ANU Alumni Awards

How to write a successful nomination
The ANU Alumni Awards – identifying, recognising and celebrating alumni

Since 2013, the ANU Alumni Recognition Program has identified, recognised and celebrated alumni performing exceptionally in their field, personally or philanthropically. More than 60 award recipients have been named, and more than 380 nominations have been received.

Nominating an alumna/us for an ANU award is a wonderful way to recognise their contribution to the ANU or their community. For many alumni, being nominated has been their first engagement with ANU since graduating, and they now have strong links to the University.

Starting an application

Nominators need to articulate the impact of a nominee and provide evidence to support the nomination in less than 1,500 words.

It is important to read the form carefully, provide supporting documentation that fulfils the criteria and address each selection criterion. Strong applications are grounded in evidence and demonstrate impact. Research will make this process much easier – as will time to review information about the nominee. Revisiting the criteria regularly during drafting helps to focus your writing. It is not advisable to start your nomination on the day it is due as you will not have time to effectively research, write and edit your nomination.

Evidence based nominations

The evidence provided in your nomination will make or break your application. The selection committee reads 50+ nominations, so your application needs to capture why the nominee should be recognised with an Alumna/us Award. Evidence should be clear and concise, and not buried in the last line of your nomination form. It is better to write a short but targeted nomination than attempt a rewrite of War and Peace.

The two questions to ask are:

- Does this evidence support the nomination?
- Does this illustrate impact to the selection committee?

Evidence can be provided through testimonials and with quantitative or qualitative data.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data is about measuring and demonstrating impact. Quantitative (numerical) indicators can provide evidence for how a nominee has created impact within their field, or within their community. These should provide insight about performance; such as part of a trend, metrics set against some kind of target, or metrics set against a benchmark.

Indicators alone do not show impact. Rather, indicators give glimpses into the activities a nominee is doing, and measure impact. The key to useful quantitative data is to connect the activities of the nominee with the impact they have had and their long-term benefits.

For example:
“XX Foundation has inspired over 12,000 school-aged children to raise more than $500,000 for charity through their own micro-businesses. This program is scalable throughout 600 schools in Australia and NZ. XX also founded global start up generator, which simultaneously develops entrepreneurial talent and has reinvented the way businesses are funded and grown through pre-IPO investment. XX has become one of Australia's most active and successful angel investors with over 20 early stage angel investments that have helped XX’s investee companies grow to over $1.7 billion in combined valuations. XX has returned 6 fold return on capital invested over 5 years.”

Nominator, 2017 nomination form

Qualitative data

Qualitative data defines attributes, characteristics or properties without measurement. That is, qualitative data describes whereas quantitative data defines. A strong nomination uses qualitative data to illustrate and support claims of impact, often from third parties. This is the opportunity to use testimonials to support your claims in the nomination form. Testimonials can also include evidence of engagement (i.e. documentation of leadership, external awards and successful grants).

For example:

“The work XX has done in developing the student experience at our college has been superb – the program has increased student enrolments three-fold and the overall student experience, as told by our students via SELT evaluations, speaks to the quality of XX’s teaching and passion for undergraduate learning. Our college is better for XX’s contributions”.

ANU Dean, 2016 nomination form

How to plan a nomination

The trick to writing a compelling nomination is:

1. **Research** who you are writing about and find evidence to support your claims.
2. **Plan** what you are going to say and plan how you will logically structure your content to illustrate your points.
3. **Draft** your nomination form and re-check that you have addressed each selection criteria.
4. **Edit** your work and ensure someone else proof reads it prior to submission. A good piece of writing is 30% planning, 40% writing and 30% editing.
5. **Submit** your content by the deadline to the correct area. Ensure you have provided all required documentation.

The importance of proof reading

One of the strongest pieces of feedback from previous selection committees is that poorly written work is distracting to read. If a committee member has to re-read your application because the content doesn't flow or is riddled with grammatical errors, you will lose their attention.

Remember - punctuation matters:
**The key to a strong nomination**

The key to a strong nomination is providing information which illustrates your points to the reader.

- **Who, how and why** – Summarise the key information at the start of your application. This is what the reader will remember.
- **Use personal examples** – This is a memorable way to make your nominee stand out.
- **Categorise** – Subheadings help to structure your writing. You can compartmentalise your thoughts and ideas, and improve readability for the selection committee.
- **Address the selection criteria** – Just like a job application, responses need to be linked to selection criteria. You can write a brilliant nomination, but if it does not address the criteria, it will not score well.
- **Avoid hyperbole** – Words like “world-class” or “superstar” are overused and not evidence based.
- **Remember your audience** – The selection committee is comprised of former award recipients, members of the ANU Senior Executive Group, college representatives and student leaders. Make their job easier by providing a strong nomination.

**Previous recognition**

One of the best places to start looking for notable alumni is previous recognition honours, such as the Queen’s Birthday list, teaching awards for ANU or major grant recipients. These lists allow you to review citations that detail their bios and provide evidence of their impact.

By selecting someone who has already been recognised or shortlisted for an honour, you are likely to find additional details to support your nomination form.
Questions & Answers – 2018 Alumni Awards

When do the 2018 Alumni Award nominations open?
9am, Monday 11 September 2017 AEST.

When do the 2018 Alumni Award nominations close?
12am (midnight), Friday 27 October 2017 AEST.

Who should I contact if I have a question about the nomination form, the selection process or the Gala Dinner?
Please contact the ANU Alumni Relations team. You can e-mail alumni@anu.edu.au, phone (02) 6125 5004 or visit the website www.anu.edu.au/alumni/awards.

How do I source a CV if I do not know the nominee personally?
There are a number of ways to source a CV. You can contact the nominee personally, look at their organisation website or LinkedIn profile or contact the Prospect Brief & Research (PR&B) team. In some cases, philanthropic research may have uncovered a CV or bio which the PR&B team may be able to provide. The key is to address the CV in the selection criteria and provide context to the selection committee if it is incomplete, out-of-date or written without the nominee’s knowledge.

Where do I find a nomination form?
Nomination forms for the 2018 Alumni Awards will be available from Monday 11 September on the ANU Alumni website. Please visit www.anu.edu.au/alumni/awards for a PDF copy of the nomination forms.

How do I submit a nomination form?
Nomination forms should be submitted as a single PDF document to the alumni@anu.edu.au e-mail account. Nominations can be submitted from 9am Monday 11 September to 12am (midnight) Friday 27 October 2017 AEST.

Will you accept late nominations?
No. Any late applications will not be considered.

I am an ANU student – can I nominate an alumna/us for an Alumni Award?
Absolutely. Nominators can be current students, ANU Alumni, academic or professional staff, former award recipients or members of the general community.

I can only find a low-resolution image of the nominee. Will you accept this?
Yes. We would prefer a high-resolution image of all award nominees but will accept a low-resolution copy in the nomination form.

Will the nominee know that I personally nominated them (successfully or unsuccessfully)?
The nominator’s identity will not be revealed to a nominee (successful or unsuccessful) without the nominator’s consent. If a nominee requests this information, the Alumni Relations office will contact the nominator to seek permission to release their details.
When will nominees be informed of the outcome (successful or unsuccessful)?

All notifications will be made in November 2017 (successful) or December 2017 (unsuccessful).

Nominees who are aware of the nomination will be contacted by the Alumni Relations office with the outcome. As all nominees have personalised stewardship strategies developed for them, the next point of engagement may be included in this outcome letter such as an invitation to an event, or request to provide a keynote address.

Nominees who are not aware of the nomination may not be contacted directly by the Alumni Relations office about the award. The Alumni Relations office will contact the nominator to request permission to acknowledge an unsuccessful nomination. If the nominator does not wish to inform the nominee of an unsuccessful nomination, the Alumni Relations office will incorporate this into the nominee’s personalised stewardship strategy.

All successful nominees will receive a letter/e-mail from the Vice-Chancellor, which will include an invite to the recipients’ drinks and details of the Gala Dinner.

When will the nominator be informed of the outcome (successful or unsuccessful)?

The successful nominators will be informed in November 2017. Unsuccessful nominators will receive formal confirmation from the Alumni Relations office in December 2017.

Do I need endorsement from my Dean or School Director to submit a nomination?

It is not necessary to have your Dean or School Director endorse your nomination. However, it is strongly recommended that you seek their input. Many Deans/School Directors will have valuable contributions, and their support will give weight to your nomination in the eyes of the selection committee. It is also a good idea to speak with your Dean/School Director’s office in case a nomination has been prepared in an earlier year, if there is a reason for the College/School not to support a nominee or another person is also working on a nomination for the same nominee.

When will the 2018 Alumni Award Gala Dinner be held?

The 2018 Alumni Awards Gala Dinner will be held on Friday 27 April 2018 at the National Gallery of Australia. Invitations will open to Colleges/Schools in January 2018.

Who will sit on the 2018 selection committee?

The selection committee for the 2018 Alumni Awards is confidential. Previous selection committee members have included members of the ANU Senior Executive Group, academics, former award recipients, alumni, student leaders and senior staff from the Alumni Relations & Philanthropy division.