

# CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS



## Helpful Hints for a Great Nomination Packet

### Trailblazer Awards

#### **Commitment to Excellence**

This award honors individuals who are deeply invested in making online education better—day by day, detail by detail. If you're nominating someone for Commitment to Excellence, here are five tips to help you build a strong and persuasive nomination:

##### **1. Emphasize consistency and leadership.**

Describe how the nominee demonstrates an ongoing commitment to improvement. Highlight their leadership in setting high standards and their influence on course quality, instructional practices, or student outcomes.

##### **2. Showcase systems and best practices.**

Explain how the nominee uses structured processes—such as quality reviews, feedback loops, or professional development—to guide and sustain improvement. Be specific about the tools, models, or frameworks they apply.

##### **3. Provide evidence of impact.**

Include examples of how their efforts have led to measurable improvements in course design, student learning, or instructional effectiveness. If applicable, describe how their work has scaled or influenced others.

##### **4. Be specific and illustrative.**

Describe particular refinements, innovations, or quality assurance strategies that reflect the nominee's dedication to excellence. Specific examples help jurors understand the depth and intentionality of their work.

##### **5. Clarify contributions.**

If the nominee works within a team or department, clearly define their individual role in driving improvement. Emphasize their initiative, leadership, and commitment to elevating online education.

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#### **Creative Problem-Solving & Ingenuity**

This award celebrates bold thinkers who approach challenges with imagination and insight. If you're nominating someone for Creative Problem-Solving & Ingenuity, here are five tips to help you craft a compelling and inspiring nomination:

##### **1. Highlight the challenge.**

Describe the specific problem or barrier the nominee faced in the context of online teaching and learning. Help jurors understand the complexity or significance of the issue.

##### **2. Emphasize originality.**

Explain how the nominee's solution was creative, unconventional, or uniquely suited to the challenge. Highlight how their thinking broke from standard approaches or introduced something new.

##### **3. Provide evidence of impact.**

Include examples of how the solution improved student learning, engagement, accessibility, or instructional effectiveness. If applicable, describe how the innovation has been adopted or adapted by others.

##### **4. Be specific and illustrative.**

Describe the inventive strategy, tool, or process in detail. Specific examples help jurors understand the ingenuity behind the solution and how it was implemented.

##### **5. Clarify contributions.**

If the innovation was developed collaboratively, clearly define the nominee's role. Emphasize their leadership, insight, and creative contributions to the final outcome.

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#### Community-Building

This award honors those who bring people together—creating spaces where colleagues and stakeholders feel connected, included, and inspired. If you're nominating someone for Community-Building, here are five tips to help you craft a strong and heartfelt nomination:

**1. Highlight intentional connection-building.**

Describe how the nominee creates opportunities for meaningful interaction and shared purpose. Emphasize strategies that foster belonging, trust, and collaboration in online or professional communities.

**2. Showcase inclusive practices.**

Explain how the nominee ensures that all individuals—regardless of background or identity—feel welcome and valued. Include examples of how they promote fairness, empathy, and mutual respect.

**3. Provide evidence of impact.**

Use student or colleague feedback, participation data, or testimonials to show how the nominee's efforts have strengthened relationships and built community. If applicable, describe how their work has had a ripple effect across groups or programs.

**4. Be specific and illustrative.**

Describe particular initiatives, events, or course elements that reflect the nominee's commitment to community-building. Specific examples help jurors understand the depth and authenticity of their work.

**5. Clarify contributions.**

If the nominee works within a team or collaborative setting, clearly define their individual role. Highlight their leadership, creativity, and influence in cultivating a strong and welcoming community.

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#### Going the Extra Mile

This award honors individuals whose dedication and initiative make a lasting difference. If you're nominating someone for Going the Extra Mile, here are five tips to help you create a compelling and heartfelt nomination:

##### 1. Highlight what's "beyond the job."

Describe how the nominee consistently goes above and beyond their formal responsibilities. Be clear about what makes their contributions exceptional—not just excellent, but truly extra.

##### 2. Emphasize initiative and impact.

Explain how the nominee takes initiative to improve the student experience, support colleagues, or enhance online education. Include examples of how their efforts have made a meaningful and lasting difference.

##### 3. Provide evidence of transformation.

Use student or peer feedback, testimonials, or specific outcomes to show how the nominee's extra efforts have led to transformative learning experiences or community impact.

##### 4. Be specific and illustrative.

Describe particular actions, projects, or moments that reflect the nominee's dedication and creativity. Specific examples help jurors understand the scope and significance of their contributions.

##### 5. Clarify contributions.

If the nominee works within a team, clearly define their individual role. Emphasize how their personal commitment and initiative set them apart.

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#### Service Mindset

This award honors individuals who lead with generosity, collaboration, and care. If you're nominating someone for Service Mindset, here are five tips to help you create a thoughtful and compelling nomination:

##### 1. Highlight consistent support.

Describe how the nominee regularly offers help, guidance, or encouragement to others. Emphasize their reliability and the ways they make themselves available to support students, colleagues, or teams.

##### 2. Emphasize collaboration and teamwork.

Explain how the nominee contributes to a positive, cooperative environment. Include examples of how they build trust, foster collaboration, or help others succeed.

##### 3. Provide evidence of impact.

Use testimonials, peer feedback, or examples of collaborative outcomes to show how the nominee's service mindset has made a difference. If applicable, describe how their support has helped others overcome challenges or achieve goals.

##### 4. Be specific and illustrative.

Describe particular moments, actions, or habits that reflect the nominee's dedication to service. Specific examples help jurors understand the depth and consistency of their contributions.

##### 5. Clarify contributions.

If the nominee works within a team, clearly define their individual role. Highlight how their service-oriented approach stands out and contributes to a culture of support and shared success.