

Writing an application for a teaching citation or award

Winning a teaching excellence award involves a mix of strategy, storytelling, and adherence to guidelines. Here are seven key tips to enhance your application:

1. Follow the award guidelines

Ensure you are thoroughly familiar with the award criteria, available on the CEI website. Many applicants have been unsuccessful due to not following the guidelines closely enough.

2. Seek advice from past award winners

Engage with previous recipients for insights and feedback on your application.

3. Structure your application effectively

a) Set the context

- Clearly define your discipline and student cohort at the start to provide context before detailing your contributions.
- Refer to Tip #5 about incorporating a strong narrative.

b) Make your claim

- Highlight distinctive or outstanding contributions to student learning rather than just good practice.

c) Describe your contribution

- Address the award criteria, such as student learning approaches, curriculum design, assessment, teaching innovations, or scholarly research in learning and teaching.
- Emphasise the strengths of your claim.
- Provide specific examples to bring your description to life.

d) Provide evidence

- Demonstrate your teaching effectiveness through student learning experiences and outcomes. The award is about their learning, not just your teaching.
- Show sustained excellence over the required timeframe (2, 3, or 5 years, depending on the award).
- **SELT data:** Include an interpretation of your SELT data. Ideally, your scores should be above the Faculty or School median.
- **Broaden your evidence base:** Don't rely solely on SELT. Use other sources like PORT, student testimonials, outcome data, and peer recognition.

4. Adopt a scholarly approach

Incorporate relevant literature on learning and teaching, not just from your primary discipline.

5. Develop a strong narrative

A compelling strategy is to:

- Introduce yourself, your teaching philosophy, and what drives you.
- Weave this personal perspective throughout your claims.
- Show that your excellence is intentional and rooted in your values.
- This adds authenticity and prevents your application from becoming a dry account.

6. Start early and seek feedback

- Strong applications take time to craft.
- Provide near-final drafts to referees well in advance for meaningful feedback.

7. Prioritise formatting and readability

- Adhere strictly to formatting requirements.
- Maintain white space to enhance readability.
- A well-presented application will be appreciated by the panel.

FAQs

Should applications be written in first person?

Yes. Writing in the first person allows you to convey your personal passion and motivations. A compelling narrative helps engage the reader and makes your teaching philosophy and impact more apparent. Readers are more likely to connect with applications that reveal the underlying reasons for your dedication to teaching.