Excellence in Education Award

RECOGNISING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Reviewer’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)
Panel Membership

The Excellence in Education Award panel is intended to represent the range of roles involved with achieving Education Excellence at Essex and includes representation from students, academics and professional services roles. Applications in each award category will be allocated to a panel cluster consisting of at least: one Deputy Dean Education (or their nominee), one student representative and one professional services representative. In total, there are three reviewers’ clusters that are arranged based on the three award categories (Excellent GTAs/GLAs, Excellent Educator, and Excellence in Education Leadership).

A typical panel is likely to include the following:

- **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)

EEA 2021 – update from previous awards

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:

- Innovative 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.
- Innovative practice around the choice/range of assessment and feedback methods used at module and programme levels to support student learning and sustained engagement.
- Innovative 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.
- Innovative 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.
The panel has a new approach to deal with peer-nominated applications, giving nominees the options to revise and develop the application and the evidence used. This will ensure fairer process to all applicants during panel discussions and decision making.

To develop more focused applications and to avoid applications that can be generic with no particular focus on certain practices, the guidance on writing the statement has been updated to give applicants some context around what the panel expects in terms of excellence with focus and impact on a particular area of practice to avoid generic descriptions.

**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.

**The Excellence in Education Criteria**

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, fellows, senior or principal fellows would be expected 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.

The EEA applications

The EEA application form includes two sections: a personal statement and supporting materials.

The statement is intended to demonstrate how the applicants meet the criteria. Each of the award criteria above is given equal consideration in the assessment process.

To establish the strengths of the applicant’s candidacy, reviewers are requested to consider the following:

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

The supporting material is for applicants to provide evidence that they regard as relevant to support the narrative in their statement. The relevance and the quality of evidence should be taken into account when making judgements on applications. Applicants were asked to adhere to the following:

• 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.

Successful applications to the awards often expected to 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.

The allocation of papers and decision-making Process

As an EEA reviewer, you will typically be allocated a number of applications/nominations to assess. These are assigned to reviewers based on the award categories and thus do not take account of reviewer’s discipline or thematic expertise. Each application/nomination will be independently judged by three reviewers with equal representation from academic staff, professional services and students.

You will be given access to the applications/nominations by OD support team (eea@essex.ac.uk). The following chart explains the process in more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>WHEN BY</th>
<th>BY WHO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications received</td>
<td>The OD team will receive applications by Moodle and email (for external applicants from partner institutions)</td>
<td>Wednesday 28 April 2021</td>
<td>OD team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application allocated and distributed by award cluster</td>
<td>The OD team will email reviewers the application forms and the reviewer guidance and form.</td>
<td>Monday 03 May 2021</td>
<td>OD team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewers’ feedback and recommendations returned</td>
<td>Each reviewer will email their reviewer forms to the OD to process. (<a href="mailto:eea@essex.ac.uk">eea@essex.ac.uk</a>)</td>
<td>Wednesday 26 May 2021</td>
<td>Reviewers action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Paperwork prepared</td>
<td>The OD team will prepare an executive summary. This summary will be divided by cluster and will include the following key areas: 1. Summary of the number of applications for each cluster (strongly recommended, recommended and not recommended) 2. Collated cluster decisions on applications listing successful applications to be awarded. 3. Collated recommended best approach and opportunities to share good practice (i.e. platforms to consider: Education Insights Workshops; Learning Lounge; Good Teaching Practice Conference; etc.).</td>
<td>Tuesday 02 June 2021</td>
<td>OD team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Summary of feedback will be emailed to be reviewed and approved by cluster members.

**Panel members familiarise themselves with paperwork**

The OD team will email the executive summary that to all panel members who should familiarise themselves with the initial outcomes.

**Panel convenes**

The panel agrees outcomes and feedback and discusses split decisions. The OD team will take the minutes of the meeting.

The agenda will be as follows:

PVC Education will:
- open the panel.
- read items 1 and 2 from the executive summary for each cluster.
- invite each cluster in turn to summarise their feedback to the panel on each application and the best ways to share good practice.
- invite other panel members to comment
- close the panel.

**Applicants Informed**

The OD team will email all applicants with the panel outcome and feedback.

**Applicants’ celebrated and disseminated**

The OD team will invite all applicants to a celebration event and will offer opportunities to share their good practice in light of the panel recommendations.

**Feedback**

The OD team will email panel members and applicants for feedback on the process.

**The roles and responsibilities of reviewers**

As a reviewer for EEA you are responsible for providing an assessment as to the extent to which the individual/team meets the award criteria including feedback to communicate your judgement to applicants and the Panel.

Reviewers are requested to respect the confidentiality of the information contained within the nomination documents and must not disclose any information about individuals or teams involved, or the content of any nomination, without the prior consent of applicant and panel.

Please note that comments you submit may be presented anonymously to the applicants without reference to your name.

Your comments will be combined with other reviewers and fed back to the EEA panel, verbatim (wherever possible). Your comments may also be shared with applicants. We ask you to be considerate in your use of language when giving feedback. We ask that this is constructive and developmental and includes a balance of comments on the strengths and areas of improvement of the application/nomination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative phrasing</th>
<th>Positive phrasing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘A weakness is ...’</td>
<td>‘It would be helpful if ...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The application fails in ...’</td>
<td>‘It would be useful if ...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘There were no ...’</td>
<td>‘Further details about ...[add specifics]...would strengthen the evidence in this criterion’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘There is a lack of evidence’</td>
<td>‘The case would be stronger with more explicit evidence of...’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wednesday 03 June 2021

Wednesday 9 June 2021

Wednesday 16 June 2021

Wednesday 16 June 2021

Wednesday 16 June 2021

Wednesday 16 June 2021

Wednesday 04 October 2021

Wednesday 04 October 2021

PVC Education

PVC Education & Reviewers & Panel members

Panel members

Panel members

OD team

OD team

OD team

OD team
‘The application needs’
‘Much room for improvement’

‘There is limited evidence of ...’
‘It is especially weak ...’

‘Unfortunately ..’

‘The team’s claim would benefit from more explicit evidence of ...’
‘Further details could usefully be provided to evidence ...
[add specifics]’

‘This example would be strengthened with further evidence of ...
To strengthen your claim, you might find it helpful to ...
To further develop your evidence for this criterion, the team might wish to ...

Avoid subjective and personal comments, including for example: ‘I enjoyed reading’ ‘I liked ...’, ‘I suggest’, ‘I think...’ or thanking the team for their Claim.

Focus on how far the nomination has met the criteria.

Avoid hyperbolic (and potentially patronising) language and punctuation like ‘fabulous’, ‘fantastic’, ‘bravo!’ and using exclamation marks.

Avoid acronyms; terms which are specific to particular contexts.

Part of your role as a reviewer is to support the University’s mission to support excellence in education by highlighting good practice and facilitating the sharing and dissemination of good practice across the university and beyond (where applicable). Please note that The University would encourage suitable EEA applicants to apply for national awards, including the AdvanceHE National Teaching Fellowship and The Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE).

If, in the process of reviewing, you wish to discuss any nomination or have any queries related to the process, please do not hesitate to contact the OD team on eea@essex.ac.uk

Conflict of Interest

Please notify the OD team (eea@essex.ac.uk) immediately (or as soon as possible) of any potential conflicts of interest related to any one of the applications/ nominations you have received.

Conflict of interest includes, for example, if you:

• are a relative or a personal friend of any of the nominated individual/ team or have been previously;
• have worked closely with the team in the recent past;

If you are unsure whether a particular situation presents a conflict of interest, please do contact us for an informal discussion, or for clarification. Please note that if you are the member of a team nominated for EEA 2021, you may not take part as a reviewer for the same category.
Each reviewer is expected to fill in one assessment form per cluster. The form will be emailed to you nearer the time. There are four sections in the form as follows:

**Feedback Comments**
As a reviewer, you are expected to summarise your feedback in *no more than 200 words* and be prepared to further discuss your judgement during the panel. These should be based around the award criteria. Please note that your comments will be collated and may be returned to applicants; therefore, please present your feedback appropriately.

**Decision**
You will be asked to make a decision on the applications selecting from the following three designations:

- Strongly recommend
- Possibly recommend
- Not recommend

**Ranking**
This part is *to be completed only after reviewing all your allocated applications*. You are asked to rank the applications you have reviewed using numbers with 1 as your most preferred, followed by 2, 3, 4 and so on until all applications are ranked.

**Good Practice**
Reviewers are encouraged to identify good practice (if any) and encourage dissemination and possible funding allocation. Please do not write more than 50 words in this section.

Once complete, reviewers will be asked to email their forms to the EEA support team [eea@essex.ac.uk](mailto:eea@essex.ac.uk) by Midnight on Wednesday 26 May 2021.

**Thank you**
Organisational Development would like to thank you most sincerely for the time and expertise you have provided in supporting the EEA 2021.