



## **2025 Pleiades Awards: Instructions for Applicants**

### **Overview**

The intention of the Pleiades Awards is to recognise the effort and progress of Australian astronomy organisations towards promoting inclusion, equity, and diversity and supporting their community. We are not simply looking for a given level of criteria matching, but a complete report of efforts. We recognise that the work of making an organisation fully inclusive and equitable will be an ongoing task. When responding to the criteria, the main thing to keep in mind is sharing an honest representation of what your organisation has accomplished. We are looking for insight into the thought processes, details of what actions have or will be taken, how those actions were judged to be successful or not, and how you reflected upon these outcomes in planning future efforts. We will not judge your organisation negatively if something has not gone as planned, has been ineffective, or a survey has returned troubling results as long as your organisation demonstrates that they have critically reflected on and explained why they think things happened as they did and describe what actions they are taking to improve for the future. If any of the criteria do not apply to your organisation, then please explain in your response why. We are also looking for sincere, sustained effort from the entire organisation towards achieving the goals of inclusion and equity.

### **Review Committee and Conflicts of Interest**

The Pleiades Award applications will be reviewed and scored by the IDEA Chapter Steering Committee. We record any real or perceived conflicts of interest and ensure that no Steering Committee member will grade or be included in the discussion of the application where a conflict exists. A member of the IDEA Steering Committee is permitted to contribute to their organisation's application. All application materials and discussions about applications will be kept confidential.

### **Pleiades Application for Each Round**

For organisations that are new to the Pleiades Awards, they must first submit an

application for Bronze, and progress from there. To ensure all organisations are continually assessed against the bi-annual Pleiades Award Criteria and evolving best practices, organisations must submit a Pleiades application at each round, even if they are seeking to maintain their current award level. If an organisation skips a round, the next time they submit a Pleiades application they will be required to start from Bronze. Requiring a restart at Bronze helps maintain fairness and accountability across all participants, ensuring that no organisation remains unassessed for more than two years, and that organisations regularly demonstrate a sincere, sustained effort towards achieving the goals of inclusion and equity.

## **Scoring, Review and Appeal Process**

Each of the criteria will be scored by each unconflicted review committee member on a scale from 0 to 4:

- 0: Not answered
- 1: Minimally answered the criteria, or missed significant aspects of the criteria
- 2: Competently answered, but with one or two missing elements
- 3: Completely answered, any issues have been clearly explained
- 4: Exceptional answer

The scoring will be followed with a moderation meeting to review each application, to discuss the scoring for each criterion, and to reach a consensus for the integer score to be assigned to each criterion for each of the applications. The committee will assess the applications and seek clarification through a rejoinder. A rejoinder will be solicited from each organisation approximately 6 weeks after the application deadline. Applicants will be given ~4 weeks to submit their rejoinder. The committee will send specific questions or requests that were identified during the scoring and first review of the application. A length limit will be given for the response. In addition to the response to the questions, organisations may also include additional data that may have been collected since the application deadline (e.g. results from a survey).

Using the criteria scores as a guide combined with the rejoinder response, the review committee will then assess the whole application and reach consensus on what level to award the organisation. The applicants will then be notified of the award decision ~4 weeks after the rejoinder submission date. If an organisation chooses to appeal the award decision, it should be made in writing and be addressed to the IDEA Chapter Steering Committee Chair within 2 weeks of the organisation receiving their results. One appeal per organisation is allowable. Following this opportunity, the award decision will be final.

## **Key Definitions:**

- **Equity, diversity and inclusion:** in these award criteria, this refers to the actions taken by an organisation to achieve equity, diversity and inclusion. The objective to provide an atmosphere and environment in which all have

equal opportunity to succeed, irrespective of (and not limited to) gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, race, age or religion. This can include (but is not limited to):

- A committee to identify barriers to and opportunities for achieving workplace equity, diversity and inclusion.
  - Monitoring of staff and student composition, to identify changes in staff and student diversity.
  - Culture surveys to measure the diversity of the staff and student cohort, and get feedback on workplace culture and identify barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion.
  - Workplace training that supports equity, diversity and inclusion.
  - Workplace readiness (cultural safety)- that is, how culturally safe and inclusive the workplace is so all people feel respected, connected and contributing to the organisation's success.
  - Recruitment, selection and promotion that encourages diversity and inclusion, including appropriate advertising, monitoring diversity and training of panel members.
  - Monitoring workloads, so they are consistent with equity, diversity and inclusion (e.g. preventing gendered teaching or administration workloads).
- **Misconduct:** includes any behaviour that inhibits a person's opportunity to succeed in their work. This can include (but is not limited to): Offensive comments related to protected attributes including gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, race, religion or national origin.
    - Unwelcome comments regarding a person's lifestyle choices and practices.
    - Deliberate misgendering or use of 'dead' or rejected names.
    - Gratuitous or off-topic sexual images or behaviour in spaces where they're not appropriate.
    - Physical contact or simulated physical contact without consent or after a request to stop.
    - Threats of violence or incitement of violence, including encouraging self-harm.
    - Deliberate intimidation and workplace bullying.
    - Stalking or following.
    - Harassing photography or recording, including logging online activity to harass.
    - Sustained disruption of discussion.
    - Unwelcome sexual attention.
    - Patterns of inappropriate social contact, such as requesting/assuming inappropriate levels of intimacy with others.
    - Continued one-on-one communication after requests to cease such activity.

## Notes on types of organisations that may apply for Pleiades Awards:

- Astronomy in Australia incorporates a number of large organisations which span multiple individual organisations for a set period or duration (e.g., Centres of Excellence). In addition to discussing internal initiatives, such organisations should also comment (as appropriate) on policies dealing with issues which may arise between parties at different member organisations.
- If an eligible organisation oversees committees of external astronomers (e.g. Time Allocation, Steering and Advisory Committees), those organisations should also comment on how their initiatives apply to those committees.
- Small organisations (fewer than 10 full-time staff and students) may find some of the Silver and Gold award criteria challenging to achieve. IDEA recommends that these organisations respond to the criteria as best they can with the Chapter's aims of organisational transparency.

If the structure of an organisation has changed considerably since its last award submission, the new organisation will be considered on its own merits as a new entity.

## Examples

Below we have included examples of responses that would receive scores of 3 out of 4 to two different selection criteria (including responses to the bronze and silver/gold criteria):

**S1. Established a committee to identify, implement and monitor positive changes in equity and inclusion within the organisation. Planned for committee members to undertake relevant diversity training as soon as possible within the next 2 years.**

**S1.a. Maintained a committed team over the past 2 years (4 years for *Gold*) with a quorum meeting regularly (at least four times a year) to identify, monitor and implement positive changes, and ensured that a majority of committee members have undertaken relevant diversity training.**

The Diversity Committee was established in October 2014 with the support of the Executive to monitor, encourage and promote equity, diversity and inclusivity. The Diversity Committee meets monthly, with a minimum of 60% members required for a quorum and is comprised of 10 members (~40% women) that represent a cross-section of the community, including science, engineering/operations, administrative staff, senior staff, and at least two PhD student representatives (one of whom is an international student). Members rotate after two year terms (one year for students), and a new Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary are elected every year.

On 28 March 2018, all 10 members of the committee, plus 15 other staff/students, participated in an Inclusive Practice training workshop (see S2). On 28 September 2018, committee members and other staff/students also participated in a Cultural Intelligence workshop run by PRISMA Cross-Cultural Consultants.

**O2. Established the number of reported cases of misconduct, the number resolved and the average time to resolution over the past year. If the applying organisation is a new entity, plans for such reporting should be clearly outlined.**

**Where an organisation is restricted in what can be reported - or, with reference to criterion O2.b, what support can be provided to complainants - by institutional policy or legal considerations, these constraints should be explicitly stated, and, where appropriate, supported by additional documentation.**

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Wards keep a confidential record of all confidential complaints and reports made to them, including cases of misconduct, their dates, nature and resolution. The statistics since 2017 are as follows:

Year	Total number of reports	Cases of factual misconduct	Resolved	Resolve time [days] (mean)	Resolve time [days] (median)
2017	5	3	5	15.2	3
2018	3	1	3	5.1	2.5

**O2.a. Published, where institutional and legal constraints permit, the number of reported cases of misconduct, the number resolved and the average time to resolution over the past 2 years (4 years for Gold) in a public document (e.g., an annual report). The location of the document should be specified in the application.**

The numbers of reports since 2014, as well as their nature and resolve time (as shown in O2 for 2017/18) are published online. A more detailed, confidential document is kept by the Wards. The number of reports remained low (~1/year) during the first three years. The reason for the rise in 2017 and 2018 can be attributed to a much more proactive approach of the Wards, who continually motivate all members to report any concerns and cases of misconduct.

**O2.b. Demonstrated support for complainants in misconduct cases, including, where institutional and legal constraints permit, the freedom**

**to publicly speak about such cases. Demonstrated unequivocal strong support of complainants when retaliation for a complaint has occurred.**

All our reported cases of actual and suspected misconduct have been dealt with confidentially and as quickly as possible. If appropriate and as far as legal constraints permit, the committee chair or Wards officer inform the plenum of resolved cases. Two examples of the last four years, made public without naming the complainants and offenders, are:

- A student reported a course coordinator for making sexually offensive comments online while identifying themselves as staff. The committee and executive decided to escalate the case to HR who decided to launch a formal investigation. The investigation included long (~60 min) interviews with several members and concluded after 60 days with measures that are kept confidential. The student expressed satisfaction with the process and result.
- A member of our community received anonymous emails attacking their religion. As soon as this case was reported, the committee, in consultation with the executive, logged a report to the Australian Cybercrime network and IT analysed the emails for traces to the offender. While no individual could be identified, the attack stopped and the complainant was satisfied with the approach. We haven't had any notable cases of retaliation but would, of course, strongly support the complainants. Staff and students trust that the Wards do their best, as shown by the increase in consultations in the past 2 years.

# 2025 Pleiades Award Criteria

Please complete two documents:

1. The [2025 Application Form](#).
2. A document addressing the 2025 Pleiades Award Criteria (below) which has up to 7,000 characters (12pt font) and up to 2 pages of accompanying tables and/or figures and/or photos. If describing a facility such as a breastfeeding room, please provide a description of its location and a small photograph within the form.

Please create one PDF including the above two documents using the following naming convention:

[Institution/School/DepartmentName]\_Pleiades2025\_[AwardLevel].pdf

## **PHILOSOPHY**

**Bronze/Silver/Gold P1.** Examined the conduct of the organisation in relation to equity and inclusion, and identified several specific areas in which there are opportunities to improve.

**Bronze/Silver/Gold P2.** Devised ways to measure the impact (or lack thereof) of planned initiatives within the organisation. Ideally the implemented initiatives will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound and should be monitored over time.

## **STRATEGY**

**BronzeS1.** Established a committee to identify, implement and monitor positive changes in equity and inclusion within the organisation. Planned for committee members to undertake relevant diversity training as soon as possible within the next 2 years.

**Silver/Gold S1.a.** Maintained a committee over the past 2 years (4 years for *Gold*) with a quorum meeting regularly (at least four times a year) to identify, monitor and implement positive changes, and provide evidence that a majority of committee members have undertaken relevant diversity training.

**Bronze/Silver/Gold S2.** Demonstrated a credible commitment to implement a range of initiatives during the coming 2 years that will promote equity and inclusion and demonstrate best practice.

**Bronze/Silver/Gold S3.** Ensured all staff are aware of the University's or institution's code of conduct as well as the process for reporting cases of misconduct.

**Bronze/Silver/Gold S4.** Provided safe avenues for staff to report issues or make suggestions without risk of repercussions, typically outside of formal reporting options provided through organisational Human Resources channels. All staff should be aware of how to make any report, what happens to that report once it is made and whether it is possible to make a report anonymously.

## **OUTCOMES**

**Bronze O1.** Announced a credible commitment from the head of the organisation to achieving equity and inclusion goals set out by the organisation.

**Silver O1.a.** Demonstrated effective commitment from the head of the organisation to achieving equity and inclusion goals set out by the organisation over the past 2 years.

**Gold O1.a.G** Demonstrated effective commitment from the head of the organisation to achieving equity and inclusion goals set out by the organisation over the past 2 years. Demonstrated widespread ‘buy-in’ throughout the organisation, including universal uptake of appropriate training and vocal public leadership by senior managers over the past 4 years.

**Bronze/Silver/Gold O2.** Established the number of reported cases of misconduct, the number resolved and the average time to resolution over the past year. If the applying organisation is a new entity, plans for such reporting should be clearly outlined.

**Where an organisation is restricted in what can be reported - or, with reference to criterion O2.b, what support can be provided to complainants - by institutional policy or legal considerations, these constraints should be explicitly stated, and, where appropriate, supported by additional documentation.**

**Silver/Gold O2.a.** Published, where institutional and legal constraints permit, the number of reported cases of misconduct, the number resolved and the average time to resolution over the past 2 years (4 years for *Gold*) in a public document (e.g., an annual report). The location of the document should be specified in the application.

**Silver/Gold O2.b.** Demonstrated support for complainants in misconduct cases, including, where institutional and legal constraints permit, the freedom to publicly speak about such cases. Demonstrated unequivocal strong support of complainants when retaliation for a complaint has occurred.

**Bronze/Silver/Gold O3.** Publicised the commitment to work towards best [practice](#) in equity and inclusion by circulating specific plans to all staff and students within the

organisation including sharing this application with all staff and students for their comment at least 2 weeks prior to submission.

**Silver/Gold O3.a.** Monitored the conduct of the organisation in relation to equity and inclusion over a sustained period of at least 2 years (4 years for *Gold*).

**Silver/Gold O3.b.** Demonstrated regular communication of goals and progress reports to all staff and students within the organisation.

**Gold O3.b.G** Demonstrated a regular public commitment to sharing best practice and achievements inside as well as outside the organisation, thereby encouraging others to implement positive change.

**Silver/Gold O3.c.** Demonstrated the implementation of a range of initiatives during the past 2 years including best practices and initiatives with high potential in promoting equity and inclusion, eg. Recruitment, selection and promotion; succession planning; professional development opportunities; flexible work; and equitable allocation of workload. Also identified several specific areas in which there are still opportunities to improve, and made plans to address those over the coming 2 years.

**Gold O3.c.G** Demonstrated sustained best practice across a broad range of measures for at least the past 4 years, and implemented novel and/or high-profile initiatives that have a broad reach and have significantly progressed equity and inclusion in the organisation over the past 4 years.

**Silver/Gold O3.d.** Measured the impact (or lack thereof) of initiatives within the organisation over the past 2 years or more.

**Gold O3.d.G** Demonstrated the tangible positive impact of initiatives within the organisation over the past 2 years or more.

**Silver/Gold O3.e.** Performed an (anonymous) climate survey to identify equity and inclusion issues within the organisation and developed an action plan to address those issues. Consulted with, and actively sought feedback from, staff and students regarding those results and action plan.

**Gold O3.e.G** Executed the action plan to address issues uncovered by climate survey within 2 years of climate survey findings.