

ACU Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning

Key information and dates

ACU Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning are designed to recognise and reward staff who have made an outstanding contribution to student learning at the University. Both individual and team contributions may be recognised.

CEI Feedback: Submit the draft to CEI, CEI@acu.edu.au, for feedback by Friday 3 August 2026.

Final submission: Due Monday 24 August 2026.

Eligibility

Eligibility for each Citation category is outlined below.

Past recipients have often achieved one or more of the following forms of recognition over 2-3 years prior to their application, but this is not a compulsory pathway.

- Faculty learning and teaching award/citation
- Letter of commendation from the Dean
- Successful completion of a Faculty Teaching Development Grant project
- Advance HE Fellowship (any category)
- Other external or ACU recognition of outstanding practice

Team applications need to be endorsed by the team leader's Head of School, or equivalent.

Citation categories

Category	Eligibility
General	Individuals and teams from academic and professional staff who have made a significant and sustained contribution to student learning over at least three years .
Early career	Individuals with no more than five years' experience teaching in a higher education institution including tutoring and part-time teaching, and who have made a significant and sustained contribution to student learning over at least two years .
Casual staff	Individuals and teams from academic and professional staff who are employed as casual or contract staff and who have made a significant and sustained contribution to student learning over at least two years .
Indigenous education	Open exclusively to Indigenous staff who have made a significant and sustained contribution to Indigenous education over at least two years .
Integrating Catholic Intellectual Tradition in Teaching practice	As per general requirements, with a significant and sustained contribution to student learning through themes or activities which reflect the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. This focus must form the dominant part of your arguments and evidence.

It is the intention of the Awards and Grants Assessment Group (AGAG) to award citations across as many categories as possible, with the provision that there are eligible applicants in each category.

Subcategories (Area of focus)

Applicants must select ONE of the four subcategories listed. The four subcategories align with the subcategories used for the 2025 Australian Awards for University Teaching.

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

This may include:

- 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.

This may include:

- 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.

This may include:

- 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 student experience.

This may include:

- 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.
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Assessment

All nominations will be assessed by the AGAG on the evidence provided in response to the selected subcategory, in relation to the following assessment criteria. All criteria must be addressed:

Criterion A	Positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience.
Criterion B	Gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community (early career and casual require student and colleague recognition). Indigenous Education the recognition includes Indigenous communities and Elders where relevant.
Criterion C	Shown creativity, imagination and/or innovation, irrespective of whether the approach involves traditional learning environments or technology-based developments.
Criterion D	Drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning to inform the development of initiatives, programs, and/or practice. Indigenous Education, including Indigenous teaching and learning literature.
ACU Criterion	Aligned with the Mission, values, and strategies of ACU, in particular, the Education and Student Success Plan (ESSP) should be directly referenced.

ACU assessors on the AGAG are drawn from a range of disciplines and learning and teaching specialisations

ACU Award for Teaching Excellence

In 2026, ACU is introducing the *ACU Award for Teaching Excellence*. This award recognises the most outstanding *ACU citation for outstanding contribution to student learning* recipient. It will be awarded annually following assessment by the AGAG.

Conditions

Evidence presented as part of a previously successful ACU or External citation or award application cannot be used for a subsequent *ACU citation for outstanding contribution to student learning*. This includes evidence used in a previously successful AAUT citation/award application, and/or ACU citation or Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award application.

Previous winners of ACU or External citations and/or awards can apply if the application meets the condition above. However, preference will be given to applicants with no prior citations or awards who meet the criteria.

Applicants can only submit one individual application per year. Applicants can be included in any number of team nominations, in addition to an individual nomination. Individuals who are part of more than one nomination in one year (individual and team) must ensure that the evidence used in each nomination is substantially separate.

Team nominations can only include members with a contribution of 10 per cent or higher.

Submission requirements

The final submission is made up of the following components.

Nomination form: To be completed in full by the applicant.

Application: There are two parts to the application, which need to be uploaded as one pdf document.

- **Written statement:** The written statement is a professional reflective narrative that addresses one subcategory. Written statement requirements are detailed below.
- **Referee reports:** Two referee reports must be combined with the written statement and submitted as one document.

Photo: A headshot photo, in jpg format, submitted as a separate file.

Written statement expectations

The written statement addresses one of the four subcategories and must not exceed four A4 pages in total excluding a list of references. Formatting requirements:

- Page size A4
- Do not use columns
- Font must be 11 pt Calibri (narrow fonts must not be used)
- Margins must be 2cm, with single spacing and 6 pt between paragraphs

Evidence should be integrated into the statement: do not use hyperlinks to external resources; do not attach evidence beyond the page limit; do not use appendices.

The written statement must have the following components presented in the following order:

1. A summary of the particular contribution, its alignment to the chosen subcategory and its specific context (1-2 paragraphs).
2. A statement addressing the chosen subcategory that provides evidence of the applicant's contribution over a sustained period. Reference should be made to the ways in which the contribution aligns with the Mission, values, and strategies of ACU, in particular the ESSP.
3. References referred to in the written statement.

The written statement should include evidence of a sustained contribution to the chosen subcategory. This evidence should come from a diverse range of sources, including students, peers, senior staff and/or external colleagues. For teaching staff, this should include a summary table of SELT results (and/or other student evaluation data) and context such as total response numbers, percentage response rates and faculty average scores. Interpretation of the data should be provided in the body of the written statement. For staff not directly involved in teaching, other forms of evidence of sustained impact are required.

Submission process

Preparation	Development	Submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your application with your supervisor • Attend the CEI Citation Information Session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the draft written statement to CEI for Feedback by 3 August 2026 • Organise two referee reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a colleague to provide feedback on your application • Submit the final application by 24 August 2026

Expenditure of citation funds

The amount awarded to each successful citation is \$5000. The award amount is per individual or team.

Recipient of the *ACU Award for Teaching Excellence* will receive an additional \$5,000 (total \$10,000) and will also be invited to develop a nomination for an *AAUT Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning* with CEI support.

Funds will be transferred to a Faculty/Unit account and should be used by the end of the following year. Successful applicants may use the funds at their discretion for any work-related purpose: examples include funding participation at conferences (i.e., travel, accommodation, and conference registration fees), purchase of work-related resources and books, purchase of subscriptions to professional journals/organisations.

Alternatively, staff may elect to have their citation funds paid as salary. Funds used in this way will be taxed as income and may be spent on items that are not related to work, or to purchase work-related equipment.

Further information and resources

Resources are available on the CEI website:

- [Writing a citation or award application](#)
- [Writing a referee report](#)

For more information contact the CEI Scholarship and Professional Learning team, CEI@acu.edu.au