

## Public Education Awards - Nomination Guide and Writing Tips

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### About the Awards

The Public Education Awards are prestigious awards presented to students, teachers, staff, schools, parents and community members in NSW government schools and the department. The awards recognise the achievements of outstanding learners, and people delivering high quality education, making impactful contributions, and driving excellence within NSW public education.

### Before you begin writing your nomination

- Carefully read through the award criteria and nomination questions for the category you have selected. Identify the key qualities, skills, or achievements the award aims to recognise. Consider examples about the nominee that relate to the questions and the award criteria to strengthen the nomination.
- Ensure the nominee is aware and agreeable to being put forward for the award. They will receive a nomination notification email after you submit their nomination.
- Allow enough time to complete the nomination (recommended minimum 30 minutes).
- Write your nomination into a word document and then copy it into the [Award Force platform](#). This ensures you have a saved copy and will not lose your nomination if the platform times out midway through your submission. through your submission.

### Writing your nomination

Each award category includes specific questions that reflect its criteria. To help you write clear and strong answers, these practical tips will guide you in addressing each question, using strong examples, and making sure your response aligns with the award criteria.

#### 1. Address Each Part of the Question Clearly

**Tip:** Break your response into distinct parts to address each element of the question. Consider applying the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your

answer. This method provides a clear and logical framework that helps the panel understand the nomination in detail and the impact of the nominee's actions.

**Example:**

- **Situation:** Start by briefly describing the context or challenge the nominee faced.
- **Task:** Outline the specific responsibility or goal the nominee was tasked with.
- **Action:** Highlight the specific steps the nominee took to address the task. Focus on their unique contributions and leadership.
- **Result:** Conclude with the outcome or impact of the nominee's actions, using quantifiable data or tangible evidence when possible.

## 2. Highlight the Nominee's Role

**Tip:** Focus on the specific, unique contributions the nominee made. Instead of a broad summary, use an example when they directly influenced success or demonstration of a behaviour.

**Example:** Rather than just listing actions, explain what made the nominee's contributions unique and the impact they had. For example, instead of saying the nominee "led a key program," describe how they identified and solved a challenge, or demonstrated values that made a meaningful difference. Focus on the tangible outcomes of their work.

## 3. Use Evidence

**Tip:** Wherever possible, provide quantifiable results or feedback that demonstrates the nominee's contribution. If you don't have quantitative data, include specific testimonials or qualitative evidence that reinforces the nominee's impact.

**Example:** "The nominee's initiative led to a 30% improvement in student engagement, as shown by surveys," Or "The nominee implemented a targeted initiative to improve equity across diverse schools, resulting in stronger student engagement and teaching practices. Their focus on data-driven evaluation and tailored professional learning has fostered continuous improvement. A colleague noted, 'The nominee's approach has transformed our school's ability to support all students effectively.'"

## 4. Keep It Focused and Concise

**Tip:** Remove any irrelevant details that don't directly contribute to the question. Focus on the core information and keep it under the word limit. If a project or initiative is being described, don't get caught up in unnecessary background — make sure to tie everything back to the nominee's impact.

**Example:** In describing a program, summarise the key actions the nominee took, focusing on their role and how they influenced the outcome. If the question is about demonstrating a value, focus on how the nominee exhibited that value through tangible actions, such as leading with excellence in a high-pressure situation.

## 5. Use Clear and Simple Language

**Tip:** Avoid jargon or overly complex sentences. Use straightforward language to make sure the panel easily understands the nominee's achievements.

**Example:** Instead of saying “demonstrated a high level of strategic acumen,” say “identified a key problem and introduced a solution that improved X by Y%.” For complex, specialty-based projects or programs the nominee undertook, simplify any technical terms or processes.

## 6. Revise for Clarity and Flow

**Tip:** After drafting, revise your nomination to ensure someone who has no prior knowledge of the nominee's work would be able to understand their achievements and their impact. You may like to ask a third party who is unfamiliar with the nominee's work to read the nomination and make sure that it is clear, and the impact of the nominee is easily understood.

**Example:** Use transition phrases like “In addition,” “As a result,” or “This led to” to guide the reader through your answer and ensure it flows smoothly.

## Writing your 100-Word Award Summary or the Principal/DEL

**Please note:** *Not all entries will require both an award summary and a citation from a principal or DEL. These are based on the award category and will appear in the form as required.*

The summary/citation should be a concise, compelling snapshot of the nominee's impact. Keep it focused on what the nominee has achieved and how it has made a difference.

- **Highlight key contributions** – Describe specific actions or initiatives the nominee has led or contributed to.
- **Show the impact** – Explain how their work has improved outcomes for students, staff, or the community.
- **Use an active voice** – Example: “*Sam drives collaboration to improve teaching quality*”, instead of “*Sam is a great team player*.”
- **Avoid generic statements** – Instead of “*They are deserving of an award*”, explain how they have demonstrated the award criteria.
- **Review your nomination before submission** (*Principal/DEL citations only*) - These citations will be included in the awards program should the nominee be successful.

**Example summary:**

*“Alex has led the development and implementation of a mentoring program that supports early career teachers to build confidence and capability in the classroom. By providing personalised coaching, tailored resources, and structured peer learning, the program has improved teacher retention and student engagement. Alex collaborates with school leaders and education specialists to ensure the program is responsive to the needs of teachers and students. Her leadership and commitment to professional growth have fostered a culture of collaboration, making a lasting impact on teaching quality and support for new educators across the metropolitan South region.”*