

Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success

ACSES Awards for Innovation and Excellence
in Impact on Higher Education Policy and
Practice 2025

1. About the award

1.1. Introduction

The Award for Innovation and Excellence in Impact on Higher Education Policy and Practice recognises individuals or teams that have made significant contributions to shaping policy and transforming practices in ways that drive positive outcomes in higher education student equity.

Recognising the diverse ways in which excellence can be demonstrated, this award scheme honours three recipients, each excelling in different aspects of the award criteria. This approach acknowledges the wide-ranging and impactful work being undertaken across the sector, whether through innovation, advocacy, collaboration, or evidence-based practice.

This award celebrates those whose work has not only influenced decision-makers, but has also led to tangible improvements in higher education outcomes for students from equity backgrounds. Their work may span any stage of the student lifecycle, from pre-access and participation to university completion and post-graduation pathways.

Recipients of this award have demonstrated a profound ability to bridge research, advocacy, and practical application, ensuring that their efforts result in sustainable, real-world outcomes in higher education equity.

Award recipients (or a nominated team member for team awards) will be supported by ACSES for their attendance at [Student Equity in an Era of Change 2025: The Australian Student Equity Symposium](#) in Sydney, where they will be formally recognised for their contributions and presented with their awards.

2. Application guidelines

2.1. Eligibility

Nominations are open to individuals or teams employed at a [Table A](#) or [Table B](#) provider or a [Regional University Study Hub](#). Both self-nominations and third-party nominations are welcome.

2.2. Nomination and award key dates

Applications close: 30 June 2025

Assessment by judging panel: July-August 2025

Award presentation: [Student Equity in an Era of Change 2025: The Australian Student Equity Symposium](#) (Sydney), 9-10 September 2025

2.3. Award criteria

Up to three recipients will be recognised for demonstrating excellence across all of the following five key areas:

1. Innovation and Originality

- The extent to which the nominee has introduced new ideas or approaches in their work on Australian higher education student equity and outcomes

- Creativity in addressing complex issues in Australian higher education student equity and in identifying unique solutions.
- 2. Impact and Effectiveness**
 - Demonstrated positive and measurable outcomes resulting from the nominee's work on Australian higher education equity policy or practice.
 - Clear evidence of the lasting and sustainable impact on students from equity backgrounds.
- 3. Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Evidence of effective collaboration with key stakeholders, including institutional leaders, policymakers, practitioners, students, and communities.
 - Demonstration of the ability to build partnerships and foster support for policy change or practice transformation.
- 4. Advocacy and Leadership**
 - Strong leadership or advocacy for change in influencing decision-makers in policy or practice.
- 5. Evidence and Research-Based Approach**
 - Use of sound evidence, research, or data to inform decisions, policies, or practices.
 - Commitment to applying rigorous methods in assessing impact and outcomes.

3. Applications

Applications are to be made using the template provided in Appendix A. Applications must be between 3-5 A4 pages following the five sections below, in the specified order. Supporting documents may be included.

1. Synopsis of the nominee's work, approach(es), methods and outcomes in Australian higher education student equity. The synopsis should be no more than 200 words. ACSES will draw on the synopsis in publicising the work of award winners.
2. Statement addressing award criteria, including evidence supporting the claims being made. Nominees are encouraged to draw on quotes from students, colleagues and other stakeholders, as well as measurable and tangible outcomes. Please address award criterion in the order specified.
3. Reference list in APA 7 format. The reference list is not included in the page limit, but nominees should be judicious in their use of references.
4. Other supporting documents of up to four (4) additional A4 pages can be included in the application. It is recommended that supporting documents be referenced to in the statement addressing award criteria.
5. Statement of team nomination (for team nominations only) outlining the contribution of each team member to the work described in the application. No more than one additional A4 page.

4. Judging panel

The judging panel will consist of the following members:

- Senior higher education leader (chair)
- ACSES representative
- EPHEA representative
- Two more members to be co-opted to bring a diversity of perspectives to the panel

Appendix A: Application form

Accessibility

All documents produced by the applicant must meet accessibility guidelines. For more information refer to these Disability Gateway guidelines on how to “[Create accessible materials – print and digital documents](#)”.

Submission

Email submissions to acses@curtin.edu.au

Mark to the attention of ACSES Research and Policy Program Ian Li.

ACSES Awards for Innovation and Excellence in Impact on Policy and Practice Application Form

Applications must be between 3-5 A4 pages following the five sections below, in the specified order. Supporting documents may be included.

Contact details (for individual/team lead)

Title (e.g., Prof, A/Prof, Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc)	
First and last name	
Position/Role	
School/Faculty	
Institution	
Email address	
Telephone	
Self or third-party nomination (please provide your contact details below)	
Third-party contact details	

1. Synopsis of the nominee's work, approach(es), methods, and outcomes in Australian higher education student equity.

- The synopsis should be no more than 200 words. ACSES will draw on the synopsis in publicising the work of award winners.*

2. Statement addressing award criteria, including evidence supporting the claims being made.

- Nominees are encouraged to draw on quotes from students, colleagues, and other stakeholders, as well as measurable and tangible outcomes. Please address award criterion in the order specified.*

3. Reference list in APA 7 format.

- *The reference list is not included in the page limit, but nominees should be judicious in their use of references.*

4. Other supporting documents of up to four (4) additional A4 pages can be included in the application.

- *It is recommended that supporting documents be referenced to in the statement addressing award criteria.*

5. Statement of team nomination (for team nominations only) outlining the contribution of each team member to the work described in the application.

- *No more than one additional A4 page.*