

HOW TO SOURCE AWARD APPLICATIONS

This is a resource for the TAFE officers who are responsible for awards. It's also handy for teaching and learning and business development teams, or managers, who might be aware of or who support innovations happening at your TAFE.

This is the first in a series of 'how to' resources that aim to:

- Generate interest in and grow TAFE capability for all Victorian Training Award submissions
- Support the preparedness and success of applicants (from consideration through to gathering info, writing and the interview stage)
- Bolster the quality of all TAFE award applications; and
- Grow TAFE profile by cultivating success in the Teacher/Trainer and Industry Engagement categories.

MYTHBUSTING

There's a good chance your TAFE has excellent people and projects flying under the radar or hiding in plain sight.

It's not just that people might be unaware of the awards or the breadth of categories that are relevant opportunities for them.

There are also common misconceptions to counter before you can cultivate an awards culture and encourage applicants to take the plunge. Examples include:

- The 'student' awards are on again (limited understanding of scope)
- I'm just doing my job; what I do is nothing special
- You're up yourself if you tell people you're excellent
- Those awards are a waste of time marketing exercise
- I'm not a good enough writer to develop a submission
- We don't do excellence around here
- I don't have the time to prepare an application.

PEOPLE + PROCESS

Your organisation might already have an internal awards process that is aligned to the timing cycle of the statewide awards. If your TAFE's approach is less formal, see what you can do to empower others to recognise and spruik the opportunities.

You could consider an internal 'blow your own trumpet' campaign. Maybe there are strategic conversations that could generate interest in and support for an awards process. Can you recruit a few champions to tap people on the shoulder?

Submissions require time and effort so any anyone calling for awards should factor this into planning and key messages.

Can you leverage former finalists or winners with quotes, case studies or mentoring? Show people the benefits and flow-on impact of success e.g. an individual teacher winner might also bring kudos and morale to a department team.

Make the most of the resource guides and role plays to support people. You can distribute relevant handouts to candidates, or use the material as a foundation for internal workshops or information sessions.

MARKETING MESSAGES

Here are a few targeted messages you could utilise for stakeholder groups across your TAFE:

- Institute Executives
 - Awards matter for morale, marketing and professional development
 - The shortfall in TAFE state & national winners is a strategic opportunity that we can leverage by showcasing our institution
 - Review what's in place here and consider our internal awards process
 - The VTA has developed resources to support us to grow awards culture
 - Get on board the *Blow your own trumpet* campaign to share the message
- Managers + Teaching & Learning + Business Development/Partnerships
 - Identify, invite and encourage applicants - look to external collaborators
 - The reflective feedback process is good for professional development
 - Success can bring benefits and exposure to the department or industry
 - Guide staff and allocate time to prepare; direct them to support resources
 - Share the *Blow your own trumpet* campaign widely, talk positively about it
- Teacher/Trainer + Industry Collaborators + Students
 - Win prize money for doing your job, winners are gridders, celebrate and showcase yourself with national exposure to put on your CV or in marketing materials
 - If you love your work, there's a strong chance you're good at it, and that may be worth talking about
 - It's ok to say you are good at something; tall poppy leaders are welcome
 - Your story matters; it's valuable for others to hear and learn from you
 - The reflective feedback process of awards is good for career/business development and improvement; it provides a baseline to gauge success
 - These award submissions take time; you need input from others and to gather evidence to back up your statements, so get on it early
 - Tap into the handy resources to help you pull it all together and ask for feedback along the way
 - Blow your own trumpet!