

GOLD COAST STUDENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

NOMINATION APPLICATION GUIDE

EXPERIENCE
GOLDCOAST.

About the Awards

Celebrate the Gold Coast's brightest minds, leaders and changemakers across eight award categories celebrating achievement in entrepreneurship, research, community leadership, diversity and inclusion, health and wellness, arts and culture, environmental sustainability, and global impact.

Who is Eligible

To be eligible for nomination, nominees must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Be an international or domestic student
- Enrolled at a registered education provider on the Gold Coast between **January and December 2026**, or have graduated from a Gold Coast education provider between **January 2026 and the nomination submission date**.
- Applicants must reside within the City of Gold Coast local government area
- Open to students from high school through to tertiary education, with no upper age limit
- Students may self-nominate

Award Prizes

Each category winner will receive \$1,000 in recognition of their outstanding achievement.

Awards Categories

Shine a light on Gold Coast students achieving excellence, innovation and impact across one of the following categories:

1. Entrepreneurship

Creating economic, social or community impact by turning ideas into action through businesses, start-ups, social enterprises and innovative solutions.

2. Research

Advancing knowledge and solutions that address real-world challenges through pursuing research, innovation and discovery.

3. Community Leadership

Creating positive change by leading initiatives, empowering others, mentoring, volunteering, advocating or strengthening communities.

4. Diversity & Inclusion

Building more equitable environments by championing accessibility, belonging, representation and initiatives that foster inclusion or celebrate diversity.

5. Health & Wellness

Inspiring healthier communities by advancing sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing through participation, coaching, advocacy and community initiatives.

6. Arts & Culture

Enriching the City's creative landscape through artistic achievement, creative practice and cultural leadership.

7. Environmental Sustainability

Creating a more sustainable future through environmental leadership, innovation, advocacy, sustainable practices or leading initiatives that protect and enhance our natural environment.

8. Global Citizenship & International Impact

Strengthening global connections through international collaboration, cultural exchange, global leadership or initiatives that create impact beyond the City.

The Application Process

Students will be assessed on what they have achieved and the positive difference they have made — not on spelling, grammar, writing style or accent. You do not need to use formal or complicated language. Clear, specific examples are more helpful than broad statements.

Question 1 - What has the student done? (maximum 150 words)

- What was the activity, project or achievement?
- What was the student's personal role and contribution?
- When did it happen?
- How did the student demonstrate initiative, leadership, creativity, commitment or persistence?
- What was the outcome or positive difference made?

Question 2 - What difference did it make? (maximum 150 words)

- Who benefited from the student's work?
- What changed or improved as a result?
- How many people were involved or reached, if known?
- Did the positive impact continue after the activity ended?
- What difference did it make to the Gold Coast or a Gold Coast community?

Question 3 - What did the student demonstrate? (maximum 100 words)

- Describe how the student showed initiative, leadership, commitment, creativity or persistence.
- Did the student start or improve something?
- Did they lead, collaborate, advocate or support others?
- Did they persist through a challenge and contribute consistently over time?

Question 4 - Why is this achievement significant? (maximum 100 words)

- Why is this achievement meaningful or significant for the student?
- How does it compare with what might reasonably be expected at their age or stage of study?
- Were there circumstances or limited opportunities that make the achievement especially significant?

5. Supporting evidence (Upload one or two supporting items)

Upload one or two supporting items to help demonstrate, confirm and provide further context about the achievement.

Examples may include:

- Photograph or project image
- Letter or testimonial from someone familiar with the work
- Media or news article
- Research, report or project summary
- Certificate, award or school record
- Link to a project, performance, publication or initiative

6. Referee details

Provide the contact details of 1 x Australian referee who can verify the student's achievement and contribution.

The referee should be familiar with the student's work and be able to speak to the achievement described. Family member references will not be accepted. Referees will usually only be contacted if the student is shortlisted, if scores are very close, or if further information is needed.

How Applications are Assessed

Eligible applications are assessed independently by a judging panel. All categories are assessed against the same four criteria to ensure a fair and consistent process.

Criterion	Weight	What judges assess
Achievement and contribution	30%	What the student personally achieved and how well it aligns with the category.
Positive impact	35%	The difference made to other students, the Gold Coast community, industry, the environment or another relevant community.
Initiative, leadership and commitment	20%	Ownership, persistence, responsibility, collaboration, advocacy and sustained effort.
Significance in context	15%	How significant the achievement is considering the student's age, study stage, experience, circumstances, available opportunities and length of involvement.

Achievements are assessed in context. Judges consider what is appropriate for the student's age, stage of study, experience and opportunities. Finalists may be asked to confirm their student status, provide further evidence or consent to publicity. The judging panel's decision is final.