

## Claims Against Assessment Criteria

### Proposed Citation: For...

Maximum 25 words. Write in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, avoid jargon, inform broadest possible audience. Key information which should be highlighted include: (1) the discipline, field of work or subject area; (2) the distinctive contribution made – this can include key elements of what was done, and outcomes achieved. Commence citation with 'For... It does not need to have your name in it – better to use the limited words to communicate the essence of what the award is for.

This should be the last thing written, so that it adequately reflects the case and evidence provided.

**Note:** the remainder of your nomination should be written in the **first person**, as this is **your story**, of **your journey**. Keep the focus clearly on the student experience - their engagement, their learning, their performance. It's not about showing how good you are, and what wonderful things you have done (as in a promotions application), but how you have impacted student learning. This is a nuanced difference, but it means keeping the focus on students and the impacts on their learning. A key give-away is the excessive use of "I" and "me" in your statements. In addition, your writing should be 'reflective' in nature – demonstrate that you are a reflective practitioner.

### Overview: Start text here...

This section, usually no more than ½ page in length, should guide the narrative to come – provide a clear concise story of (1) What you have done; (2) Why you have done it – the challenge being addressed; (3) The context in which it occurred, may include the timeframes; and (4) the impact on student learning/experience in broadest terms. In this way, the overview provides the reader/assessor with a road map and broad understanding about what is to come and what to expect – it thus orientates and focuses the detailed narrative to come.

Key important information, which might be relevant to include regarding:

i. The context: (1) the discipline, program and/or or subject.

(2) Key Characteristics, such as size of enrolments (bigger enrolments are generally more challenging); whether it is a compulsory subject (again more challenging than self-selected electives); subject is core to multiple programs (increased challenge in ensuring relevance in eyes of differing groups of students); other student diversity information such as % of international enrolments, or low female enrolments in a male dominated discipline if your initiative is about improving the female student experience for example.

(3) Timeframe – when the story commenced and duration.

(4) It might also be relevant to include key information about yourself up-front – for example if you are a relatively new academic, but don't quite meet the early career category definition, it might still be relevant to make this point, as relative opportunity is a factor for assessors to be aware of. Other details about yourself which might be highly salient to their understanding the impetus for your actions, and what drives your actions may be important to ground your story.

ii. The challenge confronted: such as poor student feedback, high fail grade, or non-submissions, or rates of plagiarism, or lack of student engagement etc;

iii. What you have done and why you have done it: brief outline of the response/initiative and what informed the response, which might include the underlying theoretical approach; and what was

achieved - the outcomes/impact. Not details, but broad statements of the key claims you will be making, and of course, evidencing below under criteria.

How much detail is presented in the overview, or subsequently under criteria, will be a subjective call, and will be dependent on the specifics of the case being put forward and on space limitations. The key question for the overview is - **how much is necessary to orientate the reader, to help them understand and appreciate the significance of the issue, or the initiative being addressed, and the outcomes achieved, and/or perhaps why this is important to you?** To leave them wanting to read more and having a sense of what is to come!

Your final sentence/s should seek to leave the reader, the assessors, with a strong take home message about the significance of your claim to excellent/outstanding performance, with a clear focus on students – their learning, their experience.

It can be good to write this section first – to help you frame the fundamentals of your narrative and provide a road map for yourself. Can then be reflected on and edited at the end of the process.

**Citation category:** Choose from four Sub-Categories - **this is the first task**. Choose wisely – think carefully about what your award is about – what you have actually done, what you claim to have achieved and the evidence supporting these achievements. Then choose the Sub-Category where these elements best fit and for which you can offer the best case to support your claim of excellent/outstanding performance.

It can be useful, before starting to write your nomination, to complete, off-the-top-of-your-head rather than in a formal sense, the 9 questions listed at the end of this document – *Preliminary Questions to help understand what your nomination is about*. This is what I have used prior to talking to potential nominees to help me discern the essence of their story – to frame the narrative and get a sense of the significance and evidence supporting the case. Undertaking this yourself and then briefly reflecting on the responses, can help you to discern the elements of the narrative which you can put together.

It can also help you to think about what Sub-Category you should choose. Reflect on the responses, on the essence of what the story you are presenting is all about? Where is the evidence strongest? Now, look at the four categories – **which of these categories best relates to the essence and strengths of your story?**

**Criterion A: Positively impacted on student learning, engagement, and overall experience.**

As the first criterion addressed this will generally be the longest as you need to expand on and explain more clearly up front what was done and why; what was achieved (i.e. what was the impact on student learning, engagement and overall experience); and present the **evidence** to support claimed achievements (see p.5 *Assessment Matrix Demystified* “What evidence can I use to demonstrate impact on student learning, engagement and overall experience?”).

Where appropriate, weave scholarly literature into the narrative to support the What, the How and the Why story – demonstrate that actions etc are scholarly informed, and informed by your personal teaching philosophy (both will be expanded in **Criterion D**). In telling this story, demonstrate that you are a **reflective practitioner** and weave the story of what drives your actions/ approach to teaching. For an internal award it is appropriate to link to the WSU Strategic Plan to demonstrate connection of your initiative to key goals etc. However, do not do so for AAUT awards – they are not about “doing what the University expects”, as one nominee’s feedback noted.

Always back up your claims with evidence to support them. Simply asserting that you have done something, or you have achieved a particular outcome is insufficient. If you say you have done something – e.g. implemented a particular strategy/approach, then you need to provide an example of what you have done and how you have done it. If claiming a particular outcome/impact – provide the evidence to support the claim – and do so proximal to the claim. One senior assessor described the process as a three-legged stool! (1) Make a claim with a persuasive narrative; (2) Give evidence to support the claim; (3) Talk about the impact of that claim – use qualitative comments to exemplify and validate the impact you are claiming.

To be compelling you need to present hard evidence – quantitative data – showing before-after impact; trend; sustained outcomes; comparative data – these are best demonstrated within graphs or tables, as dense convoluted textual explanations can be confusing. However, you still need to highlight within the narrative the key points of the data within the graph/table evidencing the claim you are making. Make sure that the evidence aligns with the claim being made – ensure congruence.

Demonstrate how you have used data and feedback during the journey to inform your understanding of the challenge etc. Show how you have reflected on the data and feedback throughout the project to make incremental changes etc. Explain what has been learnt from the data/feedback, and/or as a result of experience and critical reflection throughout the project, and how this has informed changes.

When presenting quantitative data in an AAUT nomination ensure it is meaningful to an external reviewer (different nomenclature is used across the sector). Be clear about the source of the data, use full name initially. Provide information about the range, mean, response rate etc.

Ideally, you need to go beyond SFS or SFT data, particularly for AAUT awards. The more varied data sources you can present (**triangulation**) to support your claim, the stronger your case. Use qualitative comments strategically to exemplify and represent the outcome you are claiming. Qualitative comments, when used appropriately, can be very powerful and give real-life meaning to the concepts, bringing your narrative to life.

**Criterion B: Gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community.**

In this section you need to demonstrate the extent to which others are aware of, take note of and value what you are doing and/or your expertise. This might include: Internal awards; publications; conference papers; positive feedback received; requests for further information/advice; invitations to share your experiences more widely (internal workshops; exemplars used in staff development etc); adoption by others - courses/disciplines internally, or other universities etc; expert representation (e.g., external disciplinary bodies). See page 2, Criterion B of the *Assessment Matrix Demystified* document for further examples.

**Criterion C: Shown creativity, imagination and/or innovation.**

This is often the most challenging criterion for nominees. You need to show why/how your teaching approaches/initiative were creative and innovative.

Key questions to help you think about how to approach this section: How does your approach differ from what had been done before, or what is BAU in your discipline/school/program? What sets you/your activities apart? Why is it exceptional or unique? How does it differ from, or has built-on others in the literature you have drawn on? Why is it so relevant to your context, to the challenge you faced and were responding to? What were the challenges you confronted and how did you respond to them in imaginative ways? What have others said about the creativity of your approach and perhaps how it has influenced their practice? Responses to these questions can help you to get to the essence of what is creative, imaginative and/or innovative about what you have done and how to write this story. Use examples of what you do and how you do them to demonstrate creativity etc.

#### **Criterion D: Drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning.**

In this section you need to flesh out your personal teaching philosophy – it needs to be congruent with the approaches etc which you have described. You also need to flesh out how you have used T&L scholarship to inform your understanding of the challenge and/or the approaches you have taken. Use up-to-date literature, only using dated sources if they are seminal work on which theory is based and built. If you do cite seminal works, then also cite contemporary work to demonstrate that you keep up to date with the literature. Make sure that the texts cited, clearly articulate to the concept/idea being addressed in the body.

Use references strategically and sparingly as space is limited. Rather than multiple references for one theory/concept, choose the best – the latest or the most influential.

Make clear how you have drawn on scholarship to inform your understanding, approach, design etc. How have you built on others work, or approaches? How have you applied them to your discipline/context etc? Try to weave your own publications/presentations into the story, showing how they relate to and add to the learning and scholarship in the area. They need to see that your initiative, and your philosophy are informed by the scholarly literature, rather than your having implemented a “good idea” – and clearly it is rare to be the first to think of something truly novel – usually we are building on the ideas and work of others.

**References:** To be included within the overall page limit. You can use any recognised referencing style but numbering within text is recommended because it requires less space than authors names and date. Don't leave a line space between each reference. Indeed, if you are really short on space (after substantial editing) then you might consider not using a new line for each reference – in this case use a bolded letter to make clear each new reference.

e.g. **1.** Luke, Carmen. (2005) Feminist Pedagogy Theory: Reflections on Power and Authority. Educational Theory. 46. 283 - 302. **2.** Flood, M., Dragiewicz, M., & Pease, B. (2020) Resistance and backlash to gender equality. Australian Journal of Social Issues, 1–16. **3.** Callow, J., and J. Orlando. (2015)...

They are not looking for a thesis-like reference list, but key references which demonstrate that your approach is informed by scholarship – that you are aware of and utilise, even better, contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Make sure all relevant self-publications are included.

## **Preliminary Questions to help understand what your nomination is about**

### **1. Brief outline of the project/initiative:**

[Briefly describe what the project/initiative is; its context (discipline or unit); who is involved; when commenced/how long project has been going for]

### **2. What was the underlying reason for initiating the project/initiative?**

[Why was the project/initiative commenced? What was the issue/problem/challenge which was being addressed and what evidence supported the need?]

### **3. What was the goal you sought to achieve?**

[Briefly describe what you sought to achieve by initiating the project/initiative]

### **4. Briefly, what did the project/initiative consist of?**

[Briefly describe what was actually done and why]

### **5. How does your approach differ from what had been done before, or what is BAU in your discipline/school?**

[Briefly describe what sets your initiative/approaches apart? Why is it exceptional or unique?]

### **6. What outcomes were achieved?**

[Briefly list the outcomes/impact on student learning, engagement, experience which were achieved]

### **7. What evidence do you have to support the claimed outcomes?**

[For each of the claimed outcomes listed above, briefly describe the evidence you have to support each of the claims]

### **8. Have you shared the learnings etc?**

[List any instances where you have shared the learnings from the project, such as publications, conference papers, workshops within your institution]

### **9. Have there been any outcomes resulting from sharing of your experience?**

[Have you had any feedback from sharing your experience/learnings, such as others who have adopted/implemented the strategy; requests for more information; invitations to share your experience more widely etc]