



Lee Mills Award 2026

Lee Mills was an exemplary educator from NSW with a particular interest in teacher education for those involved in Special Education. She was untiring and dedicated in her support of students with special educational needs. Lee was involved in advocacy and lobbying through AASE, which resulted in significant improvements in service delivery for all students. She was a foundation member of AASE, a State President and an inspiring active Branch, Chapter and National Committee member until her death in 1990. Lee was also instrumental in the establishment and administration of the Australian Disability Achievement Foundation.

The Lee Mills Teacher Training Award is given yearly with the express purpose of encouraging research-based practice by teachers and schools educating students with disability.

The first two categories are available for individuals undertaking study to pursue a career directly related to the education of students with special education needs. It is open to students in ALL states of Australia.

From 2024, a **new category of the award** is offered to **teachers** who are implementing research-based practices in their school or class. It is open to teachers in ALL states of Australia.

Categories 1 and 2 (individuals undertaking study)

Who can enter?

You are eligible if you:

- Are currently enrolled in an Australian University (in any state) or have had your degree conferred in the last twelve months from an Australian University.
- Are undertaking or have completed a post graduate degree (graduate diploma, masters, doctorate) in special education, education or other discipline, or are undertaking an undergraduate program which includes research in the area of special education.
- Are the sole or principal author of the submitted paper. Your major advisor or other persons may be co-authors.
- Your paper may have been published or submitted for review.

What do I do?

You need to submit an original paper relevant to the education of students with disability and special education needs.

Papers may be in one of three categories. The first two categories are for students in higher education. The third category is for practicing teachers (who may also be enrolled in a higher education course).

Category 1

Papers that report or synthesise research relevant to teachers concerning the education of students with disability and special education needs in inclusive or specialised settings. These may include original research papers on the use of evidence-based practices in classrooms, research reviews, position papers or discussion papers drawing on research.

Category 2

Papers that highlight broader issues relevant to the education of students with disability and special education needs. These may include research reviews, discussion papers drawing on research, or original research that identifies areas for development or consideration. Potential topics could include teacher views about the effectiveness of their initial or post-graduate teacher education, priorities for teacher professional learning, teacher knowledge and use of evidence-based practices, or issues related to effective instruction in inclusive settings.

Suggested Topic Areas

Any topic relevant to the education of students with disability is acceptable. Some suggested topical areas are collaborative planning with parents, carers, students and other appropriate people in both curriculum and transition planning, the preparation of regular teachers to include students with disability and teach them effectively, and professional learning for school leaders and accomplished teachers.

Formatting and referencing

Papers should be written with appropriate standards of expression, spelling and grammar. Generally papers should be in the style described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th edition) (APA style).

How are papers assessed?

Submitted papers will be blind reviewed by the NSW Chapter. Chapter's decision is final.

What does the award represent?

The successful applicant(s) will be presented with the award at an event organised by the NSW Chapter of AASE Inc. **An award of \$500** is presented to the winner of each category. Additional encouragement awards may be given. You may be given the opportunity to speak about your work at the award presentation.

How do I submit my paper?

Papers should be submitted electronically.

Forward the original paper as an email attachment.

Please submit as a Word document, so your paper can be de-identified for review. Electronic

copies should be emailed with “Lee Mills Award” as the subject to
Jennifer.Stephenson@mq.edu.au

Your personal details and/or name should not appear anywhere on the paper itself, apart from the title page. This will ensure blind review of your paper.

In your covering email provide the following information:

- your name
- contact address and a telephone contact
- course of study
- current enrolment or date your award was conferred
- university
- name of your paper
- the category your paper belongs to (1 or 2)

Include a statement that tells us whether or not the paper has been, or will be, submitted to a journal.

Category 3 (Teachers)

Who can enter?

You are eligible if you:

- Are currently a registered teacher in any Australian school. We will also accept papers from groups of registered teachers.
- Are implementing research-based practices for an individual student, class or whole school in any setting. Practices should be relevant to the education of students with disability and special education needs.
- Qualified teachers absent from their schools to undertake a university course in special/inclusive education are also eligible to enter based, on practical assignments or professional experience.

What do I do?

You need to submit a description of the research-based practice you are using in a teacher-friendly format.

Your submission should:

- Maintain confidentiality. Please do not identify schools, other teachers or students. Pseudonyms for people and places may be used.
- Briefly describe the practice.
- Provide a BRIEF overview of the evidence supporting it with a few key references you have used.
- Describe the context – the setting (classroom and/or school), student/s and teacher/s.
- Describe any resources used.
- Describe how the practice was implemented, with enough detail for other schools/teachers to be able to try it.
- Describe how the effect of the practice was monitored and evaluated. Include any monitoring pro-formas.

- Describe the student outcomes from the use of the practice.

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In your covering email provide the following information:

- your name
- contact address and a telephone contact
- your school and position
- name of your paper
- category your paper belongs to (category 3).

The closing date for applications for the 2026 Lee Mills Award has been extended to 2nd November 2026.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome by the end of June 2027.

What do winners get from the award?

Previous winner Sarah Wood says:

I submitted a paper for the Lee Mills award on the recommendation of my PhD supervisor. It was titled "A scoping review of the components of effective teacher in-service professional development in inclusive education". It was a challenging paper to write with so much information to capture and summarise. So it was a surprise to win the award. It gave me the confidence to continue with my research. I am on track to complete my PhD in a couple of years and look forward to continuing to work and do research in the area of special education, particularly inclusion.