

Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards

2025 Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching

Up to 2 of \$7000 each – Nominations open 28 April and due by 4:00pm, Friday 27 June, 2025

Guidelines for nomination

The Awards for Excellence in Teaching give recognition to teachers (individuals and teams) who have enhanced the quality of learning and teaching through sustained commitment to innovation that enriches and improves student learning outcomes.

Staff Eligibility

The Vice-Chancellor's Learning and Teaching Awards are intended to encourage, recognise and reward excellence and achievement in all forms of teaching and/or in innovations, initiatives and services that contribute in diverse ways to student learning. They are available to individuals and teams of academic and/or professional ongoing, contract or sessional staff. Nominees must be employed at ECU at the time of their nomination and receipt of the VC Award. The application must pertain to work and impact that has been sustained at ECU for no less than three years (two years for early career). All award winners will demonstrate ECU's values of Integrity; Respect; Rational Inquiry; Personal Excellence; and Courage.

Nominees may only apply for one Award in any one year, with the exception that they may submit one individual application and one team application. Applicants who have received an award in the previous three years are ineligible to apply for the same award category but can apply for a different award category. Unsuccessful nominees are eligible to re-apply.

Please note that usually staff applying for a Teaching Excellence Award will have previously been awarded another form of VC Teaching Award (e.g. sessional; citation; program).

Expectations of Award Recipients

Please note, as a condition of entry all applicants may be requested by the Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching (or nominee), or Director, People and Culture (or nominee) to showcase their application on the university website as an ECU learning and teaching exemplar. Additionally, if successful, applicants may be asked to participate in the delivery of professional development activities aimed at the promotion and encouragement of quality learning and teaching practices at ECU.

Categories

There are eight categories:

1. Early Career – open to staff with no more than four years' experience teaching in higher education institutions
2. Natural and Physical Sciences, Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies

3. Engineering, Information Technology, Architecture and Building
4. Health
5. Education
6. Business, Management and Commerce
7. Society and Culture
8. Creative Arts

Subcategories

Nominations will be assessed on the evidence provided in response to the **following four** subcategories which will be given equal consideration by assessors:

1. Approaches to teaching and/or the support of learning that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn; e.g.

Fostering student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning

Participating in effective and empathetic guidance and advice for students

Assisting students from equity and other demographic subgroups to participate and achieve success in their courses

Encouraging student engagement through the enthusiasm shown for learning and teaching

Inspiring and motivating students through effective communication, presentation and interpersonal skills

Enabling others to enhance their approaches to learning and teaching

Developing and/or integrating assessment strategies to enhance student learning

Provision of support services or programs that improve the student experience and enable learning.

Evaluating the quality of programs and activities including consideration of past and current student feedback to support student learning.

2. Development of curricula, resources or services that reflect a command of the field; e.g.

Developing and presenting coherent and imaginative resources for student learning

Implementing research-led approaches to learning and teaching

Demonstrating up-to-date knowledge of the field of study in the design of the curriculum and the creation of resources for learning

Communicating clear objectives and expectations for student learning

Providing support to those involved in the development of curricula and resources

Contributing professional expertise to enhance curriculum or resources

Evaluating the quality of curriculum, resources or services

3. Effective assessment practices that bring about improvements in student learning, may have a focus on academic integrity or digital solutions, or any assessment strategies that bring about change; e.g.

Showing advanced skills in assessment/alternative assessment practices

Using a variety of assessment strategies to bring about change

Adapting assessment methods to different contexts and diverse student needs and learning styles

Contributing professional expertise to the field of assessment in order to improve program design and delivery

Dissemination and embedding of good practice identified through assessment

Evaluating the quality of the assessment practices

4. Innovation or leadership that has influenced and enhanced learning and teaching and/or the student experience; e.g.

Participating in and contributing to professional activities related to learning and teaching

Innovations in service and support for students; coordination, management and leadership of courses and student learning

Conducting and publishing research related to teaching

Demonstrating leadership through activities that have broad influence on the profession

Providing innovative learning and teaching for different contexts, including technology enhanced environments, for large and small class sizes and/or to meet the needs of a diverse student cohort

Influencing the overall academic, social and cultural experience of higher education

Evaluating the feasibility of the innovation or the quality of leadership that enhances learning and teaching and/or influence student experience.

Assessment criteria

Nominees are required to address all the criteria under each subcategory.

A. Positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience for a period of no less than three years (two years for early career), not including time taken for development or trial of any activity.

Including evidence of extent of positive impact on student learning, student engagement and/or the overall student experience of higher education.

B. Gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community.

Including evidence of extent of recognition consistent with the purpose of the award, i.e. excellence in teaching.

C. Shown creativity, imagination or innovation, irrespective of whether the approach involves traditional learning environments or technology-based development.

Including evidence of extent to which the teaching approach shows creativity.

D. Drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs and/or practice.

Including evidence of extent to which the teaching is informed by, and if applicable, contributes to scholarly literature.

Evidencing your contribution

The application needs to be strongly supported by a diverse range of evidence. It is recommended that the qualitative and quantitative data are from an extensive range of formal and informal sources, including nominee's self-reflection, student learning, student experience and evidence of institutional, peer and stakeholders' interactions.

- Student voices, through examples and quotations, can convey a cogent account of their experiences. Each criterion is weighted evenly.
- In assessing the evidence supporting Early Career nominations, consideration will be given to the career stage of the nominee.

Addressing assessment criteria and subcategory (sc)

SC1: Approaches to teaching and/or the support of learning that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn

- Criterion A: How, and to what extent, have the approaches positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience for a period of no less than three years?
- Criterion B: How, and to what extent, have the approaches gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community?
- Criterion C: How, and to what extent, have the approaches shown creativity, imagination and/or innovation?
- Criterion D: How, and to what extent, have the approaches drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs and/or practice?

SC2: Development of curricula, resources or services that reflect a command of the field

- Criterion A: How, and to what extent, has the development of curricula/resources/ services positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience for a period of no less than three years?
- Criterion B: How, and to what extent, has the development of curricula/resources/ services gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community?
- Criterion C: How, and to what extent, has the development of curricula/resources/ services shown creativity, imagination and/or innovation?
- Criterion D: How, and to what extent, has the development of curricula/resources/ services drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs and/or practice?

SC3: Effective assessment practices that bring about improvements in student learning, may have a focus on academic integrity or digital solutions, or any assessment strategies that bring about change

- Criterion A: How, and to what extent, have the assessment practices positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience for a period of no less than three years?
- Criterion B: How, and to what extent, have the assessment practices gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community?

- Criterion C: How, and to what extent, have the assessment practices shown creativity, imagination and/or innovation?
- Criterion D: How, and to what extent, have the assessment practices drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs and/or practice?

SC4: Innovation or leadership that has influenced and enhanced learning and teaching and/ or student experience

- Criterion A: How, and to what extent, has the innovation/leadership positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience for a period of no less than three years?
- Criterion B: How, and to what extent, has the innovation/leadership gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community?
- Criterion C: How, and to what extent, has the innovation/leadership shown creativity, imagination and/or innovation?
- Criterion D: How, and to what extent, has the innovation/leadership drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs and/or practice?

Nomination guide and structure

Nominations for Awards for Excellence in Teaching should comprise of the following:

- A. **Statement of claims** against the assessment criteria which describes the nominee's teaching activities and achievements and must address all four assessment criteria in each of the subcategories, providing evidence to support claims. This section is **limited to eight A4 pages comprising** all of the following elements presented in order:
- **Proposed Synopsis** of up to 200 words, which includes the discipline or field of work and the distinctive contribution of the nominee or team. The concise Synopsis description must:
 - be written in the third person
 - avoid jargon and use plain English
 - inform the broadest possible audience about the work of the nominee.

Please note that hyphenated words will be counted as one word.
 - **Overview** of the nominee's teaching and its context (in the first person);
 - **Statement** addressing **all four assessment criteria** within each of the four subcategories providing supporting evidence including impact on student learning or student experience Please include subcategory and criterion headings and present in order. (do not include hyperlinks – all evidence must be woven throughout the narrative and linked to supporting materials when appropriate); and

- **Reference list:** nominees should use their preferred recognised reference style throughout and include a reference list within the eight pages. Links to reference lists online will not be reviewed by assessors.
- B. **Two letters of reference** of no more than **one A4 page each** on official organisation letterhead. References should include one from the nominee's line manager or at a higher level.
- C. **Supporting materials**, the relevance of which must be made clear in the eight-page statement in B, which may comprise up to two of the following:
- A three-minute video which could include footage of the nominee talking about their teaching, their teaching philosophy and interviews with students (include web address);
 - Website (include web address);
 - 10 pages of supporting materials in PDF format
- D. **Statement of contribution (for team nominations).** Team nominations must include one A4 page which explains the role and indicates the percentage contribution of team members (limited to team members with 10 per cent or higher), in addition to the team information included within the nomination form.

Formatting requirements

Please ensure that all documents are A4 page size, fonts are 11-point Arial or Calibri, margins are at least 2cm all around, there is clear definition between paragraphs, and page numbers and section headings are included. The documents should be combined and saved in one single PDF document.

Submitting a nomination

The nomination should be submitted via the **online nomination form** at www.ecu.edu.au/staff-awards, by the due date with the nomination details at A-D above uploaded to the online form in **one (1) single pdf attachment**.

Line Manager and School Executive Dean endorsement will be requested by People and Culture after submission.

Selection panel

The composition of the panel may be reviewed from time-to-time to ensure it remains relevant and contemporary, and will normally include:

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) or their nominee as Chair
- Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) or their nominees
- Manager, Teaching Quality, or their nominee
- Previous winners or assessors at the institutional or national level,
- External Reviewer/s, including institutional or national assessors from a different university; award winners from a different university, etc.
- A non-voting Executive Officer

Additional panel members may also be drawn from:

- a representative from the Academic Staff Promotions Committee; and/or
- a staff member from People and Culture.

The Selection Panel has the authority to seek further evidence from such persons as it deems necessary to evaluate the nominations.

The Selection Panel reserves the right not to recommend an award if, in its assessment, there is no nomination of sufficient merit.

Selection Process

The Learning and Teaching Awards selection process is designed to fulfil three key functions:

1. facilitate decisions that are fair, valid, reliable, and transparent;
2. provide quality feedback to all applicants, enabling them to improve future applications; and
3. maximise the number of people who may contribute as assessors and thereby have the opportunity to learn about the process themselves.

The Vice-Chancellor will review the recommendations from the Awards Selection Committee and decide upon the winners. The Vice-Chancellor's decision will be final.

If the selection committee does not believe the criteria has been met to recommend a category winner, they may recommend that no Award be made.

The winners will be formally advised of the outcome. A copy of the certificate will be filed in the respective personal files.

Method of Payment

Nominated staff must choose a preferred option for payment as part of their nomination prior to the event. An email will be sent prior to the event in November to request the preferred option for payment:

- Cash lump sum payment (paid through the payroll system and subject to income tax at the employee's marginal tax rate) **default option if no choice is made**; or
- Payment credited directly to your UniSuper Superannuation Account as a pre-tax contribution. If nominees select this option they may wish to seek personal financial advice as there are caps on the amount you can contribute to your super each financial year that, if exceeded, may result in additional tax implication; or
- Nominated ECU project /research/school account to be paid into an ECU account of choice. The prize monies must be used for work related expenditure and cannot be redistributed among team members for personal use.
 - Nominees are advised to consult their respective Finance Manager (for School Staff) or Business Manager (for Service Centre Staff) before electing to nominate an ECU account. There are limitations for time period in which prize monies are to be spent and this will vary

from area to area. These funds will be allocated to your school/centre in January of the following year and must be used by the end of that year.

- Work related expenditure does not normally attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT). However, if FBT does apply to the expenditure, it will form part of the award amount so the team members would only be eligible to spend the net-of-FBT amount. Nominees are advised to consult their respective Business Manager or School Finance Team if unsure.

For team-based nominations, prize monies will be divided between team members equally unless specified at time of nomination to the People and Culture Executive Officer.

Presentation of Awards

The Vice-Chancellor will host an event that provides formal and public recognition of the respective achievements and excellence of our staff, at which the Vice-Chancellor's Staff Awards will be presented.

Winners may be asked to present at various public events. Event photography may be utilised to promote the awards.