

Background

Since 1994 the UNE Alumni Awards have provided an opportunity to recognise the diverse achievements of our alumni in their lives, careers and communities. Award winners have demonstrated their commitment to UNE's core values which currently include:

- **BE BOLD:** Try big things together
- **BE KIND:** Act with care and courage
- **BE ACCOUNTABLE:** Own your impact
- **BE CONNECTED:** Build bridges to expand possibilities

Who can be a Nominator

Nominations can be made by any member of Convocation, as defined in the [University of New England Act 1993 – Section 14](#) including **graduates, current or former UNE Council members, staff and former staff** of the University of New England.

One graduate may be nominated for more than one award category; however, the nominee may not win more than one category in any award year, and is not eligible to win the same category more than once.

Self-nominations will not be accepted.

What information is required?

Please ensure you have the following details and information before completing the nomination form.

1. **Nominee (person being nominated) details:** Full name, contact details, current employment and degrees/qualifications.
2. **Nominator (you) details:** Full name, contact details and UNE affiliation.
3. **Two Referees:** Names and contact details of two referees who can attest to the Nominee's credentials and supply written references, the Nominator may also act as one of the two referees. Note: Referees are to supply written references as an attachment to the nomination.
4. **Selection Criteria:** Answers to each of the selection criteria questions - see below under the Award Categories.
5. **Resume/biography:** A copy of the nominee's current professional resume/biography.
6. **Optional:** Nominations may also include other supporting evidence such as awards, media clippings, electronic media footage, etc. (maximum of three attachments).

Note: *If you are nominating one graduate in multiple categories, please complete a separate nomination for each category.*

Step 1: Complete the Nomination Form

The nomination form requires the following information:

1. Provide name and details for the Nominee including full name, contact details, current employment and degrees/qualifications.
2. Provide name and contact details for the Nominator (you).

3. Provide names and contact details for the two referees who can attest to the Nominee's credentials, the Nominator may also act as one of the two referees.
4. Select the Award Category.
5. Provide answers to each of the selection criteria questions for the selected Award Category (see below) that clearly demonstrates how the nominee meets the criteria of the award and how they have gone above and beyond the normal course of their career. Provide examples and evidence where possible.
6. Confirm details and submit the nomination form. You will receive confirmation of your submission.
7. Submitted nomination forms can be edited up until the closing date.

Step 2: Provide Supporting Documents

The following supporting documents (preferably in pdf format) **must be forwarded to the Alumni Relations Office at alumni@une.edu.au** prior to the closing date:

1. A copy of the nominee's current professional resume/biography.
2. Two written references supplied by the referees named in the nomination form that support the Nominee's credentials. Referees must supply their contact details with their reference and may be contacted to verify their reference.
3. **Optional:** Nominations may also include other supporting evidence such as awards, media clippings, electronic media footage, etc. (maximum of three attachments).
4. Compile and save all documents and information as pdf files and send to alumni@une.edu.au.

Award Categories

UNE Distinguished Alumni Award	
Eligibility	Selection Criteria
The UNE Distinguished Alumni Award is presented to a UNE graduate who: - Over the course of their career has made significant contributions to their field; - Displays outstanding leadership and professional qualities while embodying UNE's values; - Embodies characteristics of honesty, ethical behaviour and authenticity; - Will inspire future generations of UNE graduates with their achievements.	Question 1: Describe how the nominee has made significant contributions to their field over the course of their career, demonstrating ways they have gone above and beyond their normal professional duties. In your response, highlight specific achievements that showcase their outstanding leadership and professional qualities, and provide examples of their honesty, ethical behaviour, and authenticity in action (500 words or less). Question 2: Explain how the nominee embodies UNE's values of being bold, kind, accountable, and connected. Additionally, discuss how their accomplishments and character will inspire current and future generations of UNE graduates (500 words or less).

2026 UNE Alumni Awards Information Pack

UNE Alumni Community Award	
Eligibility	Selection Criteria
The UNE Alumni Community Award is presented to a UNE graduate who: • Through paid or unpaid work has made significant contributions in the community sector, philanthropic or public life or to support not-for-profit organisations in Australia and/or internationally; • Embodies UNE's values through their commitment to building meaningful relationships and supporting individuals and communities to thrive; • Will inspire future generations of UNE graduates with their achievements.	Question 1: Describe how the nominee has made significant contributions to the community sector, philanthropic efforts, or public life, either through paid or unpaid work, and provide specific examples of their impact on individuals or communities in Australia and/or internationally (500 words or less). Question 2: Explain how the nominee embodies UNE's values of being bold, kind, accountable, and connected through their work, detailing the meaningful relationships they have built and the ways in which they have supported individuals and communities to thrive. Additionally, describe how their achievements will inspire future generations of UNE graduates (500 words or less).
UNE Rising Star Alumni Award	
Eligibility	Selection Criteria
The UNE Rising Star Alumni Award is presented to a UNE graduate who: • Is in the early stages of their career (15 years or less since graduation); • Displays outstanding leadership and professional qualities while embodying UNE's values; • Embodies characteristics of honesty, ethical behaviour and authenticity; • Will inspire future generations of UNE graduates with their achievements.	Question 1: How has the nominee demonstrated outstanding leadership and professional qualities in their early career, specifically in ways that embody UNE's values of being bold, kind, accountable, and connected? Please provide specific examples of their contributions and impact within their field or community (500 words or less). Question 2: In what ways has the nominee exemplified characteristics of honesty, ethical behaviour, and authenticity since their graduation, and how do these traits contribute to their potential to inspire future generations of UNE graduates? Please include any relevant achievements or recognitions that highlight their commitment to these values (500 words or less).

Conditions of entry

1. A UNE graduate cannot win more than one award category in any calendar year and cannot win the same award category more than once.
2. Awards will not be awarded posthumously.
3. Joint nominations will be accepted for the Alumni Community Award.
4. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
5. Nominations will only be accepted from members of UNE Convocation including graduates, current or former UNE Council members, staff and former staff of the University of New England.
6. Current members of UNE Council or UNE Foundation Board of Directors are not eligible to be nominated in any award category.
7. Current UNE students are not eligible to be nominated in any award category.
8. Nominations must be accompanied by two written references. Referees must supply their contact details with their reference and may be contacted to verify their reference.
9. The selection panel's decision is final on all matters relating to the nomination process and the selection of award recipients and no correspondence will be entered into.
10. The selection panel reserves the right to select nominations to remain valid for up to two years. Nominators will be responsible for updating additional information.
11. The selection panel reserves the right not to allocate an award in one of the categories if, in their opinion, there are no entries of sufficient merit. The number of awards allocated in each category will be at the discretion of the selection panel.
12. The University reserves the right to disclose the identity of the nominator to the nominee.
13. Personal information submitted to the University by the nominator or nominee, in connection with the awards, will be given to the selection panel for the purpose of judging the awards and will be stored in the University's alumni database. The Alumni Relations office maintains confidentiality with all submissions and only notifies the award recipients, their nominators, and the nominators of all other candidates. Nominators should use their discretion as to the whether to notify their nominees during the process.
14. The nominator's and/or winning nominee's name, image and statement may be published and/or used in any form of media, in any context pertaining to the awards. For more information and a complete list of past alumni award recipients, visit: <https://www.une.edu.au/alumni/alumni-awards/alumni-award-recipients>
15. Nominations are to be forwarded via email or mail to arrive by **5pm 31 July**.

Tips for submitting a strong nomination

To ensure your nomination stands out and effectively highlights the achievements of the nominee, consider the following tips:

1. Understand the Award Criteria

- Carefully review the eligibility and selection criteria for the specific award category.
- Align the nominee's achievements with UNE's values: Be Bold, Be Kind, Be Accountable and Be Connected.

2. Provide a Compelling Narrative

- Tell a clear and engaging story about the nominee's accomplishments.
- Explain the impact they have had on their industry, community, or society.
- Use specific examples that demonstrate their leadership, innovation, or dedication.

3. Use Quantifiable Evidence

- Where possible, include measurable achievements (e.g., "Increased community engagement by 50%", "Led a team that developed a ground-breaking medical innovation").
- Highlight awards, recognitions, or published works that validate their contributions.

4. Gather Strong Supporting Documents

- Provide letters of support (references) from colleagues, mentees, or industry professionals who can vouch for the nominee's impact.
- Include relevant media articles, publications, or testimonials to strengthen the case.

5. Be Clear and Concise

- Avoid overly technical language; write in a way that is accessible to the selection panel.
- Keep responses within word limits and ensure all required sections are completed.

6. Ensure Accuracy

- Double-check dates, names, and details before submission.
- Proofread for grammar and clarity to maintain a professional submission.

7. Submit Before the Deadline

- The nomination period is **open from 1 April – 31 July**.
- Don't wait until the last minute—allow time for revisions and gathering supporting documents.

Tips for writing a strong reference

Here are some key tips to make your reference letters impactful:

1. Structure and Content

- Open with your relationship to the nominee and how long you've known them
- Be specific about their achievements and impact
- Include concrete examples and measurable outcomes
- Focus on achievements since graduating from UNE
- Keep to 1-2 pages maximum

2. Key Elements to Address

- Professional accomplishments
- Community contributions
- Leadership qualities
- Innovation in their field
- How they represent UNE's values
- Impact on others (mentoring, inspiration, etc.)

3. Writing Style Tips

- Use clear, professional language
- Provide detailed examples rather than general statements
- Include specific achievements
- Be genuine and personal while maintaining professionalism

4. Supporting Evidence

- Include specific projects or initiatives
- Mention awards, recognition, or media coverage
- Reference any quantifiable results or outcomes
- Describe their influence on their profession or community

5. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Being too brief or vague
- Focusing on personal characteristics over achievements
- Including irrelevant information
- Writing about achievements from their student days only

The most compelling references are those that tell a story about the nominee's journey and impact since graduating from UNE.

Example structure for reference:

[Your Name and Title]

[Your Contact Information]

[Date]

RE: Reference for [Nominee's Name] – [UNE Alumni Awards Category]

Dear Selection Committee,

Opening Paragraph:

Introduce yourself and your relationship to the nominee

Body Paragraphs (2-3):

- Specific examples of achievements
- Impact on profession/community
- Leadership and innovation
- Connection to UNE values

Closing Paragraph:

Strong endorsement and summary

Sincerely,

[Your signature]

[Your name]

Closing date

Completed nominations must be received by **5pm 31 July 2026**. Any incomplete nominations or nominations submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Self-nominations will not be accepted. If you do not have a nominator, you will not be able to complete the nomination form. If you feel you may be eligible but are having difficulty in finding a nominator, the Alumni office may be able to assist. Please email Alumni Relations at least one month prior to the closing date if you would like help finding a nominator - alumni@une.edu.au

Nomination Form

The nomination form can be found here <https://www.une.edu.au/alumni/alumni-awards>

Other information

Frequently Asked Questions - <https://www.une.edu.au/alumni/alumni-awards/alumni-award-faqs>

Previous Award Winners - <https://www.une.edu.au/alumni/alumni-awards/alumni-award-recipients>

For any questions, contact the UNE Alumni Office at alumni@une.edu.au.