



How to Write an Exceptional Nomination

NC State Awards for Excellence

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Nomination Criteria

Criteria

Individuals can be recognized who demonstrate one of the following award categories within their departments or divisions, the NC State campus community, the State of North Carolina, or the lives of others:

Customer Service

This category recognizes a candidate who provides/provided exceptional service that left the customer fully satisfied with their experience. The candidate exceeded expectations to meet the needs of the customer and added value to the customer experience.

Efficiency and Innovation

This category recognizes a candidate who has made a significant contribution in improving the efficiency of state government services. The candidate has established new and/or improved methods, practices, plans or designs resulting in innovation, savings and/or efficiency.

Human Relations

This category recognizes a candidate who has made an outstanding contribution toward enhancing the quality or morale of the workplace or toward enhancing the public image of a department or division, NC State University, or state government.

Outstanding State Government Service

This category recognizes a candidate who demonstrates an unselfish devotion to duty far and above the normal requirements and contributes significantly to the advancement of state service to the citizens of North Carolina.

Public Service

This category recognizes a candidate who has made an outstanding contribution through volunteerism or through implementing community or public service projects.

Safety and Heroism

This category recognizes a candidate who demonstrates outstanding judgment or courage in an emergency, voluntarily risking his/her life or exhibited meritorious action to prevent injury, loss of life or prevented damage to or loss of property.

Spirit of North Carolina

This category recognizes a candidate who exemplifies the state motto "To be, rather than to seem" by mentoring others in the pursuit of excellence and serving as an ambassador for the State of North Carolina. This award category is reserved for exceptional circumstances and for accomplishments and achievements of the highest caliber.

All Awards for Excellence nominations require the approval of the nominee's manager. Nominees will be disqualified in the event of any active or pending disciplinary actions or in the event of documented disciplinary actions within the preceding 18 months.

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How do I write a compelling nomination?

A well-written nomination is providing the readers/evaluators with specific information illustrating outstanding accomplishments and contributions that excel above and beyond an employee's normal job responsibilities.

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 an exceptional 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 NCSU 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-NC State University 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 Awards for Excellence nomination. Remember to write the nomination as if a stranger is reading it.

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 to avoid

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.

