



MACE

Marketing, Advancement & Communication in Education

PREPARING FOR
Excellence

*Your guide to creating your entry for the
MACE Excellence Awards Programme*

2022

FOREWORD

Congratulations! You took the first step to win a MACE Excellence Award by opening the Preparing for Excellence Guide. This guide will take you every step of the way to preparing an award-winning entry. However, it will also do more than that – it will help you to align your communication interventions with global best practices and focus your thinking about all future projects.

In this guide you will find:

- ❖ The requirements you need to meet to enter, the deadline dates and the cost of entering.
- ❖ The different divisions and categories that you can enter in
- ❖ The global standard against which you will be measured
- ❖ What the evaluators are looking for.

You will notice that there is no special category for COVID-19 projects because we believe that it is just one of the many themes you need to communicate about. You should enter any pandemic related project in the division that you see fit.

To assist you in preparing your entry, we posted a series of webinars on specific elements of the Preparing for Excellence Guide. In each of our reminder emails, you will also find tricks and tips to present your project in an award-winning way.

Please feel free to contact Dr Amanda Hamilton-Attwell (amanda@businessdna.co.za) if you need more advice and guidance on presenting your entry. She has years of experience developing award-winning entries and will gladly assist you – but she will not prepare your entry.

We love excellence in our profession! Use this guide to present your project according to global best practices. It will save you time and energy!

How to use the Preparing for Excellence Guide

- ❖ Read the guide – every page
- ❖ List all the projects you want to enter
- ❖ Indicate which categories are best suited for the different projects
- ❖ Download the entry form for the division you are going to enter your project in
- ❖ See what is required and decide how you can best present the work samples and the work plan
- ❖ If you need to conduct measurement, consider doing that now
- ❖ Develop a timeline to ensure your entries will be ready in time.

**The entry forms for the different divisions are available on the MACE website:
www.mace.org.za/excellence-awards/**

1. The Basics

1.1 The terms and conditions

- ❖ Only paid-up Ordinary Institutional Members (as defined by the MOI) may enter for the Excellence Awards. When entering, your institutional membership payment must already reflect in MACE's bank account. (Review)
- ❖ Your entry must be received by 23:59 on the deadline days indicated to be eligible for the Super Saver or Early Bird fees. If your entry reaches us after 23:59 on the date of the special fee deadlines, it will be considered for the next deadline date. No entry will be accepted after 30 September 2022 at 23:59.
- ❖ Your proof of payment must reach us by close of day on 29 September 2022. If we haven't received the proof of payment for your entries by 16:30 on this date, your entries will be disqualified.
- ❖ Incomplete entries will be disqualified. "Incomplete" constitutes the Work plan, or the Work sample is not submitted.
- ❖ Entries must be submitted using the entry form template. If you do not use the template, your entry will be disqualified
- ❖ Entries exceeding the page limits will be penalised. 100 words – 0,5 deducted from your score; 101 - 200 words – 1,0 deducted from your score; 201 – 250 words – 1,5% deducted; more than 250 – disqualified.
- ❖ Work samples will not be evaluated if the evaluator struggles to open or understand the role of the sample according to the work plan. Make sure that you label your work samples, that all links in your entry work, and that the evaluator has easy access to everything they need to evaluate.
- ❖ Projects and initiatives that are more than 51% based on syndicated or reprinted material will be disqualified.
- ❖ Projects planned, created, and executed by agencies may not be entered. The communication team must have completed at least 51% of the conceptualisation and the creative process. The institutions must show that they were consistently involved and approved the process.
- ❖ If the permission and declaration section on the entry form is not completed and signed, your entry will be disqualified
- ❖ Entrants will receive feedback from the evaluators within four weeks after the results of the MACE Excellence Awards have been shared. If you have not received your feedback after five weeks, please email mari@businessdna.co.za.

1.2 The Awards

The following awards will be made:

- ❖ **BRONZE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:** All entries that achieved a score of 5.24 to 5.74.
- ❖ **SILVER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:** All entries that achieved a score of 5.75 or higher.
- ❖ **GOLD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:** All entries earning a Silver Award are eligible for a Gold Award. The highest-scoring entries in a **category** will be considered for a Gold Award. If an entry received a Gold Award, a Silver Award would not be awarded as well. Only one Gold Award will be made per category
- ❖ **PLATINUM AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:** This award will be made in every **Division** to the Gold award entry with the highest score. If an entry received a Platinum Award, a Gold Award would not be awarded as well. This will imply that the Gold Award will be awarded in that category.

- ❖ **CHAIRPERSON'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:** The winners of the Gold and Platinum Awards of Excellence will be considered for this award, which is presented to a single entry that embodies true excellence in Marketing, Advancement and Communication. The Moderator and the Chairperson of MACE will identify the winner of this award. If there is an entry from the institution associated with the Chairperson of MACE, the Deputy Chairperson of MACE will assist in identifying the award winner. If there is an entry from the institution associated with the Deputy Chairperson, a senior evaluator from industry will assist in determining the award winner.
- ❖ **MACE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH:** The award will go to the entry with the highest score in measurement and evaluation. The entry must demonstrate how the project's impact was measured and contributed to the institution's strategic objectives.
- ❖ **THE SEVERUS CERFF AWARD FOR CONSISTENT EXCELLENCE:** This award is based on the number of entries an institution entered and the number and level of the awards won. The award is therefore made to the institution with the highest success ratio. A Bronze Award will receive a weighting of 1, a Silver 2, a Gold 3 and a Platinum 4.

1.3 The seven-point scale

The evaluation is based on a seven-point scale of excellence.

1	Information not provided, totally inappropriate approach
2	No indication of strategic alignment, approach not explained or wrong
3	Inadequate explanation of the area, most key elements were missing
4	Professionally competent execution, what you will expect from a communication professional
5	Better than just competent, excellent strategic thinking
6	Impressive content that reflects strategic thinking and business alignment
7	An exceptional and innovative approach, setting a new standard, insightful alignment with the strategy

The evaluators use the scoresheet and the requirements set out in the Preparing for Excellence Guide to scoring each section of the entry. Use the scoresheet and the Preparing for Excellence Guide to create your entry. That will ensure that you include what the evaluators are looking for.

1.4 Entry weighting

The scoring in the different divisions is the same, but the weighting of the work plan and the work sample differ:

- ❖ **Division 1: Campaigns** – Work plan: 60%; work sample: 40%.
- ❖ **Division 2: Media** – Work plan: 50%; work sample 50%.
- ❖ **Division 3: Skills** – Work plan: 40%; work sample 60%.

2. The Divisions and Categories

2.1 Division 1: Campaigns

Campaigns would typically include a range of communication platforms, be run over more than one day and be aimed at one or more target groups.

2.1.1 Categories

1 Brand-building campaigns

This category deals with implementing strategies for new brands, repositioning existing brands or ongoing brand awareness in relation to internal and external audiences. Entries must demonstrate how research was used to inform the brand strategy and discuss the strategic approach and results. It may include brand characteristics and attributes, changes to corporate identities, and design solutions that address brand communication challenges. These campaigns are total packages, including events, publications, posters, billboards, multimedia, and web advertising. It could be for the institution, department, faculty, or function, such as a business school. It must be more than a new logo redesign.

2 Fundraising campaigns

This category deals with donor relations focused on addressing and responding to donor issues and long and short campaigns related to gifts and pledges. It may also include stewardship and public relations activities. This category also includes appeals for endowments and annual giving programmes to obtain and/or renew donors through continuous requests made throughout the year for providing ongoing financial support to the institution's operating budget or support for facilities, equipment, and other special needs.

3 Stakeholder engagement campaigns

This can be a once-off or an ongoing programme that seeks to enhance stakeholder understanding of the institution within the community served. The aim of the campaign could be to build trust and credibility with stakeholder groups. The tactics and supporting strategies may include formal and informal meetings, events, social and electronic media, and printed material.

4 Issue management campaigns

This category focuses on campaigns that proactively or reactively deal with institutional issues. It could address internal and external campus issues, such as reputation, environment, study and other fees, safety and security, research and intellectual property, parental and guardian involvement, diversity, and services to students. An issues management campaign will be aimed at preventing a potential crisis.

5 Crisis management campaigns

This category deals with the management of a crisis. It would aim to explain and defuse an immediate institutional crisis, such as hate crimes, racism, strikes, student protests, student and staff deaths, sexual harassment, weather-related disasters, and health issues.

6 Student recruitment campaigns

The focus of this category is on campaigns designed to build brand awareness, influence opinion, and impact the decisions of parents, caregivers and learners to decide to enrol at an institution. These campaigns would be run on an annual basis. They would use various communication vehicles and channels, such as events at schools and on campus, radio and television commercials, newspaper and magazine ads, flyers, brochures, the website, social media, mall advertising, posters, and even guerrilla-marketing tactics.

7 Community and social-responsibility campaigns

This category deals with social responsibility campaigns and encourages positive actions while building awareness and reputation and positioning the institution as a good corporate citizen. It would generally focus on enhancing communities and populations' well-being through causes, such as the environment, entrepreneurial development, literacy, education and health, cultural preservation, and indigenous and heritage protection.

8 Alumni campaigns

This category would include creative strategies for encouraging alumni involvement, for example, alumni boards, strategic planning, and alumni financial support and stewardship. This would also include programmes by:

- Alumni associations and the alumni office.
 - Activities and programmes of student alumni associations and similar student organisations linked to the alumni office.
 - Alumni marketing and branding initiatives, including how you market and position your alumni association or office and its mission for your various constituencies.
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2.2 Division 2: Media

This division is about how you get your message across to your target groups. A medium could be part of a campaign, or it could be a stand-alone medium. Remember to provide the context of the medium entered, in other words, the programme of which it was part, the target group and the objectives you want to achieve.

2.2.1 Categories

9 Printed: Internal magazines and newsletters

This category recognises newsletters and magazines sent to internal audiences. The newsletter and magazine must be published at a set frequency, i.e. monthly, quarterly, annually. Provide the frequency and circulation.

10 Printed: External magazines and newsletters

This category focuses on external printed magazines and newsletters. To be eligible, the magazine or newsletter must be published at a set frequency, i.e. monthly, quarterly, annually, etc. This category includes research magazines devoted exclusively to the coverage of an institution's scholarly contributions, whether in science, technology, the humanities or other scholarship areas. Please provide the frequency and circulation.

11 Printed: Other publications

This category recognises excellence in any once-off publication aimed at a specific stakeholder group, e.g. brochures, pamphlets, and coffee table books.

12 Printed and digital annual reports

This category recognises annual reports published, reports on research and other outputs of a department or school, the utilisation of funds, or an integrated report or any other annual report. This would typically be a once-off publication, but it must report on a group's performance for one year. Indicate the circulation.

13 Digital: Internal magazines and newsletters

This category recognises excellence in internal magazines and newsletters written and designed for the web or other digital platforms. Entered magazines and newsletters may also have a printed counterpart, though simple PDF versions of a printed magazine posted on the web would not be considered.

14 Digital: External magazines and newsletters

This category recognises excellence in external magazines and newsletters written and designed for the web or other digital platforms. Entered magazines may also have a printed counterpart, though simple PDF versions of a printed magazine posted on the web would not be considered.

15 Digital: Other digital media

This category recognises excellence in digital media used to promote aspects of the institution, for example, research, institutional achievements, etc. It could be e-Books, promotional material, viewbooks, and prospectuses.

16 Websites

This category recognises institutional websites, including sites created for an institution overall or a specific college or school within an institution, e.g. law school or business school. Do not enter your homepage only. Special-purpose websites created for a particular purpose may also be entered, such as annual reports, fundraising, campaigns or news directed towards a specific audience such as alumni, prospective students, current students or parents.

Important: All sites must be accessible to the public. Intranets and password-protected sites may be entered only if passwords or mirror sites are provided.

17 Mobile Apps

This category recognises mobile apps developed for any area of marketing, advancement, communication or stakeholder communication.

18 Social media

This category recognises social media sites developed and maintained for any area of marketing, advancement, communication, and engagement with a specific stakeholder group. It encompasses tools and practices that allow individuals and groups to collaborate and share knowledge and experiences online. It may use conversation-enabled publishing platforms, such as blogs and podcasts, social networks, such as LinkedIn and Facebook, democratised content networks, such as wikis and message boards, and micro-blogging sites, such as Twitter, content-sharing sites such as YouTube, Instagram and Flickr, and virtual networking platforms. Pages must have been in place long enough to produce measurable results.

19 Events: Single and multi-day

This category recognises events aimed at marketing, advancement or communication. Single-day events centred around special occasions, such as anniversaries, first-year welcomings, open days, inaugurations, exhibitions, building dedications, and conferences during open days. Multi-day events are conferences, roadshows, graduations, and exhibitions.

20 Audio, visual, and audio-visual

This category recognises radio and TV ads, corporate videos, podcasts, live-streaming, presentations (Prezzi, etc.) and other audio, visual, and audio-visual projects where the specific execution could have been done outside the institution, but the concept and creative idea originated internally. It is important to indicate your role in the project. If an agency did most of the work, your entry would be disqualified.

2.3 Division 3: Skills

This division recognises the specific skills that marketing, advancement and communication professionals use to achieve their objectives. The communication platform entered in this division may have been entered in other divisions as well. Remember to provide the context for this skills entry; in other words, the campaign or programme it was part of, the target groups and the objectives to be achieved.

2.3.1 Categories

21 Design for printed media

This category recognises excellence in the design of internal or external publications in all formats. It may include magazines, newspapers, newsletters, tabloids, annual reports, integrated reports, books, special publications, brochures, and other advertising material and e-newsletters.

22 Design for visual media

This category recognises excellence in the design of other visual media, such as PowerPoint, Prezi presentations, and banner advertisements. It also includes any other communication vehicle produced using sound and images or a combination of these elements.

23 Design for digital media

This category recognises excellence in electronic and interactive communication channels, such as websites and online stores. It includes all computer-based communication vehicles defined as the end product and are produced for internal or external audiences, relying on a digital communication channel for delivery. It may also include electronic newsletters, electronic annual reports, special publications, CDs or DVDs, e-cards, and banner ads.

24 Writing for news media

This category recognises excellence in news writing, editorials, interpretive and expository articles, news releases, and feature stories related to the institution. One or more writers may have written the report. It can be a news report for internal and/or external media. It also includes news reports about research.

25 Writing for features, documentaries, and brochures

This category recognises writing excellence in features, documentaries, brochures, and any other similar medium. It also includes copy written on research, medicine, and science. Copy written for recurring features or columns, magazines, newsletters, internal or special publications, stand-alone features, speeches and presentations, executive correspondence, scripts for corporate use, technical writing, and annual and special reports should be entered in this category.

26 Writing scripts

This category recognises excellent script-writing. You may enter copy written for commercials, advertising, marketing or sales promotion material, and advertorials.

27 Writing for the web

This category recognises excellence in writing produced for the web. This includes writing that only appears online, such as web articles and profiles of donors, alumni, and students. A single web page, profile or article constitutes one entry.

28 Photography: News

This category recognises excellence in black-and-white and/or colour photography produced for mass news media. All work must have appeared in print in an institutional publication or periodical or used for institutional purposes, such as a website, an exhibition or advertising. The photograph must be the work of a staff member from the institution. Include the news report that was published with the photograph in your entry.

29 Photography: Feature and documentary

This category recognises excellence in photography for feature articles and documentaries. All work must have appeared in print in an institutional publication or periodical or used for some institutional purpose, such as a book, on a website, an exhibition or advertising. A series of related photographs from the work of a single staff photographer may also be entered here. An entry is limited to a portfolio of seven photographs. Include the feature or documents with the photograph as part of your entry.

30 Videography: Skills

This category recognises excellence in marketing, advancement, and communication using a short video. This can include corporate videos or videos produced for recruitment and communication about research projects. The video must have been created specifically for your institution and not for, or in conjunction with, other associations or groups. Please note that only ONE video should be submitted per entry, not a series. Videos may not be longer than 10 minutes. Indicate your role in the project. Indicate what percentage of the project was outsourced or done by an agency.

3. Preparing your entry: Division 1 and 2

This is the information that must be provided for every entry. This is just to explain what and why we need the information. Use the entry form on the website to provide the information on your entry.

3.1 Tombstone information

Provide information about yourself and the project

If you do not provide all the information, your entry may be disqualified. You must use a different entry form for every entry and different divisions.

Category number	The number to the left of the category title
Category name	As listed in this document
Institution	The name of the entrant's institution
Name of the entrant	Even if a team of people worked on the project, it should be entered under one name.
The team, if it was a team effort	Only the key team members who invested more than 20% of their time in this project should be listed — no more than 5, excluding the person entering it.
Function/department	The name of the function or department where the entrant works.
Job title	The role of the entrant in the institution.
Timeline of the project	The duration of the campaign or when the channel was published, or the skills sample was commissioned.
Name of the entry	Be creative. Make it short. Try to limit it to five words. This is what will be on your award.
URL and passwords	URL and necessary passwords, if applicable.
Email address	This will be used to share information with the entrant.
Mobile number	To be used to contact the entrant for clarification.

3.2 Your work plan

The purpose of the work plan is to convince the evaluator that you approached the project strategically, aligned with the institution's strategy and that you based your decisions on well-motivated facts. You need to provide the following detail

3.2.1 Background

Start your entry with a contextualisation of the institution. In other words, describe the circumstances and events that had a bearing on the institution when the project you are entering was planned and implemented. It would be helpful to describe the institutional factors that impacted it that made the project relevant. This will help the evaluator to understand the background of the project. An excellent way to start is to imagine that the evaluator is from another country and has never heard of your institution.

Tell the evaluator how big it is, for example, if it is a single campus with a limited number of staff and students or a distance-learning institution with totally different campuses, staff and student structures. Explain why this campaign or project is unique. This should form the backdrop of your project.

The evaluator will ask to what extent the entrant:

- ❖ Explained the organisation and provided context for the entry, e.g. the socio-political and communication environment.
- ❖ Explained why the project is unique.

This section is important, but should not comprise more than one or two paragraphs at most.

3.2.2 The need for the project

In this section you need to motivate the project. Why was this project undertaken? What were the strategic needs and business opportunity for the project? Use research and measurement to substantiate the need for the project. You may use public-domain information or institution-specific research. Avoid generalising; instead, try to be as specific as possible and give relevant examples.

You will get a 4 if you only:

Your score will improve if you also:

- ❖ Link the strategy and needs of the institution to the marketing, advancement and communication opportunity.
- ❖ Explain how the project or intervention solved a problem, filled a need, or helped leverage an opportunity.
- ❖ Indicate how formal or informal research was used to define the need. You may use public-domain information or institution-specific research. If the information is more than two years old, it will be rated lower.

You will score less if you:

Do not:

- ❖ Define and explain the institutional need.
- ❖ Explain how the opportunity was identified and why it was important to the institution.
- ❖ Explain how the project addressed the need.
- ❖ Indicate why this project was undertaken or the medium used.

Or:

- ❖ Make generalisations about the need for the project.
- ❖ Use statements like “Management thought it would be a good idea”.
- ❖ Assume needs because there was a trend among tertiary institutions to do it.
- ❖ Do not indicate how the project supported the strategy of the institution.

3.2.3 The target audience

Effective marketing, advancement and communication only occur once the target audience receives and understands the message. In this section, you must demonstrate a deep understanding of the target audience’s communication and psychographic characteristics (their values, attitudes, opinions, interests and preferences). You must explain who the target audience was and what their communication characteristics and preferences were. Make sure you use research and measurement to support your motivation.

Don’t just list the target audience categories; instead, indicate how their characteristics influenced your messaging, roll-out, and media choices.

Your score will improve if you:

- ❖ Differentiate your audiences based on primary, secondary and tertiary
- ❖ Use research not more than two years old to define audience characteristics and needs.
- ❖ Information that shows how the target audience is linked to the business and communication strategies.
- ❖ A definition, segmentation, and analysis of the audience's critical characteristics concerning the project's need.
- ❖ Information about the characteristics of the target group, such as prior knowledge, education, geography, preferences, attitudes, opinions, motivations or issues.
- ❖ An explanation of how the factors you mention influenced the project.

You will score less if you:

- ❖ Just list audiences.
- ❖ Do not indicate why these groups are relevant to the project you are entering.
- ❖ Did not define the target audiences according to their needs or characteristics.
- ❖ Missed an obvious audience relating to the defined need.
- ❖ Identified the wrong audiences based on the defined need.
- ❖ Use vague, unsupported assumptions about audience needs and characteristics, e.g. "We thought they might like..."
- ❖ View an audience collectively, without identifying any characteristics, e.g. the general public.
- ❖ Include characteristics or behaviours that are irrelevant to the project or audience.

3.2.4 Goal and objectives

The key question here is: what was the project's goal, and what were the output and outcome objectives? Output objectives are related to tactics used, for example, producing a monthly electronic newsletter. Outcome objectives relate to the impact made on knowledge, the attitude to be created, and the behaviour it should result in. The objectives must be formulated in SMART terms.

The SMART formula

The **SMART** formula ensures that you state objectives that are relevant and measurable. SMART is an acronym for:

Specific: describes a specific desired outcome.

Measurable: quantified as an output, such as volume, frequency, timelines, or an outcome describing a shift in opinion, attitude or behaviour.

Achievable: challenging but within the range of your influence.

Relevant: contributes to institutional goals in a meaningful way.

Time-framed: includes a start and a completion date.

Output and outcome objectives

Output-based objectives measure volumes or increases such as website hits, articles distributed, ads produced, meetings held, blog posts, tweets, downloads of publications, etc. For example:

- ❖ Publish 100 stories in news media.
- ❖ The publication will be downloaded 10 000 times during the first 12 months.
- ❖ The number of hits on the website will increase by 15 000.
- ❖ Remember, advertising value equivalency (AVE) is not a valid measurement of impact.

If you only state objectives that are output-based, the highest score you will earn is 4 (and only if the set objectives are directly relevant to the institution's need).

Outcome-based objectives measure what the audience will gain by way of awareness, understanding, recall, changed perceptions and quantifiable change in attitudes, opinions, and behaviour. Outcome-based objectives have a more significant impact on the institution's needs, for example:

- ❖ Audience awareness of the programme to increase from 10% to 50%.
- ❖ Employee understanding of the institution's goals to increase from 25% to 65%.
- ❖ Positive perception of the institution to improve from 30% to 50%.
- ❖ 65% of administrative staff actively practise the customer experience standards daily.
- ❖ Enrolment to increase by 10% and market share by 2%.

What is the difference between output objectives and tactics?

Entrants often provide a list of tactics when they discuss the output objectives. **Tactics** describe the media and activities used to achieve output objectives. The tactics will be discussed when you deal with the project as such. Examples of tactics are:

- ❖ Redesign the staff newsletter (tactic) to achieve 1 000 downloads per month (output objective).
- ❖ Stage a town-hall meeting (tactic) to share the Principles message with 1 000 people (output objective).
- ❖ Create a social media campaign (tactic) to engage 1 000 students in an online conversation about campus safety (output objective).
- ❖ Stage an open day (tactic) to activate 500 students to participate in sports (output).

Your score will increase if your:

- ❖ The goal is over-arching and supported by SMART objectives.
- ❖ Objectives are linked to the institutional objectives and strategy and an identified need of the target groups.
- ❖ Objectives are stated in terms of the impact the intervention will have on the institution and the target audiences.
- ❖ Objectives are output and outcome-based and likely to deliver meaningful results to the institution.

Your goal and objectives will score less if you:

- ❖ Just state an overall big-picture goal.
- ❖ List the objectives, but not in SMART terms.
- ❖ List the goal and the objectives but do not align them with the original need for the project.
 - ❖ Are over-ambitious and have too many objectives.
 - ❖ Don't address the identified need.
 - ❖ Are vague, irrelevant or not measurable, such as "Our objective was to win the hearts . . ."
 - ❖ Aren't aligned with the needs of the audience or institution.
 - ❖ Are production or deadline focused, or based on tactics such as "produce a newsletter".

3.2.5 The strategic approach

In this section you need to explain and motivate the approach you used. The question that the evaluator will have in mind is: given the institution's need and audience analysis, how effective will the selected communication approach be?

To convince the evaluator of the approach, you need to demonstrate strategic thinking by explaining how institutional needs, audience characteristics, and objectives aligned with the messaging and communication channels used and how the project was planned.

You can expect a higher score if you:

- ❖ Provided and explained the primary and supporting messages.
- ❖ If the messages would connect emotionally and intellectually with the target groups.
- ❖ Provide the rationale for linking the target audience(s) and objectives to tactics and the roll-out plan.
- ❖ Indicate the links to the institution's needs.
- ❖ Use an innovative approach.
- ❖ Give a summary of how you integrated the approach with the institution's needs and the overall marketing, advancement and communication strategy.

You will score less if you:

- ❖ Do not describe how the plan was developed.
- ❖ Do not indicate the primary and secondary messages.
- ❖ Do not indicate the communication channels used.
- ❖ Do not explain how the characteristics of the target groups were taken into account when the project was planned
- ❖ Use a dated approach to address a new problem communication problem.
- ❖ Use an approach that would not address the institution's need.
- ❖ It is not clear how the chosen strategy will address the business need.

3.2.6 The project implementation

Now is the time to convince the evaluators of your professional skills. Give an overview of the project implementation. In the previous section, you explained how you planned the project; now you must explain how you executed it. Explain how you had to navigate various challenges, such as tight deadlines, changes in direction, small budgets, stubborn decision-makers and staff turnover.

The evaluator would also like to know how your budget, time and other resources were used. While it doesn't have to be detailed, it is crucial to provide enough information to convince the evaluator that resources were used wisely, regardless of how limited or generous they were. Just by indicating what percentage of your budget you used for this project, how many hours or portion of your time and the time your team worked on the project, the evaluator will be able to form an opinion on the effective utilization of resources. If you and your team did not do everything in-house, include something on how you collaborated with other groups such as consultants and media houses. You must indicate what percentage of the project was outsourced or syndicated material used.

Your score will improve if you:

- ❖ Provide a reasonable budget, given the institution and the scope of the project.
- ❖ Make good use of resources, including your people.
- ❖ Have smart solutions to challenges.
- ❖ Explain how you addressed challenges like impossible deadlines, small budgets, and student unrest and yet achieved your goal.
- ❖ Had to use an innovative approach to sell the project to decision-makers.
- ❖ Indicate your role in the project and, if applicable, how and why you outsourced some elements of the project.
- ❖ Indicate how and why you collaborated with other people, for example, with subject matter experts.

You will score less if you:

- ❖ Did not provide any budget or resource information.
- ❖ Did not make the best possible use of the budget you had
- ❖ Did not explain how the project was implemented.
- ❖ Did not indicate any challenges and did not indicate why there were no challenges.

3.2.7 Measurement and evaluation

This is where the rubber meets the road! It is, without a doubt, the most critical part of your entry. If you have set strong objectives and measured against them, you can expect a high score. Remember to explain how you measured the impact of the project according to the stated objectives. Use valid and reliable research methods. Anecdotal statements, such as “management liked it”, are insufficient.

Your measurement must demonstrate strategic alignment. That’s why it is critical to set measurable objectives aligned with the institution’s needs, and then measure against them. The results should show the relationship between the objectives that were set and the results that were achieved. Your measurement should be thorough and convincing. It is a good idea to report results against objectives in a table format. List the original objectives and the measurements used and compare them with the outcomes or outputs achieved.

Your score will improve if you:

- ❖ Demonstrate alignment between the objectives and the measurement.
- ❖ Use appropriate measurement methodology, formal and informal.
- ❖ Use appropriate sample sizes.
- ❖ Measure the impact of the project against the original benchmarks of the objectives set.
- ❖ Show credible results that support the needs of the institution.
- ❖ Provide results that demonstrate that the strategy influenced progress toward institutional goals.
- ❖ Provide details on the research process.
- ❖ Use multiple measurement methods to determine the impact of the project.

You will score less if you:

- ❖ Only indicate that the impact of the project was measured and that it was positive – without a clear explanation of the measurements used.
- ❖ Only measure output-based results.
- ❖ Use a methodology that is inappropriate for the aspect measured.
- ❖ Only include anecdotal measurements.
- ❖ Use results that are not substantiated and questionable.
- ❖ Measure aspects that were not aligned with the needs of the institution.
- ❖ Include overly positive results that don’t seem possible given the project realities.
- ❖ Use vague results or generalisations.
- ❖ Do not measure the objectives set out in the beginning.

This is your work plan for Divisions 1 and 2. Page limit:

Division 1: four pages, Division 2: three pages.

Do not use a typeface smaller than 10pt and use standard margins.

An entry exceeding this limit will be disqualified.

3.3 The work sample

This is the opportunity you have been waiting for – to display the result of your planning. The work sample elements that you include will convince the evaluators of the quality of your project.

The evaluators will look for the following in your work sample:

- ❖ Alignment with the objectives and the target audience’s characteristics and needs.
- ❖ The creativity and innovativeness of the approach.
- ❖ How professionally the project was executed.
- ❖ Well-chosen samples reflecting what you explained in the work plan.

Remember:

- ❖ You can include additional information in your work sample to substantiate the work plan, e.g. perception surveys, media reports that resulted in the project, research on the profile of the target audience, etc. This is part of the five examples that you may include. Do not include research reports, only provide background to the survey and include the relevant findings.
- ❖ Number your samples and use the numbers in the appropriate places in your work plan to make it easier for the evaluator to find the relevant evidence.
- ❖ No physical examples can be submitted. Take photographs of the elements and how and where they were applied and include that.
- ❖ Be very selective with the work sample and the way you present it. Remember, the evaluator only has limited time to evaluate your entry. Make sure that the elements you include reflect the best of your project.
- ❖ Consider creating one PowerPoint presentation and embedding all your samples into that one document.
- ❖ Make sure that all links work before submitting your project.

You may include a maximum of five items in your work sample.

3.3.1 Alignment with the objectives and the target audience’s characteristics and needs

Connecting with the audience in a meaningful and memorable way is a key competency in our work. Messages and media must be aligned with audience needs and preferences. If the audience doesn’t get the message in a clear, consistent and creative way and facilitates the achievement of the objectives, everything else is academic.

The evaluators will look for a match between how the audience was described and how the programme was executed. Things such as: Is the language level appropriate?

- ❖ Are the font sizes big enough or clear enough for an older audience?
- ❖ For an audience that has little time, is the copy concise?
- ❖ Does the choice of media match the audience’s profile?
- ❖ Will the media and approaches that are used facilitate the achievement of the objectives?

You will score higher if:

- ❖ The messages, visuals and design would resonate with specific characteristics of the audience.
- ❖ The messages, visuals and design would connect emotionally and intellectually with the audience.
- ❖ The different media and messages were well integrated to touch the target audience in various ways.

You will score less if:

- ❖ The message, visuals and design are boring and old-fashioned and would probably not resonate with the target audience.
- ❖ The language, graphics or design would be too complicated or inappropriate for the audience.
- ❖ Messages would patronise or insult the target or any other audience.
- ❖ Key messages are not evident, or the target audience will find it difficult to understand them.

3.3.2 The creative approach

Creativity is when you do something totally new, but it can also be when you use something old in a completely new way. Being creative in what we do is one of the best parts of our profession – you have the opportunity to display it here.

If you're entering a strategy, a training programme, a research programme or any other programme that doesn't lend itself to the same creative appeal as, for instance, a campaign, it does not mean that it cannot be creative. Creativity can be found in taking unusual approaches or thinking innovatively about research or a strategy.

Expect a higher score if:

- ❖ The evaluator is wondering why they never thought of doing it this way!
- ❖ The approach was creative while matching the characteristics of the target audience.
- ❖ There was evidence of some smart thinking that addressed the audience's perspective and needs.
- ❖ A standard approach, design, visual elements or medium are applied in a new and surprising way.
- ❖ It is likely to leave a lasting impression on the target audience.
- ❖ It is state-of-the-art for the media selected, the approach used, and the objectives achieved.

You will score less if:

- ❖ The approach and application are so creative that the key messages are lost.
- ❖ The project is creative but does not reflect the institution's brand.
- ❖ It is creative but inconsistent.
- ❖ The creativity distracts from the objectives and the key messages.
- ❖ It is not clear why a specific creative approach was used.
- ❖ The different elements are confusing, poorly presented and not explained.
- ❖ There is an apparent mismatch between the audience and the creative approach.
- ❖ There is excessive focus on design or gimmicks without communicating the key messages.
- ❖ It is just a personal endeavour for a designer, photographer, or another key role player.

3.3.3 Professional execution

This is the last aspect that the evaluator will use to form an opinion about your work. At this stage, the evaluator will consider your whole project. The work plan and the work sample must be aligned. If the work plan describes the context, challenges, and solution for the communication opportunity, the work sample should demonstrate the strategy.

The evaluators will ask the following questions:

- ❖ Does this project reflect good use of the budget and other resources?
- ❖ Is there consistency between the different elements of the project and the institution?
- ❖ Does it reflect good taste and respect for the audience?
- ❖ Would this project integrate seamlessly with other projects and campaigns of the institution?
- ❖ Is there alignment between the work plan and the work sample? The sample must be strategic, not just look great. If the work sample were weak, even though the work plan was good, the score would reflect that weakness and vice versa.
- ❖ Does the sample contain all the elements referred to in the work plan?
- ❖ Is it easy to see that the sample is a logical, detailed presentation of the work plan?

A standard entry will reflect the following:

- ❖ Good production values, appropriate to the media and the budget.
- ❖ Professional standards of ethics and good taste.
- ❖ Alignment with audience needs and preferences and the institution's needs.
- ❖ The work samples match the descriptions in the work plan.
- ❖ Clear, consistent use of language, visuals and other elements that support the brand. Together, these communicate the institution's needs and support marketing, advancement and communication objectives.
- ❖ A standard approach that is well executed.
- ❖ An excellent overall product, aligned with the needs, the target audience and the objectives.
- ❖ A comprehensive but not overbearing presentation of the elements described in the workplan.

You will score higher if your entry reflects:

- ❖ High-quality writing and superior production.
- ❖ Inspirational, superior thinking and strategic alignment.
- ❖ Thorough cross-referenced documentation that supports the work plan.
- ❖ A professional approach through the work plan and the work sample.
- ❖ Excellent project management principles through the execution of the project.
- ❖ Evidence of care and attention being devoted to preparing the entry.
- ❖ Consistency between the work plan (what you said you would deliver) and the work sample (what you delivered).
- ❖ Respect for the evaluator.

You will score less for:

- ❖ Amateur work or dated approaches, unless supported by the strategy.
- ❖ Inconsistent use of images and language.
- ❖ Poor technical production.
- ❖ A budget exceeding the outputs that were produced.
- ❖ An overused approach or one that's likely to bore the audience.
- ❖ A sample that doesn't match the plan or reflect the institutional or audience's needs.
- ❖ Inconsistency or lack of clarity between the work plan and the work sample.
- ❖ Spelling, grammatical or structural errors.
- ❖ Poor proofreading, photography, technical production.

4. Preparing your entry - Division 3

Remember, in this division, the work plan is two pages. Your work sample is the priority in this division.

4.1 Tombstone data

Category number	The number to the left of the category title
Category name	As listed in this document or the Call for Entries
Institution	The name of the entrant's institution
Name of the entrant	Even if a team of people worked on the project, it should be entered under one name.
The team, if it was a team effort	Only the key team members who invested more than 20% of their time in this project should be listed — no more than 5, excluding the person entering it.
Function/department	The name of the function or department where the entrant works.
Job title	The role of the entrant in the institution.
Timeline of the project	The duration of the campaign or when the channel was published, or the skills sample was commissioned.
Name of the entry	Be creative. Make it short. Try to limit it to five words. This is what will be on your award.
URL and passwords	URL and necessary passwords, if applicable.
Email address	This will be used to share information with the entrant.
Mobile number	To be used to contact the entrant for clarification.

4.2 Work plan

Your work plan should not be more than two pages. Because the work plan only accounts for 40% of the total score, less detail is required. The content of the work plan is explained in the next section, but it will be a good idea to read the more detailed explanation provided for Divisions 1 and 2.

4.2.1 Background

Contextualise your organisation and the specific campaign that your skills project forms part of. This means putting the institution and the campaign into perspective. The evaluator needs to understand the context of the product and the circumstances and events that gave rise to it. Provide a budget and indicate what percentage of the budget was outsourced to an agency or other service provider. Indicate your role in the creation of the project.

4.2.2 The need for this project

Why was it necessary to produce this specific communication product? How did it contribute to the project or campaign and the institution's success?

4.2.3 The target audience

Who was this product aimed at? You will score more if you focus on the target audience's communication and psychographic characteristics (values, attitudes, opinions, preferences, etc.).

4.2.4 Objectives and measurement

What did you want to achieve with this product? Give a motivated opinion on the success of this product against the objectives you wanted to achieve and ultimately achieved.

This is your work plan for Division 3. It should not be more than two pages!

An entry exceeding this limit will be disqualified

4.3 Your work sample for Division 3: Skills

- Your work sample should profile the skills category you entered. Ensure that it reflects what you explained in the work plan. Remember that the focus of this entry is not so much on the work plan but the sample. Choose it well and ensure that the work plan supports your skills sample.
- Take note of what was said about the work sample for Divisions 1 and 2. Here are a few other pointers to keep in mind as well.

4.3.1 Alignment with the objectives and target audience

You need to convince the evaluator that the skill you are showcasing achieved the objectives set in the work plan by touching the target audience in a specific way. Connecting with the audience in a meaningful and memorable way is the key to this division. Enable the evaluator to see that you were successful. The evaluators will look for alignment with your audience. They will ask:

- ❖ Are the language and images aligned with the target group?
- ❖ Will this approach facilitate the objectives set?
- ❖ Is the style appropriate, or is it out of sync with the audience?
- ❖ Will it connect emotionally and intellectually with the target audience?

4.3.2 Creativity

Being creative is the ultimate reflection of mastery. Here, you have the opportunity to portray your creativity through the use of your skill. It can be a new approach or a traditional approach presented in a new way.

- ❖ Expect a high score if the evaluator wondered why they never thought of presenting a message in this way.
- ❖ Always ensure that your entry reflects creative elements aligned with your target audience's characteristics.
- ❖

4.3.3 Execution

This is the last aspect that the evaluator will use to form an opinion regarding your work.

The work plan and the work sample must be aligned. In the skills section, the evaluator will focus on detail, such as grammar, style, design principles, etc.

5. A last couple of things

5.1 A useful timeline

	<i>Action</i>	<i>Hours</i>
1	Get all the elements required for the entry, e.g. research, public-domain information, examples of the outputs, findings on the impact of the project.	16
2	Study the Call for Entries and the Prepare for Excellence documents.	8
3	Select the material for the work sample and number them.	4
4	Write the work plan and build the work sample.	8
5	Review the work plan and the work sample.	4
6	Ask somebody else to evaluate the Preparing for Excellence Guide to score your entry.	4
7	Discuss the entry and make adjustments.	4
8	Submit your entry!	1 second

5.2 Building an award-winning entry

Remember that awards go to communication projects and products that were significantly better than the best. Create an entry that will make it easy for the evaluator to identify excellence. Use a PowerPoint presentation and embed all your material in one document. It is also good to number the elements in your work sample and refer to them in the work plan, especially in Division 1.

5.3 One final check

Before you submit your entry, ask yourself:

- ❖ Did you complete all the sections of the work plan?
- ❖ Did you include your work sample elements – remember, it must all be online?
- ❖ Did you make the payment?

5.4 Questions

If you have any questions about the MACE Excellence Awards Programme in general, please contact Ms Lacea Loader at loaderl@ufs.ac.za.

If you have any questions about the divisions, categories, or preparing your entry, please contact Dr Amanda Hamilton-Attwell at amanda@businessdna.co.za.

If you have any questions about administrative issues regarding the entry process or submitting your entry, please contact Ms Mari Steenkamp on 083 353 1708 or mari@businessdna.co.za.

Good luck!