

# HOW TO WRITE AN AWARD

Read this in conjunction with the [official Victorian Training Award resources](#).

It takes time to prepare an award application. Start by reviewing the **'checklist'** to get your head around each of the steps.

This guide is for the writing stage. It's general advice that's relevant for any Victorian Training Award application.

It can be hard to talk about yourself and what you do but these tips will help.

## **SCRIBBLE IT**

Some people plan their writing. Others fly by the seat of their pants. A helpful first step is the brain dump. As you read through the criteria, jot down notes and ideas. These bits of inspiration don't always come in one hit, so give it some time. The recall process can help to clarify your thoughts and develop the draft.

## **BIG PICTURE**

Try to find your story; a hook or an angle. You want to show how your work has taken something or someone from A to B on a journey of discovery and development to achievement. Think about the difference you've made and all the steps you've taken along the way that help to tell this story.

## **LITTLE DETAILS**

Write to answer the criteria. You must respond directly to each. Some people find it easier to answer the bullet points piece by piece. You can also respond in one a combined answer. It can be handy sometimes to paraphrase the question language in your answer to show that you understand what is being asked.

## **PROOF OF PUDDING**

If you're making claims about 'quality', 'excellence' (or anything, really) you need to back it up with proper evidence. Those words don't speak for themselves. Show your achievement through data, results or examples. The attachment section is useful but you need style and substance in your answers. That's what is judged.

## **MAKE WORDS COUNT**

It can be hard to fit what you want to say into the strict limits. Don't waste words by waffling. The judges won't read extra words. Keep your writing simple, succinct and to the point. Give yourself time to think, write and edit. Make sure you answer all the questions, and try to keep the language active or punchy.

## **EXPLAIN YOURSELF**

Set the scene. Don't take for granted that people will understand your context or industry speak. What seems obvious to you might not be clear to people reading the submission. Sometimes what's second nature to us only becomes clear when we take the time to reflect or explain it to someone else.

## **BLOW YOUR TRUMPET**

The only person who knows your story is you. The judges want to hear it in your voice. Be confident. People often undersell achievements because they don't want to be perceived as 'up themselves'. But if you don't believe in yourself it's hard for others to. So if you've got the evidence to back it up, stand tall and stake a claim.

## **THE RIGHT TONE**

Writing isn't everyone's cup of tea. You could get a colleague to help but make sure your story is what's being shared. Write like you are telling someone a story. Speak from the heart but also include facts so that your submission is personal and professional. Explain things, but try not to be too formal or technical.

## **A ONCE OVER**

Once the draft is done, bring in a fresh set of eyes to take a look. Check if what you've written makes sense to someone else, that they understand the story. Ask if they reckon your answers meet the criteria. Can they offer any ideas to improve your submission? Are there any errors they have spotted that you need to fix?

## **RED PEN TIME**

Once you've improved the draft after feedback, set it aside for a day or two before you give it a good old proofread. Use spell check and check the grammar. Read the draft out loud to see how it flows. If you print it out, grab a ruler and red pen to double check slowly, line by line, that all is well.

## **HIT THE BUTTON**

Give yourself time before the deadline in case things crash online. Be sure to copy your answers into the right sections. Gather all of your attachments. Check it's good to go and hit submit. Phew! Well done for throwing your hat in the ring. If you get shortlisted for an interview, check out the resources for that next step.

*If you need more information to respond to the criteria or prepare for interview, have a chat to colleagues who've done this before. We've also developed specific resources for the **Teacher/Trainer** and **Industry Collaboration** categories.*