



How to:
Write a Compelling Nomination
UNCW Staff Award for Excellence





How to Write a Compelling Nomination

Who deserves an Award for Excellence?

The UNCW Staff Award for Excellence program is a part of the North Carolina Governor's Award for Excellence Program, which celebrates the people who make both our campus and our state a better place to live. Awards are presented in seven categories:

- Customer Service
- Efficiency & Innovation
- Human Relations
- State Government Service
- Public Service
- Heroism
- The Spirit of North Carolina

For detailed descriptions of each category, please [click here](#).

Nominees must be permanent state employees.

There are always fewer awards than people who deserve them. Because receiving awards is so rare, it is reserved for people:

- Who have achieved excellence in their field and/or made significant, observable changes or accomplishments;
- Whose work has benefitted UNCW, the people of North Carolina, or anywhere in the world in their field or activity.

If you think your nominee demonstrates these criteria and that their contribution stands out from those of others, please consider nominating them for the UNCW Staff Award for Excellence.





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How do I write a compelling nomination?

The key to a well-written nomination is providing the readers/evaluators with *specific information* illustrating how the individual's or group's achievements have had a positive impact on UNCW and its mission.

In order for your nomination to stand out against the many others we receive, you must *explain* and *include evidence* and *clear examples* of what makes your nominee so exceptional. Below is a recommended format for writing a quality UNCW Staff Award for Excellence nomination. Your nomination's summary should be written in 3 parts: **Opening Statement**, **Supporting Statement** and **Closing Statement**.

Opening Statement:

Start with a clear, direct and specific statement of why the nominee deserves recognition. Include enough information for the panel to become familiar with the nominee's specific challenges faced, actions taken, and results or goals met. List the most important information in the first few sentences and then elaborate as necessary.

Supporting Statements:

Support the opening statement with specific examples that address the award criteria and elaborate on why the nominee's accomplishments are worthy of the award. These examples should include outcomes, results, and/or activities above and beyond the nominee's job description. Include qualities that make this person outstanding, and that are clearly relevant to the award criteria. Consider including the following evidence to answer the 'who, what, when, where, why' in your supporting statements:

- » **WHAT did the nominee do?**
 - Projects and/or activities above the nominee's job description
 - Any challenges or issues encountered and overcome
- » **HOW did they do it?**
 - Initiative and/or leadership
 - Teamwork
 - Creativity and/or innovation
 - Behaviors and/or attitudes
- » **WHAT were the results and/or impact?**
 - What did the nominee's efforts accomplish?
 - Are there specific benefits that UNCW and/or NC has derived from those efforts?

Closing Statement:

Describe how others regard the nominee (e.g., recognized expert, progressive leader, or exceptionally innovative program). Consider mentioning major non-UNCW awards and/or the nominee's other education, community, etc. efforts.



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Additional Suggestions

Don't just say your nominee is outstanding – prove it!

It's important to use specific and concrete examples to illustrate how your nominee meets each of the eligibility and award criteria. Provide examples of how your nominee has demonstrated outstanding character and is a deserving candidate for the Award for Excellence.

Well-written nominations are more appealing to the panel of reviewers.

- Write short sentences that are concise and give specific detail.
- Support their nomination with your own observations, as well as qualitative and quantitative facts, statistics, metrics, etc.
- Provide a complete overview of the nominee or team's accomplishments. It is important to tell the nominee's story as you would to a stranger.
- Use an active voice when writing.

Create a unique picture of your nominee.

- Solicit information from others to strengthen the nomination.
- Describe unique characteristics that are more than just that the nominee is a great or nice person.

The selection committee is relying on your words to give them a positive, factual picture of your nominee's accomplishments. Explaining detailed behaviors and giving specific examples will make it obvious why someone deserves to be recognized.

- Keep it brief. Too much information that is not relative to the criteria can be harmful. Avoid giving work history or job descriptions, unless it directly relates to the award criteria. The goal is quality, not quantity.

Verify all information in the nomination.

- Nominations should be checked carefully to verify that all information submitted is accurate.
- Ensure that all acronyms are spelled out and are correctly defined, except for common acronyms.

Keep it simple

Remember that longer doesn't necessarily mean better. When presenting your nominee, keep your explanations clear and to-the-point while ensuring there is enough information for the selection panel to make their decision.



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What shouldn't I do?

Selection panels evaluate nominees' merits based on the information provided to them. That is why only the strongest and most compelling nominations result in an award.

There must be enough convincing information in the nomination package to make a good case. Therefore, your nomination *should not* be:

- an extended CV or resume;
- a list of educational achievements or transcripts;
- a list of appointments, awards or posts;
- a job description showing what the person has been hired to do.

Because weaker nominations often list these things, a regular complaint from the selection panel is that the nominee was "simply doing their job" or "nothing exceptional was demonstrated."

Instead, you should describe what is outstanding about your nominee's achievements and show memorably and persuasively how and where they have made a difference.

Ready to nominate?

We hope that you have found this guide useful. If you are now ready to nominate someone:

- Visit the [UNCW Staff Award for Excellence website](#).
- Read the [instructions](#) carefully.
- Go over the nomination form [checklist](#).
- Submit your nomination package by the deadline. Detailed instructions for submitting your nomination form can be found on the website.

