

Excellence Awards: Suggestions for Material Preparation
March 7, 2006

1. State clearly in your letter and in your summary what specific work you want the committee to attend to when you are being considered for an award. Give enough details about the work that allow the committee (who are not specialists in your field) to understand what you did.
2. Put your work's significance in context. Explain the significance of your work in a way that someone who is not familiar with your work can understand. For instance, if you have published something in a journal or magazine, how competitive is that venue? What impact has your work had?
3. Help the committee to understand how much effort a given item in your portfolio represents. For instance, if you served on a committee, what work did you actually do and how much time did it take? Or, if you are a second author on an article, how significant was your contribution?
4. Organize your documentation. If there is a lot of material, create a table of contents and mark different sections of a notebook with labeled tabs. For example, if you are presenting student evaluations, briefly summarize the main items and indicate where they can be found in the document. You want to make it easy on the committee to understand your material.
5. Present your work in a physical format that holds up to many people reading it over a period of several days and minimizes the chance that separate items will get lost.
6. Make sure that in your letter, your summary, your documentation, you are only presenting time-relevant material. If a date does not obviously correspond to the dates of the award, explain why you think it should be considered for that year (e.g., it was accepted during the award period but delayed a year in press, or it was backdated because a journal is behind on its volumes).
7. Focus your case on only one of the three areas: teaching, service, or research and creative activities (for Teaching and Resource Professionals), Teaching (for Instructors) and on the area of primary employment (for Academic Support Professionals). For Teaching and Resource Professionals, make sure that you choose the best area for your work to be judged favorably.