Excellence in Education Award

RECOGNISING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Applicant’s Guidance 2021

“The University of Essex...must continue to be a place of intellectual rigour, a teaching institution of the highest quality...it must stand for excellence.”

- Albert Sloman (1963)
The Excellence in Education Award (EEA) is inspired by the University’s strategy to achieve excellence in both education and research. Our staff aim to offer students a transformational educational experience through intellectually challenging and stimulating courses of study that are based on creative and innovative approaches to education.

As a member of the University, the EEA exists to recognise and celebrate commitment to promote and achieve an outstanding learning experience that enables our students to contribute positively to communities and societies around them. It invites applications from all colleagues who can demonstrate commitment to the University’s values and mission to deliver excellence in education.

In the application statement, applicants should address the following question:

*How does your practice demonstrate an effective, proactive and impactful approach to education at the University of Essex?*

**EEA 2021 – Excellence in module leadership and development**

The EEA 2021 panel is particularly interested in applications demonstrating *excellence across Essex in module leadership and development*. This may include these areas of practice:

- Excellent practice around the extent to which learning, teaching and assessment strategies at module or programme levels enable the students to achieve their learning outcomes and skills development including employability.
- Excellent practice around the choice/ range of assessment and feedback methods used at module and programme levels to support student learning and sustained engagement.
- Excellent practice around the extent to which inclusive and supportive learning environments are maintained at module and programme level, such as academic support and personal tutoring.
- Excellent practice around successful, sustained and effective use of technology at module and programme levels to achieve excellent learning experience in the light of COVID-19 and move to remote and dual delivery of teaching.
What are the Excellence in Education Award categories?

There are three categories for the EEA 2021. These can be submitted by self or peer nomination:

- **Excellent Graduate Teaching/ Laboratory Assistants (GTA/ GLA) Award (individual)**

  The recognition is given to GTAs/ GLAs in recognition of their significant contribution to excellence in module delivery or contribution to new approaches to the enhancement of the learning experience of students and staff.

- **Excellent Educator Award: (individual or collaborative)**

  The recognition is given to individual members of teaching staff or teams, learning and teaching support staff or technical staff in recognition of their significant, consistent and sustainable contribution to excellence in module design, content, delivery; or contribution to new approaches to the enhancement of the learning experience of students and staff.

- **Excellence in Education Leadership Award (individual)**

  The recognition is given to individual members of staff who teach or support learning and demonstrated excellent leadership in learning and teaching. Nominees need to evidence a sustained, successful and transformational leadership in learning and teaching within the University and proactivity in sharing best practice within Essex and/ or with other institutions.

What are the criteria for Individual and Collaborative Awards?

All applicants or nominees should be able to evidence at **least one** of the following criteria:

- Excellence in curriculum/module design, content or delivery;
- Contribution to innovative approaches to education, learning and teaching or the improvement of the learning experience of students and staff within or outside a particular module, department, school, centre, or section;

In addition, applicants/nominees for the Excellent Educator Award should be able to evidence:

- Consistency and sustainability of excellent practice demonstrating effective approaches to learning and teaching over a period of time;
- For collaborative awards, explanation of how the team collaborate and how that collaboration has been an advantage.

In addition, applicants/nominees for the Excellence in Education Leadership Award should be able to evidence the following transformational leadership qualities in education:
• Impact on learning and teaching, learning support, organisational and administrative practices within or outside a particular department, school, centre, or section;
• A focus on sharing best practice, institutional leadership and working with other institutions.

The extent to which these criteria will be weighted in the final judgement will be commensurate with career stage and role: for instance, GTAs would be expected to have more limited possibilities for some criteria, whereas lecturers would be expected to have more opportunities.

Peer-nominated applications will be considered alongside self-nominated applications. However, peer-nominated applicants would be informed of their nominations and given the opportunity to comment and/or consider enhancing their applications with a reflective narrative and supporting evidence if applicable. Peer-nominated applicants reserve the right to withdraw their application from the process if they wish.

Who can apply?

• All full and part-time members of staff with responsibility for teaching and/or supporting the student learning experience are eligible to apply or nomination. This includes members of academic staff, professional services staff, technicians with educator roles and GTAs/ GLAs.
• Excellent Graduate Teaching/ Laboratory Assistant Award (Individual or collaborative) is open to all GTAs/ GLAs across the university campuses, departments, schools, centres or sections.
• Excellent Educator Award (Individual or collaborative) is open to individual members of academic and teaching staff or teams, learning and teaching support staff or technical staff across the university departments, schools, centres or sections.
• Excellence in Education Leadership Award (individual only) is open to individual members of academic and teaching staff, learning and teaching support staff or technical staff across the university departments, schools, centres or sections.
• All applicants are requested to agree to a statement indicating that their line manager, Head of Department, Director of Education or designate support their application.
• Under peer-nominations, nominees will receive an email from Organisational Development informing and congratulating them on their nomination. They will be given three options to either develop their nominations further, submit the application as it is or withdraw from the process.
• Applications or nominations from teams under our collaborative awards can be made up of any combination of academics, professional services staff and students with any level of experience as long as individuals can demonstrate their contribution and impact within a team.
• Previous winners of the award are eligible to apply in the same category five years after the year that the original award was received.
• Applications from all our UK partner institutions (University Centre Colchester/ Colchester Institute, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and Kaplan Open Learning) are encouraged.
• Team members applying under collaborative awards cannot use the same application or grounds to apply under other categories in the same year or subsequent years.
• Individuals may not submit applications for different awards categories to the same panel.
• Applications will need to be based on projects, initiatives or endeavours that commenced during or prior to the current academic year up to three years, with the focus of the application being towards the recent academic year.
• Unsuccessful applicants may apply for the award in subsequent years with a revised application as per panel feedback.

How to apply?

Once you have read through the guidance notes, you need to complete the EEA application form. This is available on the Excellence in Education Award Moodle page (https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=13229).

The deadline for applications is

Midnight on Wednesday 14 April 2021 (Peer-nominations)

Midnight on Wednesday 28 April 2021 (self-nominations)

Applications should be submitted electronically using the link provided on the Excellence in Education Award Moodle page.

If you are from a partner institutions, please email your application to eea@essex.ac.uk

If you have any queries, don’t hesitate to email us on eea@essex.ac.uk

Guidance on how to write your personal statement and supporting material

Developing your statement

The personal statement (for applicants and nominees) is the most important component of the award. As a result, plan to put a good amount of time and effort into fine-tuning your statement. Although the award allows significant flexibility in content, layout and evidence, there are three main aspects that will be used by the panel to establish the strengths of your candidacy: effectiveness, proactivity and impact.

In the statement, we are asking you or your nominee to consider the following:

• **Effectiveness** - Demonstrate how your statement meets the award criteria to deliver excellence in education.
• **Proactivity** - Describe how your contribution represents self-initiated behaviour to go above and beyond your expected role.
• **Impact** - Show how the applicant’s action has led to changes in practice and/or influenced others within your context and/or beyond through sharing good practice and supporting colleagues.

Successful applications to the awards often address the following in their submission:
• Aims, objectives and rationale for the individual or team’s approach to a particular learning scenario, environment or issue.
• Demonstration of student involvement with the individual or team submission (if applicable).
• Focus on how the individual or team has addressed a thematic issue such as assessment and feedback, employability, academic support, etc.
• Description of how the individual or team has tackled a particular situation.
• Detailed and reflective account of the outcomes and impact of the individual or collaborative work.
• Use of evidence of how the individual or team’s work has enhanced student learning.

Supporting material

This is your opportunity to provide evidence that you regard as relevant to support the narrative in your statement. You are invited to follow the guidelines below:

• Up to three sets of supporting documents may be submitted, but in total they should comprise of no more than six sides of A4 if the evidence is in a written format.
• Documents can be in multiple formats (e.g. PDF, PowerPoint, Word, images, video files, etc.)
• Supporting materials may include: photographs, tables, graphs, documents containing statistics, testimonials from colleagues and Heads of Sections/Departments and Schools, supporting research, evaluation or inspection reports, promotional materials and media coverage.

For further information and support, please contact the award organising team on eea@essex.ac.uk.

After you apply

Your application will be peer-reviewed by a cross section of the panel members and their decision is final. Applications in each award category will be reviewed by a student, academic and professional services staff panel member. Ideally, the panel will include the following members:

• Chair
  PVC Education
• Reviewers
  Three academic staff representatives (typically Deputy Dean Education from each faculty)
  Three student representatives (typically Faculty Convenors from each Faculty)
  Three professional services staff (typically Education Developers or in an Education related role)
• Observers
  Students’ Union VP Education
  Head of Academic and Professional Practice
  Organisational Development – Award Lead
• Secretary (Organisational Development Administrator)
All applicants will be informed within 5 working days of the panel meeting by email with the panel’s decision and feedback. There will be opportunity after the panel to discuss the outcomes with colleagues in Organisational Development.

### Sharing Good Practice and Celebrating Excellence

- All award winners and some unsuccessful applicants will receive an offer of face to face feedback to discuss how they could further develop their practice or disseminate their practice more widely to have an institutional/ national or international impact.
- All applicants applying for an award, reviewers, panel members and the University senior education leaders will be invited to attend our Annual Excellence in Education Celebration event and participate in education events, such as the Education Development Conference. More details will be shared with applicants nearer the time.
- All EEA winners will receive a recognition certificate signed by Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor (education) and Student Union President.
- All applicants may be invited to facilitate the creation of a poster or a short talk/presentation in order to share their good practice. Full support will be provided by Organisational Development.
- All applicants will also be given the opportunity and encouraged to share their good practice by contributing to the University Education Insights Workshops, Peer Exchange Network, Education Development Conference and Learning Lounge.
- Winners, where suitable, will be encouraged to apply for the Education Strategic Fund grant to support the development and/or dissemination of their practice institutionally, nationally and internationally.
- Winners, where suitable, will also be encouraged and supported to prepare for external awards such as National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) and Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE). Individuals will receive support and guidance preparing these applications from the Organisational Development team.
Excellence in Education Award 2021 timeline

Award Nomination Opens
Wednesday 10 February 2021

Award Submission Deadline for peer-nominated applications
Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 23:59

Award Submission Deadline for self-nominated applications
Wednesday 28 April 2021 at 23:59

Announcement of results
Wednesday 16 June 2021

EEA 2021 Virtual Celebration Event
TBC – Week commencing 20 September 2021