How to Write a Student Statement for the 2006 RMIT Teaching Awards

Writing a Student Statement for the 2006 RMIT Teaching Awards is like writing a letter of recommendation. This document can help with:

- Writing process
- Tips
- Examples
- Links to letter-writing sites
- Letter-writing books in RMIT libraries

Remember

- Your involvement is your own choice and **you are completely free to be involved or not.** You can pull out at any time without it affecting your studies. Whether you recommend a staff member for an award or not will have no influence on your current or future studies in any way.

- **Your recommendation is confidential.** It is for the Teaching Awards Selection Panel only, not the teaching staff member. That is why you will not send it directly to the staff member.

- **Please be honest.** Do not write anything that is not true.

Process

How do you write an essay or assignment?

- Jot down ideas
- Plan the order of ideas
- Write a first draft
- Have a friend read your draft
- Write your final draft

You can use a similar process to write your recommendation.

Read more about steps in the writing process at RMIT 101 (you will need to log in) [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=h6eaaxm6xqi41](http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=h6eaaxm6xqi41)

Structure

Your student statement is like a letter of recommendation. Here is the standard layout and structure for a business letter.
Dear XXXXXXX

Introduction

Body

Conclusion

Yours sincerely

Your signature – hand written

Your name – typed

Greetings Line

If you can find the name of the person leading the RMIT Teaching Award Selection Panel (called the Chairperson), you can write their name.

For example:
Dear Professor Goldsmith
If you cannot find that person’s name, you can begin with:

- Dear Sir or Madam  
- To whom it may concern  
- To the RMIT Teaching Award Selection Panel

**Introduction**

In one paragraph, answer:

- *Who are you?*  
  (eg. Second year student studying Engineering; PhD student close to completion; graduate of a Food Science degree now working as a food scientist.)

- *How you know your teacher/lecturer/supervisor?*  
  (eg. Research supervisor, lecturer, clinical teacher)

**Body of text**

In more than one paragraph, answer:

- *General statement of recommendation?*  
  If you had to summarise their good points in one sentence, what would you say?

- *How does your teacher/lecturer/supervisor meet the selection criteria?*  
  Look through the selection criteria in the category for this award on the RMIT Teaching Awards website. Do any of them sound like your teacher/lecturer/supervisor? If so, include them. You don’t have to include each one.

- *Concrete examples?*  
  When you think about your teacher/lecturer/supervisor’s good points, do you think of specific stories?

- *Would you recommend this person and their course/program to other students?*

**Conclusion**

In one short paragraph, answer:

- *Reflecting on what you have written, what is your overall opinion of this person? Do you recommend them for the Teaching Award?*

**Example Student Statement**

Your statement might be longer or shorter. Check the page limit in your category.
To the RMIT Teaching Award Selection Panel

It is a pleasure to support Dr Ani Newbegin’s nomination for the 2006 RMIT Teaching Award. I came to RMIT University to study a Doctor of Philosophy under a scholarship program and Dr Newbegin is my primary supervisor. I have been studying with her for two years now. She is a supportive, inspiring and thoughtful supervisor.

Dr Newbegin is a supervisor who works hard to help her students to develop as researchers. She does not ‘spoon feed’ her students, but works with them to develop a research project that is satisfying and exciting. This helps students like me to be motivated about our research, since the majority of the ideas are our own. It is extremely satisfying to contribute ideas to your own research project and helps to build your confidence.

Another example of how Dr Newbegin helps to build our confidence is that she strongly encourages us to present our work at conferences. Last month I presented my preliminary findings at the national science meeting for our discipline. I received very positive feedback from those who attended my presentation, which confirmed that I’m on the right track. Dr Newbegin also presented at this meeting. While some supervisors may have been primarily focused on their own needs and seen little of their students at a conference, Dr Newbegin was very thoughtful and introduced me and another RMIT student to leading researchers in our fields. I feel I made very valuable contacts.

Unfortunately, the first months of my PhD were very frustrating due to technical problems, but Dr Newbegin was always supportive and helpful. I do think I would have given up without her regular encouragement. Dr Newbegin was also thoughtful in helping me to find a second supervisor. She introduced me to Dr Tanaka, who became my second supervisor and a very valuable contact as a researcher in industry.

I am confident that Dr Newbegin is very well read and current in her field and meets this criteria of the teaching award. In discussions with her students she often points out connects to related areas and directs the development of our thinking with much sophistication.

Dr Newbegin shows many examples of meeting the student-centred criteria of the teaching award by her focus on what students require to learn and develop. She uses a systematic approach to documenting students’ progress, with her three-monthly Progress Forms. I found this both a useful way to set goals, document my progress, and communication my needs to her.

Although not an international student myself, I have witnessed Dr Newbegin spending a lot of time with students from overseas and those who do not come from English speaking backgrounds. She encourages all of her students, but gives the international students the confidence they need to begin work in a totally foreign environment, which tends to boost the morale of everyone. It is obvious that she cares about her students’ welfare. I have always found her to be very approachable regarding personal matters, and see her as a strong and independent lady who is a mentor for life as well as for research.

I strongly recommend Dr Newbegin for the 2006 RMIT Teaching Award.

Yours sincerely

Pearl Black

Pearl Black
Further Reading

Writing a letter of recommendation - These imagine you are recommending someone for a job.
http://resume.monster.com/articles/recommendation/
http://pag.lcs.mit.edu/~mernst/advice/write-recommendation.html

Letter writing - General tips.
http://www.askoxford.com/betterwriting/letterwriting/?view=uk
http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/letterguide.html

Plain Language - Free on-line course for writing in plain language. Good for ways to think about effective writing. But be careful – tips on this site won’t always apply to writing for TAFE and university assessment.
http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/plaintrain/

Example RMIT library books:


Further Help

- Learning Skills Unit staff (http://www.rmit.edu.au/lsu) can support you in writing your student statement. You will need to book an appointment.

- If you have questions about the RMIT Teaching Awards, please contact the appropriate Portfolio Awards Coordinators as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Kate Patrick</th>
<th><a href="mailto:kate.patrick@rmit.edu.au">kate.patrick@rmit.edu.au</a></th>
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<td>Design and Social Context</td>
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