

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AWARDS FOR PROGRAMS THAT ENHANCE LEARNING

(approved Academic Board 10 November 2008)

INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the Academic Board of the University of Queensland established the annual Awards for the Enhancement of Student Learning (AESL). The awards were renamed Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning (APEL) in 2008. These awards recognise learning and teaching support programs and services that make an outstanding contribution to the quality of student learning and the quality of the student experience of higher education. The programs and services that receive these awards must have demonstrated their effectiveness through rigorous evaluation. There are seven award categories with up to four awards in total granted each year at the discretion of the Teaching and Learning Committee. Each award winner will receive a certificate and a grant of \$10,000.

In 2005, DEST announced a significant expansion of the Australian Awards for University Teaching with the objective of heightening the status of teaching and supporting the centrality of teaching in institutional missions. In 2006 the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education assumed responsibility for the Australian Awards for University Teaching and implemented a substantially larger awards program.

The Carrick Institute was renamed the Australian Learning and Teaching Council in May 2008, to reflect the organisation's core mission while highlighting the way in which it complements the activities of other national bodies, such as the Australian Research Council.

To enhance opportunities for recognition of outstanding teachers at The University of Queensland, changes have been made to the guidelines for the Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning to align with those of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the APEL are to:

- encourage and foster innovation in higher education;
- improve the learning environment for students through the development of quality teaching practices and/or products;
- recognise, encourage and foster collaborative relationships in the provision of educational services with students to the community;
- enhance effective educational practice by rewarding projects and initiatives in support services, administrative units and/or disciplines, or groups of related disciplines, centres, schools and programs of study.

NOMINATION

- Nomination is open to all programs and services that enhance student learning at The University of Queensland. It is intended that eligible programs are broader than one or two courses or a limited service that involves only a few students. For example, programs may involve a service or program provided at the institutional, faculty or school level, a program of study across a year or number of years, a service or program directed at particular groups of students.
- All nominations must relate to programs and services that have been sustained for a period of at least 3 years.
- Cross-faculty, cross-school/unit or cross-discipline nominations will be considered.
- Previous University of Queensland and/or AAUT Citation winners are eligible to apply for an Award for Programs that Enhance Learning.
- Previous University of Queensland Awards for the Enhancement of Student Learning/Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning winning programs/services are ineligible for re-nomination.
- Nominations must be submitted on the appropriate form.
- Candidates may self-nominate.
- Teams may be of any size. If a team is larger than five members, a team name should be given.

CATEGORIES

A project/initiative nominated for an award should be an innovative development that has resulted in improvements to the quality of the student learning environment across a single discipline or organisational unit, across a consortium of organisational units within the University, or in the community. The term 'innovation' should not be interpreted narrowly. 'Innovation' can include the development of new practices or products and/or modification or adoption of existing practices or products.

There are seven award categories:

1. **Assessment and feedback**
 - encompassing assessment initiatives that encourage students to develop and demonstrate higher-order skills and attitudes such as academic independence, ethical practices and values, and critical thinking and feedback that is timely and supports students' learning development
2. **Educational partnerships and collaborations with other organisations**
 - encompassing partnerships between universities, and universities and other organisations - such as schools, professional bodies, businesses and industries - in collaborative approaches to learning and teaching
3. **The first-year experience**
 - encompassing the academic and social transition to higher education, learning and teaching within large student groups, and the quality of the first year student experience
4. **Flexible learning and teaching**
 - encompassing approaches to learning and teaching that afford flexibility in time, place and/or mode of learning
5. **Innovation in curricula, learning and teaching**
 - encompassing innovations that encourage novel approaches to learning and teaching, innovations that encourage or support multidisciplinary, research-based learning and teaching approaches, innovations that utilise the potential of new and/or emerging technologies

6. Postgraduate education

- encompassing programs that focus on postgraduate students, postgraduate coursework learning and teaching, postgraduate research supervision and research higher degree candidature, and postgraduate learning support

7. Services supporting student learning

- encompassing services directly related to student learning such as services for specific groups of students, information access, course advising, language and learning support, counselling and disability support

The pattern of distribution of the awards will ultimately be determined by the quality of the nominations.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All nominations for Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning will be assessed on evidence they provide in relation to the following four criteria, which will be given equal consideration by the Selection Committee.

1. Distinctiveness, coherence and clarity of purpose

Extent to which the program has clear objectives and systematic approaches to coordination, implementation and evaluation

2. Influence on student learning and student engagement

Extent to which the program targets identified needs and directly or indirectly enhances student learning, student engagement and/or the overall student experience of higher education

3. Breadth of impact

Extent to which the program has led to widespread benefits for students, staff, the University, and/or other institutions, consistent with the purpose of the program

4. Concern for equity and diversity

Extent to which the program promotes and supports equity and inclusiveness by improving access, participation and outcomes for diverse student groups

In assessing nominations against the four selection criteria, the Selection Committee will take into account:

- evidence of the effectiveness of the program in formal and informal evaluation;
- the degree of creativity, imagination or innovation; and
- evidence of the sustained effectiveness of the program.

NOMINEES

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

In the first instance a two-page expression of interest addressing the selection criteria, together with a completed nomination form, is required. The nominee must be the person representing the project initiative.

Nominations must be endorsed by the unit leader. Cross-faculty, cross-school/unit or cross-discipline nominations must be endorsed by the relevant unit leaders. The nomination form is available on the Teaching and Learning website <http://www.uq.edu.au/teaching-learning/> under *UQ Excellence in Teaching and Learning Awards*.

A Shortlisting Committee will appraise expressions of interest according to the published criteria and invite eligible nominees to provide a detailed submission.

Shortlisted nominees will be invited to a workshop facilitated by the Director of the Teaching and Educational Development Institute where advice and guidance will be given on the format and content of their submission.

SUBMISSIONS

A. SUBMISSION DETAILS

Shortlisted nominees are required to use the submission template, which is available on the Teaching and Learning web site <http://www.uq.edu.au/teaching-learning/> *UQ Excellence in Teaching and Learning Awards*.

- Paper must be A4 and should be plain white with matte finish.
- Submissions must be presented in the font Times New Roman.
- The minimum acceptable font size is 11 point.
- Margins should be at least 2cm with clear definition between paragraphs.
- The written statement is limited to 8 A4 pages in total. The page limit will be strictly administered.
- The submission must be unbound and single sided. An electronic copy must be provided also.
- Submissions that do not meet these requirements will not be accepted.

B. WRITTEN STATEMENT

The core element of a submission for an Award for Programs that Enhance Learning is a written statement which describes the program, and specifically addresses each of the four selection criteria. Nominees are obliged to demonstrate not only the outcome of the nominated project/initiative but also to state the process by which this was achieved.

The written statement should be presented under the following headings, in order:

1. *Synopsis (350 – 400 words, in third person)*
2. *Selection Criteria:*
 - (a) *Distinctiveness, coherence and clarity of purpose*
 - (b) *Influence on student learning*
 - (c) *Breadth of impact*
 - (d) *Concern for equity and diversity*

The synopsis must cover a description of the program and its teaching areas, the program's contribution to student learning and engagement, and the program's impact for students. The synopsis must be written in the third person. The word limit is strictly 350 – 400 words.

The remainder of the written statement should be devoted to addressing the category in which it is nominated and each of the four criteria in turn. **Evidence in support of the claims against these criteria must be provided.** The views of students, collaborators and/or colleagues, as appropriate, will be a key element in the assessment of the submissions.

The written statement is limited to **8 A4** pages in total and should include all information that might be referred to in the submission.

C. REFERENCES

- Two references of **no more than one A4 page each**, to be provided by people who are able to comment on the nominee's contribution to the enhancement of learning against the selection criteria. One of the referees **MUST** be the head of the nominee's unit.
- If the nomination is from a team, the references should apply to the team.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

SHORTLISTING COMMITTEE

Membership of the Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning Shortlisting Committee comprises the following:

- Director, Teaching and Educational Development Institute (Chair)
- Two members of Teaching and Learning Committee (nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic))
- A recipient of Awards for the Enhancement of Student Learning/Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning (nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic))

The Shortlisting Committee will appraise nominations according to the published criteria and invite eligible nominees to provide a detailed submission by a nominated closing date.

The committee may also identify additional projects or services relating to teaching and learning which, in its view, promote excellence in the learning environment and the provision of student services at The University of Queensland, with a view to inviting detailed description of identified projects.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection of recipients of the Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning is made by Teaching and Learning Committee, augmented by the Academic Registrar or nominee.

At any time during the selection process, the Committee may call for supporting documentation and may ask applicants to address the Committee.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The presentation of the Awards to the winners is made at a ceremony in Teaching and Learning Week each year.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning are granted on the condition that all monies associated with the award are used to further the enhancement of teaching and learning at The University of Queensland although not necessarily for development of the project. Each award winner will receive a certificate and a grant which should be expended in the two calendar years immediately following receipt of the award.

Expenditure is subject to standard University policy and must be authorised by the Head of School or senior financial delegate.

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