

SUGGESTIONS ON WRITING A SUCCESSFUL AWARD APPLICATION

Below are some suggestions from the 2020 assessors and awards committees on writing a successful application:

1. Preparation

- Plan, plan, plan. Preparing a good application takes time. Choose your area of strength early on and then strategically build the case, collecting a variety of evidence along the way to support your contentions. Make sure you follow all instructions. Be creative in how you compile the application and incorporate some variety, rather than solid pages of text.
- Develop a long term (3-5 years) T+L innovation strategy with a view to making an AAUT submission as part of a larger, pro-active career development strategy.
- Be prepared to draft carefully to the criteria, and then redraft after seeking feedback from L&T advisors and previous awardees. Then draft again.
- If you are part of a team, identify your individual component and what difference that made.

2. Select correct category

- Support every statement with evidence and remember to keep checking back with the criteria of your particular category/ sub-category.
- Ensure that you apply for the most appropriate award.

3. Application Writing

- State your learning and teaching context and your philosophy clearly at the commencement of application. Highlight challenges and how you identified, addressed or resolved them (or not). Do not simply include lists of achievements (e.g. prizes and awards) but provide a well-constructed narrative, remembering the audience doesn't know you or your institutional context. Make sure that institution-specific terminology is eliminated.
- Focus more on impact than input. Think about how your initiative or program has improved the student learning journey/experience - what have they gotten out of it; how can you tell?
- 1) clearly describe what students DO to learn and what teachers DO in their teaching approaches.
2) make it clear what is "outstanding" or in other words novel and unique about your sustained approach.
3) provide evidence that the approach worked and learning challenges or problems were solved (e.g. improved grade distributions graphically presented).

4. Selection Criteria

- Take care to specifically address the criteria and provide evidence for that criteria
- Be selective about what you include, don't overload the application and dilute the narrative.

5. Provide evidence of the claims

- Provide evidence of impact over a sustained period of time. Where appropriate include numbers of responses and response rates. Contribute to SOTL and not only the disciplinary research so we can all learn from each other.
- Engage with the T&L literature /initiatives in your discipline and tell us how it informs your work.
- Pursue evidence beyond your teaching surveys, include appropriate statistical parameters.
- Make sure your evidence is accompanied by an explanation of the significance of the evidence for your context, or in comparison to benchmarks.
- Use tables to present data like student evaluation scores. Avoid claims that show that students' grades are averaging higher, without considering other factors (e.g. the assessments are easier).
- Show how you have acted on feedback and used it to improve or adjust practice. Make use of direct sources of evidence about claimed student learning outcomes. Engage in peer review as a way of gaining feedback on your units, program, innovation, etc. and how you acted on it, in your discipline, in other disciplines, nationally and/or internationally. How have others used your work?