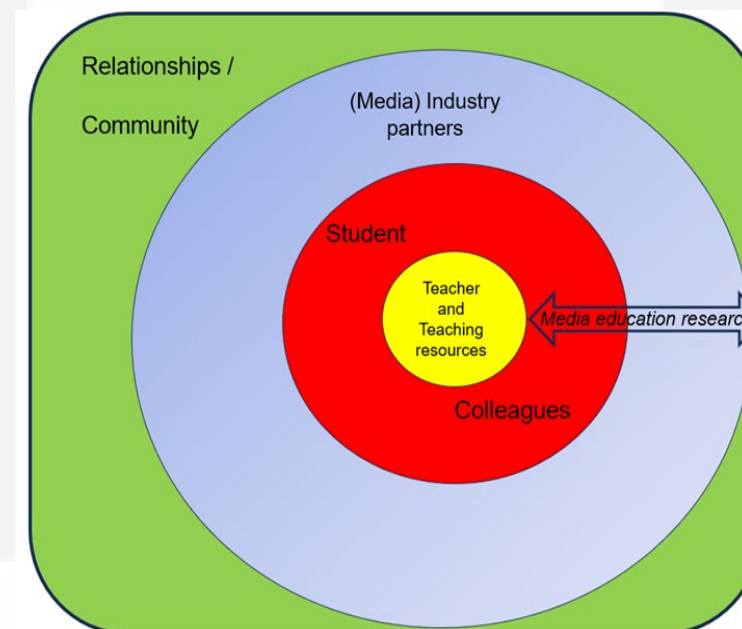
# Challenges



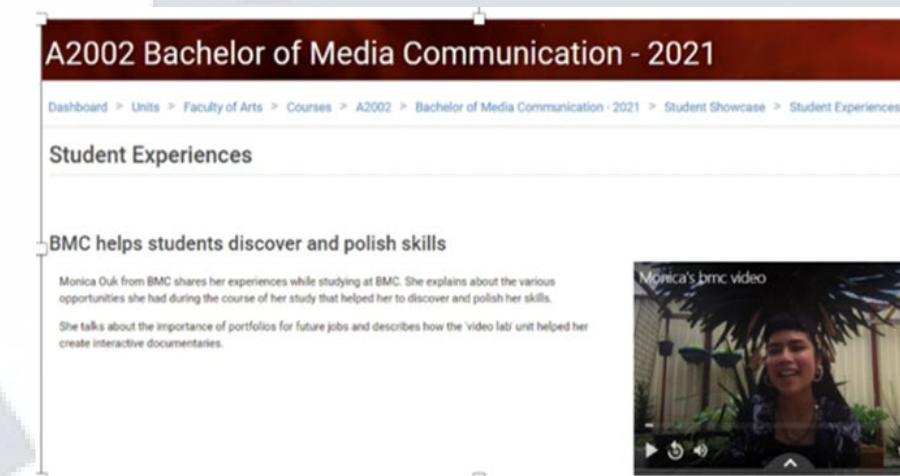
1. Writing your application takes time – it is really a slow process – and you will need attention and focus in fine-tuning it.
2. The importance of drawing on scholarly literature.
3. Addressing all the criteria: make sure you follow all the guidelines. Having data about teaching was so helpful: a challenge to convincingly demonstrate relationships between my key education activities and improvement of outcomes for students.
4. 4) Don't forget making a **video**! It has to compliment your narrative.

# Tips & Advice for future applicants

1. Use visuals to back-up your narrative. For example, create your own models, graphs, images.



2. Contact your reviewers asap; reach to national and international scholars.



The BMC Moodle site showcases student experiences, providing a place for students to learn from each other about opportunities within the degree. Students create their own videos, and the site also features a range of information about the degree, including interviews with industry experts.





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# Prof Alexander Maier

Australian National University

2023 Award for Teaching  
Excellence (Science)





Diverse & Content-rich  
-> Common Storyline?





It always takes longer than expected, even if you expect it.

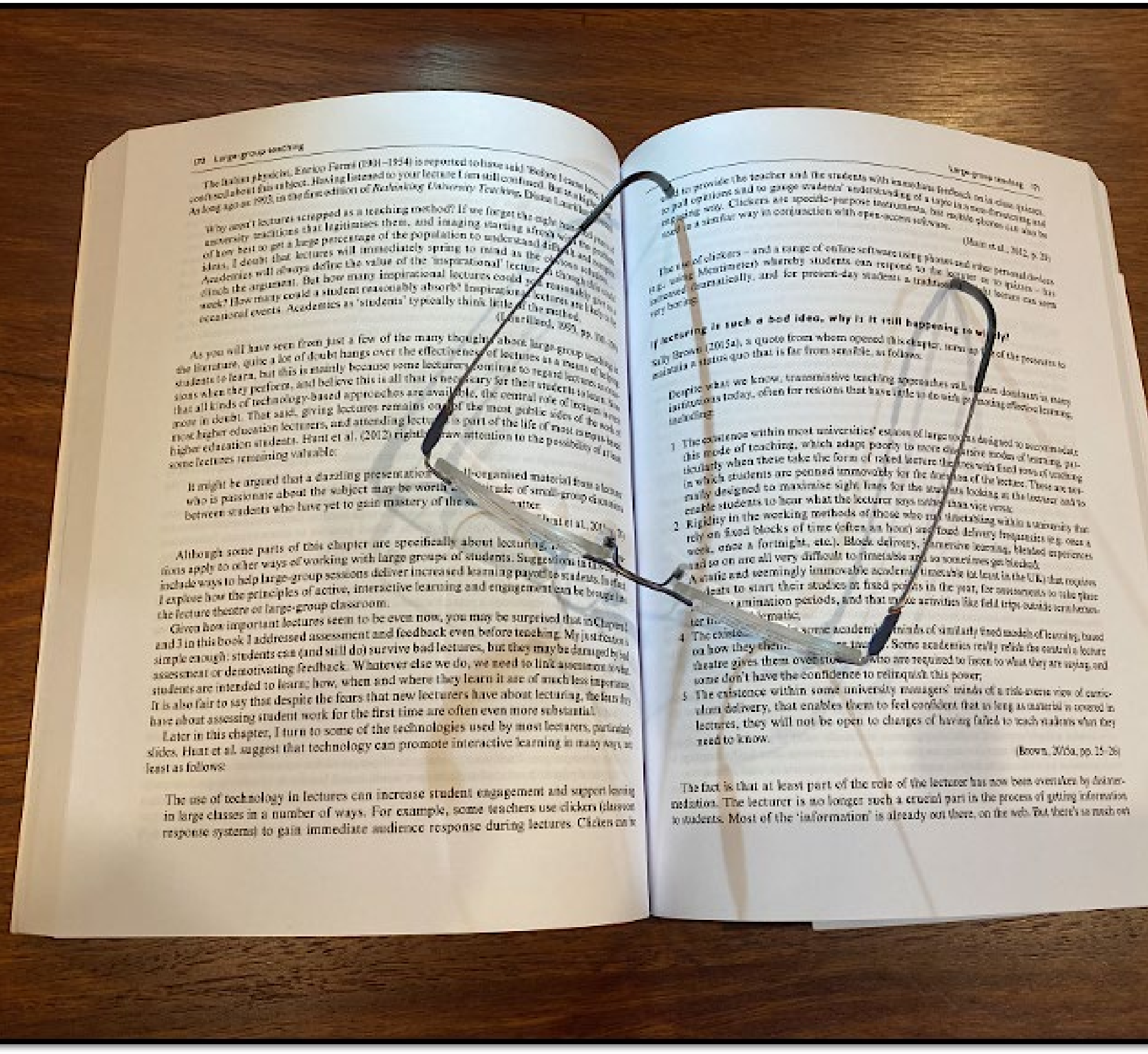
Attitude ->  
Personal  
Development





# Writing Style

# Link to Educational Literature



The Italian physicist, Enrico Fermi (1901–1954) is reported to have said 'Before I went to university I confused about this subject. Having listened to your lecture I am still confused. But ten days ago on 1903, in the first edition of *Resolving University Teaching*, Diana Laurillard

Why aren't lectures scrapped as a teaching method? If we forget the nightmarish scenes of university institutions that legitimise them, and imagine starting afresh with the promise of how best to get a large percentage of the population to understand difficult and complex ideas, I doubt that lectures will immediately spring to mind as the obvious solution. Academies will always define the value of the 'inspirational' lecture, and through this we can discuss the argument. But how many inspirational lectures could you reasonably give each week? How many could a student reasonably absorb? Inspirational lectures are like the occasional events. Academies as 'students' typically think little of the method. (Laurillard, 2003, pp. 100–101)

As you will have seen from just a few of the many thoughts about large-group teaching in the literature, quite a lot of doubt hangs over the effectiveness of lectures as a means of helping students to learn, but this is mainly because some lecturers continue to regard lectures as the only way when they perform, and believe this is all that is necessary for their students to learn. Even if all kinds of technology-based approaches are available, the central role of lectures is even more in doubt. That said, giving lectures remains one of the most public sides of the work of most higher education lecturers, and attending lectures is part of the life of most computer-based higher education students. Hunt et al. (2012) rightly draw attention to the possibility of at least some lectures remaining valuable:

It might be argued that a dazzling presentation of well-organised material from a lecturer who is passionate about the subject may be worth the sacrifice of small-group discussion between students who have yet to gain mastery of the subject. (Hunt et al., 2012, p. 20)

Although some parts of this chapter are specifically about lecturing, the principles and practices apply to other ways of working with large groups of students. Suggestions in this chapter include ways to help large-group sessions deliver increased learning payoffs to students. In effect, I explore how the principles of active, interactive learning and engagement can be brought to the lecture theatre or large-group classroom.

Given how important lectures seem to be even now, you may be surprised that in Chapters 1 and 2 in this book I addressed assessment and feedback even before teaching. My justification is simple enough: students can (and still do) survive bad lectures, but they may be damaged by bad assessment or demotivating feedback. Whatever else we do, we need to find assessment tools that students are intended to learn; how, when and where they learn it are of much less importance. It is also fair to say that despite the fears that new lecturers have about lecturing, the fears they have about assessing student work for the first time are often even more substantial.

Later in this chapter, I turn to some of the technologies used by most lecturers, particularly slides. Hunt et al. suggest that technology can promote interactive learning in many ways, at least as follows:

The use of technology in lectures can increase student engagement and support learning in large classes in a number of ways. For example, some teachers use clickers (classroom response systems) to gain immediate audience response during lectures. Clickers can be

used to provide the teacher and the students with immediate feedback on in-class questions, to poll opinions and to gauge students' understanding of a topic in a non-threatening and engaging way. Clickers are specific-purpose instruments, but mobile phones can also be used in a similar way in conjunction with open-access software. (Hunt et al., 2012, p. 20)

The use of clickers – and a range of online software using phones and other personal devices (e.g. using Mentimeter) whereby students can respond to the lecturer or to questions – has increased dramatically, and for present-day students a traditional lecture format can seem very boring.

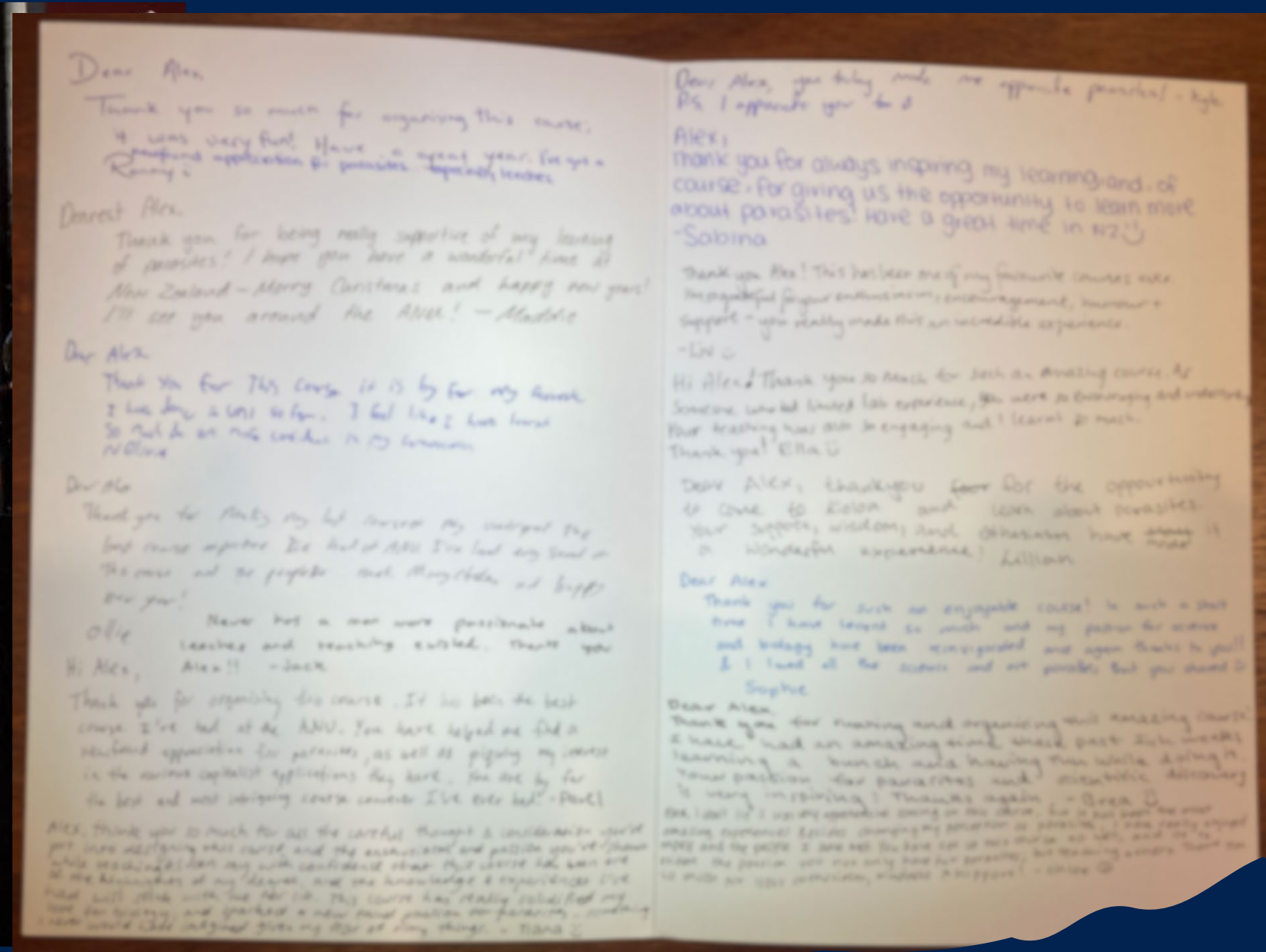
If lecturing is such a bad idea, why is it still happening so widely? Willy Brown (2015a), a quote from whom opened this chapter, turns to the role of the professor to maintain a status quo that is far from sensible, as follows:

Despite what we know, transmissive teaching approaches will continue dominant in many institutions today, often for reasons that have little to do with promoting effective learning, including:

1. The existence within most universities' estates of large rooms designed to accommodate this mode of teaching, which adapt poorly to more distinctive modes of learning, particularly when these take the form of roles lecture theatres with fixed rows of seating in which students are penned immovably for the duration of the lecture. These are normally designed to maximise sight lines for the students looking at the lecturer and to enable students to hear what the lecturer says rather than vice versa.
2. Rigidity in the working methods of those who run universities that rely on fixed blocks of time (often an hour) and fixed delivery frequencies (e.g. once a week, once a fortnight, etc.). Block delivery, intensive learning, blended experiences and so on are all very difficult to timetable and so sometimes get blocked.
3. Academic and seemingly immovable academic timetables (at least in the UK) that require students to start their studies at fixed points in the year, for assessments to take place during examination periods, and that make activities like field trips outside universities very difficult to timetable.
4. The existence within some academic environments of similarly fixed models of learning, based on how they themselves were taught. Some academics really believe the central lecture theatre gives them oversight of students who are required to listen to what they are saying, and some don't have the confidence to relinquish this power.
5. The existence within some university managers' minds of a risk-averse view of curriculum delivery, that enables them to feel confident that as long as material is covered in lectures, they will not be open to charges of having failed to teach students what they need to know. (Brown, 2015a, pp. 25–26)

The fact is that at least part of the role of the lecturer has now been overtaken by digitalisation. The lecturer is no longer such a crucial part in the process of getting information to students. Most of the 'information' is already out there, on the web. But there's no rush out





Help - Different Perspectives  
Qualitative - Collect Quotes  
Quantitative - Meaningful

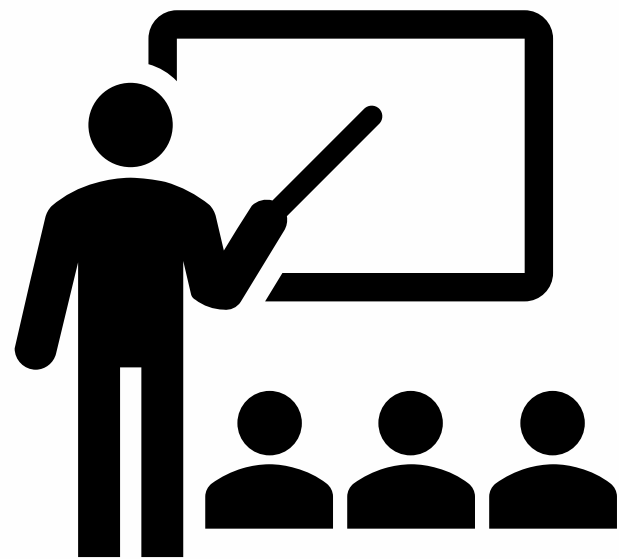






# Questions?

# Upcoming AAUT PD Sessions



**15 May**—Writing a successful Teaching Award nomination

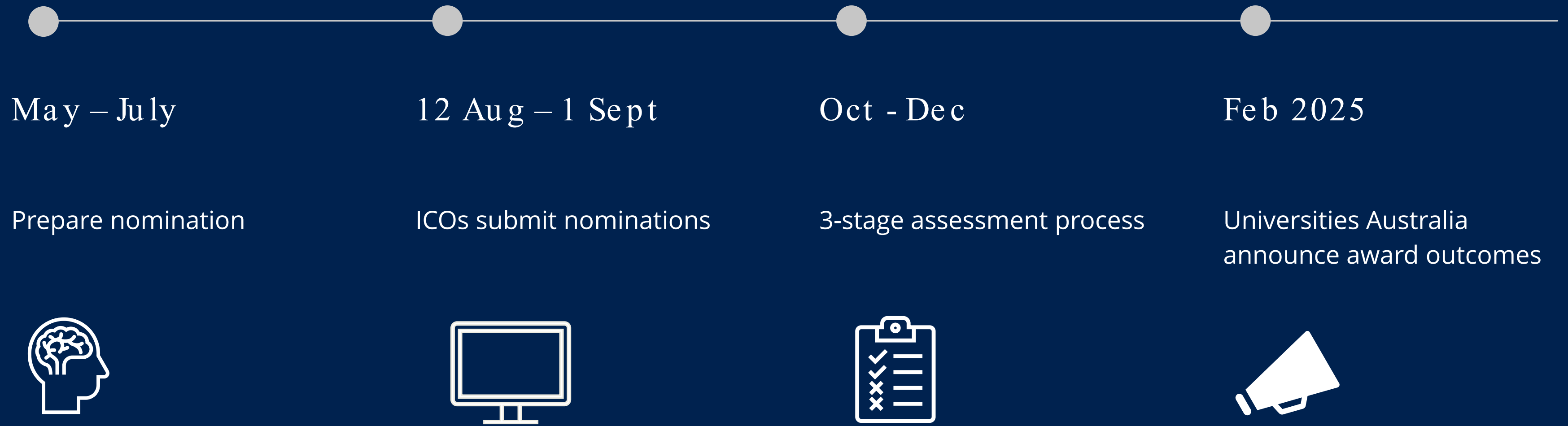
**21 May**—Writing a successful Citation nomination

**3 June**—Writing a successful Early Career Award nomination

**18 June**—Writing a successful Neville Bonner Award nomination

**26 June**—Writing a successful Program Award nomination

# Nomination process / Key dates







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WITH US



**More information**  
[AAUT-UA webpage](#)

**Mentoring Scheme**  
[aautn.org](#)



**AAUT Awards Team**  
[aaut@rmit.edu.au](mailto:aaut@rmit.edu.au)



[@AAUTnetwork, @ProfAngeCarbone](#)  
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