

Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards

2025 Vice-Chancellor's Sessional Staff Award

Up to 6 of \$1000 each – Nominations open 28 April and due by 4:00pm, Friday 27 June, 2025

Guidelines for nomination

The Sessional Staff Awards recognise and reward the diverse contributions made by sessional staff to the quality of student learning.

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 Vice-Chancellor's Staff 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.

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. Natural and Physical Sciences, Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies
2. Engineering, Information Technology, Architecture and Building
3. Health
4. Education
5. Business, Management and Commerce
6. Society and Culture
7. Creative Arts

8. Multidisciplinary

Subcategories

Nominees must choose one of the following subcategories to respond to their nomination, as relevant to their contribution. Nominations will be assessed on evidence provided:

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. Evaluation practices that bring about improvements in teaching and learning; e.g.

Showing advanced skills in evaluation and reflective practice

Using a variety of evaluation strategies to bring about change

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

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

Dissemination and embedding of good practice identified through evaluation

3. Developing teaching practice, curricula or learning environments that foster inclusion for a diverse range of students; e.g.

Mentoring undergraduate or post graduate students from diverse backgrounds and pathways.

Adopting innovative approaches to teaching and learning that recognise diversity of the student body and support flexibility and choice.

Expanding and incorporating resources and learning opportunities that challenge bias (conscious and unconscious) and provide alternatives to the dominant paradigms in Western Culture.

4. Building and supporting inclusion and diversity at ECU, fostering inclusive teams and positively influencing the learning environment; e.g.

Implementing effective strategies to address the barriers that have prevented full participation of students from diverse backgrounds and pathways in higher education.

Developing programs or partnering with UniPrep, Learning Support, Kurungkurl Katitjin, or other areas of the University to enhance educational opportunities and success for students from diverse backgrounds and pathways.

Promoting an inclusive and supportive learning culture where LGBTI students feel comfortable and safe to bring their whole selves to the learning environment.

Evidencing your contribution

With a focus on the chosen subcategory, nominations will be judged on the extent to which the nominee's contribution has:

- impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience;
- gained recognition from fellow staff, the institution, and/or the broader community;
- shown creativity, imagination or innovation, irrespective of whether the approach involves traditional learning environments or technology-based development;
- drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs and/or practice; and
- been sustained for a period of no less than four teaching periods not including time taken for development or trial of any activity.

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.

Nomination guide and structure

Nominations for Sessional Staff Awards should comprise of the following:

A. **Statement of claims** against the **assessment criteria**. This section is **limited to two A4 pages comprising** all of the following elements:

- **Proposed Citation** of up to 25 words, which includes the discipline or field of work and the distinctive contribution of the nominee or team. The concise Citation description must start with 'For...' and:
 - 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 **the selected criterion** (include criterion heading) with supporting evidence about impact on student learning (do not include hyperlinks – all evidence must be woven throughout the narrative); and
- **Reference list:** nominees should use their preferred recognised reference style throughout and include a reference list within the four pages. Links to reference lists online will not be reviewed by assessors.

B. **One letter of reference** of no more than **one A4 page**.

- C. **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. **Note that all team members for a Sessional Staff Award must be sessional staff.**

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-C 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.