

Preparing for EXCELLENCE



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

| 2026

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Forward

Welcome to Your Journey Towards Excellence

By opening this Preparing for Excellence Guide, you have already begun a journey that extends far beyond preparing an entry for the MACE Excellence Awards. The simple act of starting early demonstrates a commitment to planning, strategic thinking and professional excellence – the hallmarks of outstanding Marketing, Advancement and Communication practice.

This guide is much more than an awards manual. It is a practical roadmap to help you plan, implement, measure and document your projects according to internationally recognised best practices. Whether you ultimately submit an entry or not, the principles contained in this guide will help you deliver stronger programmes, demonstrate greater impact and create meaningful value for your institution and stakeholders.

Remember, the most successful award-winning projects do not start a few weeks before the entry deadline. They begin early in the year with careful planning, clear objectives, sound measurement and disciplined execution. By starting now, you are giving yourself the best possible opportunity to achieve excellence.

In this guide, you will discover:

- The requirements, deadlines and entry fees for the MACE Excellence Awards.
- The divisions, categories and award opportunities available.
- The globally recognised standards against which projects are evaluated.
- Practical guidance on planning, implementing and measuring projects for maximum impact.
- Insights into what evaluators look for in high-scoring and award-winning entries.
- Tips on gathering evidence and documenting results throughout the life of a project.

Always keep in mind that excellence is not an event; it is a process. Use this guide as a companion throughout your project journey and as a tool to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of your work.

Best of luck with your journey to pursue excellence and showcase the remarkable work being done within the higher education sector.

For personalised advice, don't hesitate to contact Dr Amanda Hamilton-Attwell (amanda@businessdna.co.za), who has been assisting us with this project for the past 14 years. With a wealth of experience creating award-winning submissions, she stands ready to offer her insights and assistance. It's important to note that while she's eager to support you, she will not prepare your entry.

In our profession, impact is paramount. Use the power of this guide to showcase your excellent projects and their impact according to global best practices.

A quick guide

Preparing your entries

Here's a streamlined guide to prepare your entries:

- Read this guide – cover to cover.
- Compile a list of projects you want to submit.
- Match each project with the most suitable category.
- Head to the MACE website (www.mace.org.za/excellence-awards/) to download the entry form specific to your chosen division and category.
- Scrutinise the entry form to ensure that you thoroughly understand the requirements. Then, decide how you can optimally present your work samples and work plan.
- Note: If you need more measurable evidence of your project's impact, prioritise gathering it now.
- Craft a timeline to ensure the timely completion of your entries.

I. The basics

I.I The terms and conditions

- **Only fully paid-up Ordinary Institutional Members** (as defined by the MOI) can enter the Excellence Awards. Ensure your institutional membership payment is reflected in MACE's bank account before submitting your entry.
- **To qualify for Super Saver or Early Bird fees**, your entry must reach us by 23:59 on the specified deadline days. Entries received after this time will be considered for the next deadline. No entries will be accepted after 4 September 2026 at 23:59.
 - Super Saver Deadline: 14 August 2026 | Fees: R900
 - Early Bird Deadline: 28 August 2026 | Fees: R1 000
 - Final Deadline: 4 September 2026 | Fees: R1 500
- We must receive **proof of payment by 23:59 on 4 September 2026**. Entries will be disqualified if proof of payment is not received on that day.
- **Incomplete entries will be disqualified.** An "incomplete" entry is defined as one where either a Work Plan or Work Sample is not submitted.
- Entrants must **use the provided entry form template**. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.
- Entries exceeding page limits will be **penalised** as follows:
 - One paragraph (+/- 100 words) – 0.5 deducted from your score;
 - Two paragraphs (+/- 101 - 200 words) – 1.0 deducted from your score;
 - Three paragraphs (+/- 201 – 250 words) – 1.5% deducted;
 - more than 250 words – **DISQUALIFIED!**
- Work samples will not be evaluated if evaluators cannot open them. **Ensure your work samples are** labeled clearly, all links function correctly, and evaluators can easily access all necessary materials.
- Projects and initiatives where more than 51% of syndicated or reprinted material was used **will be disqualified**.
- **Projects planned, created, and executed by agencies should not be entered.** The institutional communication team must have been involved in at least 51% of the conceptualisation and creative process. Indicate how much an agency was involved in a project.
- Please **complete and sign the permission and declaration section on the entry form** to avoid disqualification.
- Entrants will receive **feedback from evaluators within four weeks** after the announcement of the MACE Excellence Awards results. If you haven't received 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 scored 5.24 to 5.74.
- **Silver Award of Excellence:** All entries that scored 5.75 or higher.
- **Gold Award of Excellence:** The highest-scoring entry in a category.
- **Platinum Award of Excellence:** The highest-scoring entry in a division.
- **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 awards won. It is, therefore, given to the institution with the highest success ratio. A Bronze Award will receive a weighting of 1, a Silver Award 2, a Gold Award 3, and a Platinum Award 4.



I.3 The seven-point scale

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

Score	Quality of the information and explanation provided
1	Information not provided or totally inappropriate approach was used in this section.
2	There is no strategic alignment between the institutional need and approach used in this section.
3	There is some strategic alignment but key elements were missing in the explanation in this section.
4	Professionally competent execution of this section. This is what you will expect from a communication professional but not new or unique in any way.
5	There is clear alignment with the institutional need and there are aspects of this section of the project that are new and unique.
6	Excellent execution of this section that reflects strategic thinking and institutional alignment.
7	An exceptional and innovative approach was used in this section, setting a new standard of execution of this section.

Evaluators use this scoresheet and the criteria outlined in the Preparing for Excellence guide to assess each section of your entry. By effectively leveraging these resources, you can craft your submission to reflect your excellence and ensure alignment with what the evaluators are looking for. This approach will help you encapsulate all the elements the evaluators are looking for, maximising your chances of success.

I.4 The weighting of the work plan and the work sample

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



Division 1 Campaigns

4 pages | Work plan: 60%
Work sample: 40%
Up to 5 samples



Division 2 Channels

3 pages | Work plan: 50%
Work sample: 50%
Up to 5 samples



Division 3 Skills

2 pages | Work plan: 40%
Work sample: 60%
Up to 5 samples

2. The divisions and categories



Division I : Campaigns

A campaign is a coordinated series of communication activities designed to achieve a larger behavioural or organisational objective over time. It usually involves multiple audiences and stakeholder groups and consists of several projects and activities.

CATEGORIES

1

Brand-building campaigns

Brand-building campaigns include projects aimed at launching a new brand within an institution, repositioning existing brands, or fostering ongoing brand awareness among both internal and external audiences. These campaigns focus on holistic endeavours, integrating a spectrum of platforms, including events, publications, posters, billboards, and multimedia, to name a few. Whether executed for an institution, department, faculty, or a specific function, such as a business school, submissions must transcend mere logo redesigns, offering comprehensive brand-building initiatives.

2

Fundraising campaigns

Fundraising campaigns centers on donor relations, emphasizing the management of donor concerns and the execution of both short and long-term campaigns aimed at soliciting gifts and pledges. It encompasses a spectrum of activities including stewardship initiatives and public relations efforts. Moreover, this category encompasses appeals for endowments and annual giving programs designed to attract and retain donors by soliciting ongoing financial support. These appeals may span a year, seeking contributions to sustain the institution's operational budget or to fulfill specific needs such as facilities, equipment, or other special projects.

3

Stakeholder engagement campaigns

Stakeholder engagement campaigns encompass continuous programs aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of the institution within its served community. The overarching goal is to cultivate trust and credibility among stakeholder groups. These campaigns employ a diverse range of tactics and supporting strategies, ranging from formal and informal meetings to events, social media outreaches, and printed materials. Through these multifaceted approaches, institutions endeavor to establish meaningful connections and enhance communication with their stakeholders, ultimately strengthening relationships and fostering mutual understanding.

4

Issue management campaigns

Issue management campaigns are designed to address institutional concerns both proactively and reactively. These campaigns address a broad spectrum of internal and external issues faced by the campus community. Examples include matters related to reputation management, environmental sustainability, tuition fees, campus safety, research integrity, diversity initiatives, and student services. The primary objective of an issue management campaign is to mitigate potential crises by addressing emerging issues before they escalate. Through strategic communication and proactive measures, institutions aim to maintain stability, foster positive relationships, and uphold their reputation amidst challenges.

5

Crisis management campaigns

Crisis management campaigns are dedicated to navigating an institutional crisis effectively. These campaigns focus on promptly addressing and diffusing immediate crises that threaten the institution's well-being and reputation. Examples of crises include hate crimes, incidents of racism, labour strikes, student protests, fatalities involving students or staff, allegations of sexual harassment, weather-related disasters, and health emergencies. The objective of crisis management campaigns is to provide clear communication, strategic interventions, and proactive measures to manage the crisis, protect the institution's stakeholders, and uphold its integrity during critical times.

6

Student recruitment campaigns

Student recruitment campaigns are strategic initiatives designed to enhance brand visibility, shape perceptions, and influence the enrollment decisions of prospective students and their influencers, including parents and caregivers. These campaigns are conducted on an annual basis, utilising a diverse range of communication channels and media. Communication platforms may include school and campus events, radio and television commercials, print advertisements in newspapers and magazines, distribution of flyers and brochures, utilisation of websites and social media platforms, mall advertising, poster placements, and even innovative guerrilla-marketing tactics. By leveraging these multifaceted communication channels, recruitment campaigns seek to engage with target audiences effectively, showcase the institution's unique offerings, and ultimately motivate high-caliber students to enroll.

7

Community and social-responsibility campaigns

The community and social responsibility category encompasses campaigns dedicated to fostering social responsibility and driving positive impact while bolstering brand awareness and reputation, positioning the institution as a responsible corporate citizen. These campaigns typically focus initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of communities and populations through various noble causes. Such causes may include environmental conservation, fostering entrepreneurial development, promoting literacy and education, advancing healthcare initiatives, preserving cultural heritage, and safeguarding indigenous and heritage resources. Through these endeavors, institutions aspire to actively contribute to societal improvement, demonstrate an institution's commitment to ethical practices, and cultivate a positive perception among stakeholders as agents of positive change and community empowerment.

Alumni campaigns

Alumni campaigns includes a wide range of strategies aimed at fostering robust alumni engagement. This category focuses on initiatives geared towards encouraging alumni involvement through various avenues, such as alumni boards and initiatives focused on soliciting alumni financial support and stewardship. Additionally, it includes programs facilitated by:

- Alumni associations and alumni offices, showcasing their efforts to connect and engage with former students.
- Activities and initiatives led by student alumni associations and similar student organisations affiliated with the alumni office.
- Alumni marketing and branding efforts, highlighting how institutions market and position their alumni associations or offices and articulate their mission to diverse constituencies.

Through these multifaceted approaches, institutions strive to cultivate enduring relationships with their alumni community, leverage their support for institutional advancement, and reinforce a sense of pride and loyalty among former students.





Division 2: Channels

The channels division centers on various means to convey institutional messages to specific target groups. These channels may either function as integral components within a broader campaign or independently as stand-alone platforms. It's crucial to provide context about the project the channel was part of, the intended target audience, and the objectives to be achieved.

CATEGORIES

9

Printed: Internal magazines and newsletters

This category acknowledges newsletters and magazines tailored for internal audiences. Entries in this category must follow a regular publication schedule, such as monthly, quarterly, or annually. It is essential to specify both the frequency of publication and the circulation figures to enhance understanding of the reach and consistency of the publication.

10

Printed: External magazines and newsletters

This category focuses on external printed magazines and newsletters. The magazine or newsletter must adhere to a predetermined publication frequency, such as monthly, quarterly or annually. This category includes research magazines highlighting various fields such as science, technology, humanities, and other areas. Provide the publication's frequency and circulation numbers..

11

Printed: Other publications

This category celebrates excellence in once-off publications tailored for specific stakeholder groups. Entries in this category includes brochures, pamphlets, coffee table books, etc. These channels play a crucial role in engaging and informing stakeholders.

12

Printed and digital annual reports

This category is for institutional annual reports, reports on research and other outputs of a department or school, 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.

13

Digital: Internal magazines and newsletters

This category celebrates excellence in internal magazines and newsletters crafted specifically for web-based or other digital platforms. Entries in this category may also include a printed counterpart, but it's important to note that mere PDF versions of printed magazines uploaded online will not suffice.

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 online would not be considered.

15

Digital: Other digital channels

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

6

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, e.g., 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 celebrates the ingenuity and effectiveness of mobile apps developed for both internal and external communication purposes, including general communication, and stakeholder engagement.

18

Social media

This category celebrates the ingenuity and effectiveness of mobile apps developed for both internal and external communication purposes. These apps serve as tools to facilitate seamless interaction, enhance user engagement, and streamline communication efforts across various platforms. Whether designed to bolster marketing campaigns, facilitate advancement initiatives, or foster effective stakeholder communication, mobile apps represent a pivotal component of modern communication strategies.

19

Events: Single and multi-day

This category recognises events designed to drive marketing, advancement, and communication objectives. Events may range from single-day occasions commemorating special milestones like anniversaries, first-year welcomes, open days, inaugurations, exhibitions, and building dedications to conferences. Multi-day events includes conferences, roadshows, graduations, exhibitions, etc.

20

Audio, visual, and audio-visual

This category honours excellence in radio and TV ads, corporate videos, podcasts, live-streaming, presentations, and other audio, visual, and audio-visual projects. While some elements of the project could have been outsourced, the concept and creative vision must have been done by the entrant. It's crucial to specify your role in the project. Entries will be disqualified if an agency executed more than 50% of the work, emphasizing the importance of internal creativity and innovation.



Division 3: Skills

This division highlights the skills employed by marketing, advancement, and communication professionals to achieve their objectives. Entries in this division may involve communication platforms and content that have also been entered into other divisions. It's essential to provide context for the skills entry by specifying the campaign or program it was part of, identifying the target groups and outlining the objectives to be achieved.

CATEGORIES

21

Design for printed channels

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 channels

This category celebrates excellence in the design of visual channels beyond traditional print and digital formats. Entries may include presentations created with tools like PowerPoint, advertisements as well as banners, or multimedia projects.

23

Design for digital channels

This category deals with excellence in electronic and interactive communication channels like websites and online sites. It includes all computer-based communication channels defined as the end product and is produced for internal or external audiences, relying on a digital communication channel for delivery. It may include uniquely designed newsletters, annual reports, special publications, CDs or DVDs, e-cards, banner ads, etc.

24

Writing for news channels

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 worked on the report. It can be a news report for internal and/or external channels. It also includes news reports about research.

25

Writing for features, documentaries, and brochures

This category celebrates writing excellence in features, documentaries, brochures, and any other similar channels. 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 is for excellent scriptwriting. You may enter copy written for commercials, advertising, marketing or sales promotion material, and advertorials.

27

Writing for the web

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

28

Photography: News, feature articles and documentaries

This category recognises excellence in photography. 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 content that was published with the photograph in your entry. Entries without the content will be disqualified.

29

Videography

This category recognises excellence in videography. 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. Entries should not be longer than 3 minutes. If the video is longer than 3 minutes, just provide a cut. Provide the context of the video. Indicate your role in the project. Indicate what percentage of the project was outsourced or done by an agency.



3. Preparing your entry: Division I:



Campaigns

Important!

4 pages
Work plan: 60%
Work sample: 40%
Up to 5 samples

[Click here](#) to use the entry form on the MACE website to provide the information for your work plan and work sample. If you do not use the entry form, your entry will be disqualified and not evaluated.

3.1 Entrant and project detail

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	The project lead. Even if a team worked on the campaign, it should be entered under one name.
The team, if it was a team effort	The names of the people that invested 20% or more of their time on the project. Limit it to 5 team members, 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 at the institution.
Timeline of the project	The duration of the campaign.
Name of the entry	Be creative. Make it short. Try to limit it to five words. This is what will be on your award.
Email address	This will be used to share information with the entrant.
Mobile number	To be used to contact the entrant for clarification.
URL and passwords	URL and necessary passwords, if necessary, to be used to access the work sample.

3.2 Create your work plan

The purpose of the work plan is to convince the evaluators that you approached the campaign strategically, aligned with the institution's strategy and need, and based your decisions on well-motivated facts.

Remember you have only four pages for an entry in Division 1. Every word counts!

3.2.1 Background

3.2.2 The need for the campaign

3.2.3 The target audience

3.2.4 Goal and objectives

3.2.5 The strategic approach

3.2.6 Campaign implementation

3.2.7 Measurement and evaluation

3.2.1 Background

Start your entry with a contextualisation of the institution. Describe the circumstances and events that had a bearing on the institution when the campaign you are entering was planned and implemented. Focus on the institutional factors that made the campaign relevant. This will help the evaluator to understand the background of the campaign. An excellent way to start is to imagine that the evaluator is from another country and has never heard of your institution or the realities you must address with your communication efforts.

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.



Your score will improve if you:

- Provide background about the institution that will enable the evaluator to understand the context of this campaign.
- Include information about the institution that relates to the campaign.
- The evaluator feels familiar with your environment.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Just include the history of the institution and do not relate the institution to the campaign you are entering.

3.2.2 The need for the campaign

In this section, you need to motivate the campaign within the institution. Why did the institution need this campaign? What research did you use to motivate the value this campaign will add to the institution? You may use public-domain information or research and measurement conducted for your institution. Avoid generalising; be as specific as possible and give relevant examples. **The institutional need for the campaign is the golden thread that must run through the whole entry.** It must be evident how every element of the campaign addressed or was related to the institutional need for the campaign.



Your score will improve if you:

- Explain the institutional need that triggered the campaign. Use research and measurement to proof the need. If possible indicate the consequences if nothing was done.
- Link the strategy and needs of the institution to the marketing, advancement and communication opportunity.
- Explain how the campaign had the potential to address the 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. You will be rated lower if it is more than two years old.

You will score only 4 or 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 campaign addressed the need.
- Indicate why this campaign was undertaken or the channel used.

Or

- Make generalisations about the need for the campaign.
- 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 campaign 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 demographic (age, language, education level, gender, etc), psychographic (their values, attitudes, opinions, interests) characteristics and communication preferences. Use research and measurement to support your definition of the target audience.

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



Your score will improve if you:

- Differentiate between primary, secondary and tertiary audiences.
- Use research not more than two years old to define audience characteristics and institutional needs.
- Use information that shows how the target audience is linked to the business need and communication strategies.
- Segment and analyse the audience's critical characteristics concerning the institutional need.
- Provide information about the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the target group/s.
- Provide an explanation of how the factors you mentioned influenced the campaign.

You will score less if you:

- Just list audiences.
- Did not indicate why these groups were relevant to the campaign you are entering.
- Did not define the target audiences according to their needs or characteristics.
- Missed an obvious audience's characteristics relating to the institutional 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 characteristics, e.g. the general public.
- Include characteristics or behaviours that are irrelevant to the campaign or audience.

3.2.4 Goal and objectives

The key question here is: What was the campaign's overarching goal, and what were the output and outcome objectives? Output objectives relate to tactics, such as producing a monthly electronic newsletter. Outcome objectives relate to the impact on knowledge, the attitude to be created, and the behaviour in which it should result.

Both outcome and output objectives must be formulated in SMART terms.

3.2.4.1 Starting **SMART** objectives

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



The following framework can help you formulate your objectives.

What do you want to achieve?	The outcome you want to achieve	Measurement	By when?
• Increase • Decrease • Maintain (if already high)	Message • Knowledge about • Interest in • Understanding about • Emotion about Channel • Usage • Access to • Usefulness • Attendance Behavior change • Positive • Negative	• By x% over the current level • From x% to y% • From x# to y#	• By end of year (or quarter) • Within 12 months • By a specific time

Your objectives, be they outcome or output, will be a sentence in which you apply SMART thinking using the process in the table above. **DO NOT TELL THE EVALUATOR WHAT SMART MEANS – REFLECT IT IN YOUR EXPLANATION OF YOUR OBJECTIVES.**

3.2.4.2

Output objectives

Output-based objectives measure volumes or increases, things you can count.

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 impact measurement. Outcome measurements must always support it.

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

3.2.4.3

Outcome objectives

Outcome-based objectives measure what you want the audience to gain through awareness, understanding, recall, changed perceptions, and quantifiable change in attitudes, opinions, and behaviour.

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%.

3.2.4.4

The difference between output objectives and tactics

- Entrants often provide a list of tactics when they discuss the output objectives. While output objectives indicate what you want to achieve, tactics describe the channels and activities you will use to achieve output objectives. Examples of tactics are:
- Redesign the staff newsletter (tactic) to achieve 1,000 monthly downloads (output objective).
- Stage a town hall meeting (tactic) to share the Principle's 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 you:

- Goal is over-arching and supported by SMART objectives.
- Objectives are linked to the institutional needs and strategy and linked to the characteristics 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.

You 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 campaign.
- Are over-ambitious and you have too many objectives.
- Don't address the identified institutional need.
- Have objectives that are vague, irrelevant or not measurable, such as "Our objective was to win the hearts"
- Have objectives that 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, the audience analysis, the goal, and the objectives, how effective will the selected communication approach be?



Your can expect a higher score if you:

- Provide and explain the primary and supporting messages.
- If the messages would connect emotionally and intellectually with the target groups.
- Provide the rationale on how you linked the target audience(s) and objectives to tactics and the campaign plan.
- Indicate the links to the institution's needs.
- Use an innovative approach.
- Indicate 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 considered when the campaign was planned
- Use a dated approach to address a new communication problem.
- Use an approach that would not address the institution's needs.
- It is not clear how the chosen strategy will address the business need.

2.6 The campaign implementation

In the previous section, you explained how you planned the campaign; now, you must explain how you executed it within the allocated budget and the institution's realities. Remember to explain how you had to navigate challenges such as tight deadlines, changes in direction, small budgets, stubborn decision-makers, staff turnover - whatever the challenges you faced. You need to include a timeline.

The evaluator would also like to know how you utilised your budget, time, and team, specifically, whether you worked with a team. While it doesn't have to be detailed, provide information to convince the evaluator that your resources were used wisely, regardless of whether they were limited or generous. By indicating the percentage of your budget allocated to this campaign, the number of hours or portion of your time spent on it, and the time your team dedicated to the campaign, the evaluator can form an opinion on the effective utilisation of resources. If you outsourced some of the elements of the campaign, indicate what was outsourced and how you collaborated with these groups, such as consultants and media houses.

You must indicate the percentage of the campaign's outsourced or syndicated material used.



Your score will improve if you:

- Provide a reasonable budget, given the institution and campaign scope.
- 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 campaign to decision-makers.
- Indicate your role in the campaign and, if applicable, how and why you outsourced some elements of the campaign.
- Indicate how and why you collaborated with other people, for example, with subject matter experts.

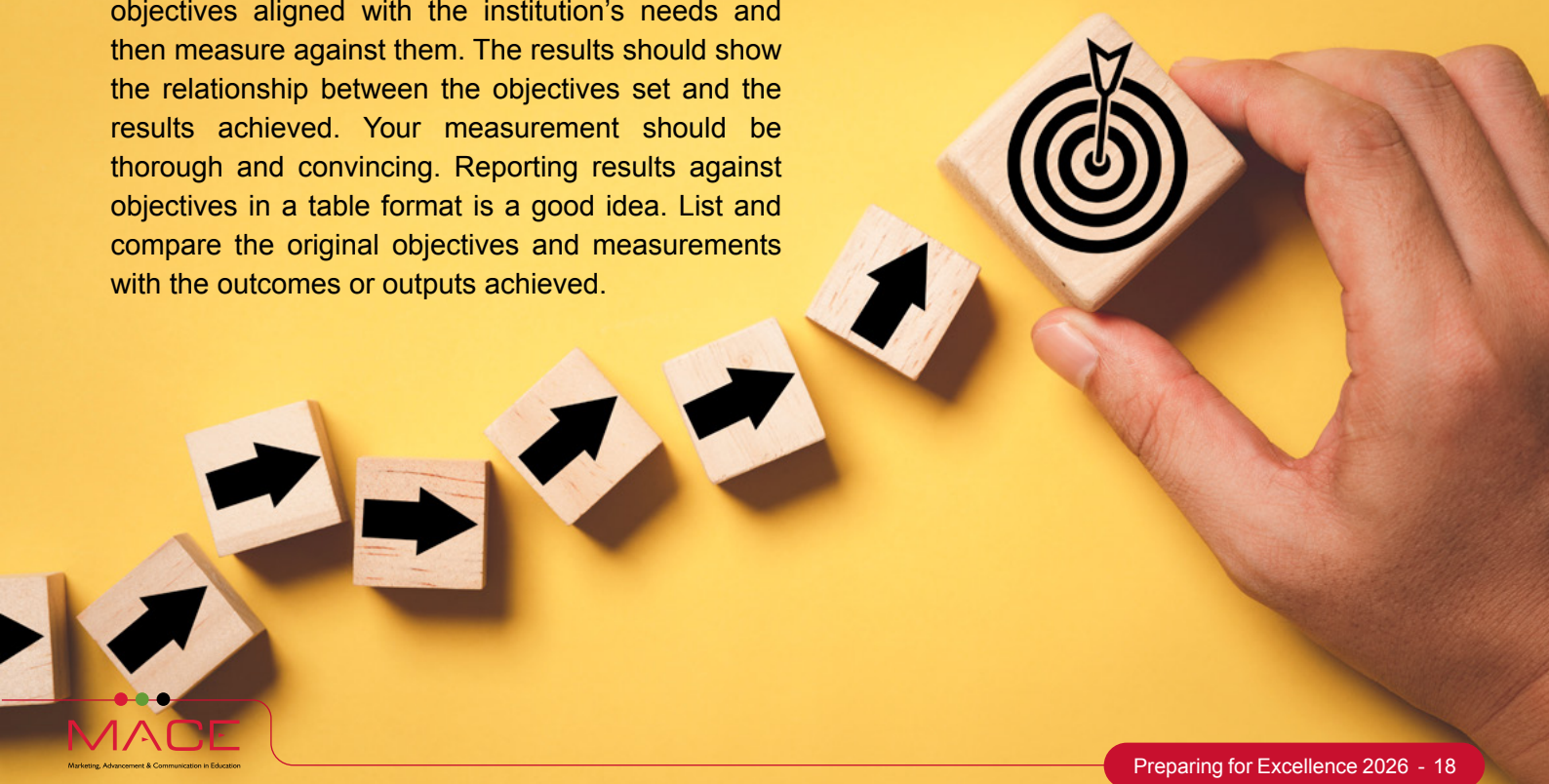
You will score less if you:

- 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 campaign was implemented.
- Did not indicate any challenges or did not indicate why there were no challenges.

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. You can expect a high score if you have set solid objectives and measured against them. Remember to explain how you measured the campaign's impact 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 set and the results achieved. Your measurement should be thorough and convincing. Reporting results against objectives in a table format is a good idea. List and compare the original objectives and measurements with the outcomes or outputs achieved.





Your score will be high if you:

- Demonstrate alignment between the objectives and the measurement.
- Use appropriate measurement methodology, formal and informal.
- Measure the impact of the campaign against the original benchmarks of the objectives set.
- Show credible results that support the needs of the institution.
- Provide results that demonstrate that the campaign addressed the institutional needs.
- Use more than one measurement method to determine the impact of the campaign.

You will score less if you:

- Do not measure the objectives set out in the beginning.
- Only indicate that the impact of the campaign was measured and that it was positive – without a clear explanation of the measurements used.
- Only report on outputs.
- 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 campaign realities.
- Use vague results or generalisations.



This is your work plan for Division I

- Page limit: Division I: four pages.
- Do not use a typeface smaller than 10pt, and use standard margins.
- An entry exceeding this limit will be disqualified or points will be deducted.

3.3 Compile your work sample

You have been waiting for this opportunity to display the result of your thinking, planning and execution.

The work sample elements you include must convince the evaluators of the quality of your campaign.

3.3.1 Alignment with the objectives and the target audience's characteristics & needs

3.3.2 The creative approach

3.3.3. Professional execution overall

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 campaign was executed.
- Well-chosen samples reflecting what you explained in the work plan.

Remember:

- The evaluator has limited time to form an impression of the campaign's elements. Be selective in what you include and ensure that the context is in the work plan.
- You will be penalised if your work sample is just a graphic format of your work plan. Only provide samples that are relevant to the institutional need.
- You may include supporting information in your work sample to substantiate the work plan, e.g. perception surveys, media reports that resulted in the campaign, research on the profile of the target audience, etc. Remember this is part of the five samples that you may include.
- Do not include research reports; only provide background to the survey and include the relevant findings. Consider creating one slide.
- 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 must be submitted. Include photographs of the elements and how and where they were applied.
- Consider creating one PowerPoint presentation and embedding all your samples into that document, including video links.
- Check if all the links work before submitting your campaign.

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

When evaluating your work sample, the evaluators will **consider the following:**

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 channels must be aligned with audience needs and preferences. If the audience doesn't get the message in a clear, consistent, and creative way that facilitates the achievement of the objectives, everything else is a waste of time and money.

The evaluators will look for a match between how the audience was described and how the campaign 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 channels match the audience's profile?
- Will the channels and approaches that are used facilitate the achievement of the objectives?



You will score higher if you:

- You have included the full range of your communication channels.
- 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 channels 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 new, but it can also be when you use something old in a completely new way. Now is the time to WOW the evaluator.



You will score higher if:

- The evaluators wonder 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 channel 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 channels selected, the approach used, and the objectives achieved.

You will score less if for:

- The approach and application are so creative that the key messages are lost.
- The elements are creative but do not reflect the institution's brand.
- It is creative but inconsistent.
- The creativity distracts from the objectives and the key messages.
- 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 simply a style that a designer, photographer, or another key player liked, with no connection to the strategy's actual purpose.

3.3.3 Professional execution overall

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 campaign. The work plan and the work sample must be aligned. The work plan must describe the context, challenges, and solution for the communication opportunity, and the work sample should demonstrate it.

The evaluators will ask the following questions:

- Do these campaign elements reflect good use of the budget and other resources?
- Is there consistency between the different elements of the campaign and the institution?
- Does it reflect good taste and respect for the audience?
- Is there alignment between the work plan and the work sample? The sample must be strategic, not just look great. If the work sample was 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?
- Are the samples included a logical reflection of the work plan?



Your score will be 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 campaign management principles through the execution of the campaign.
- 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 if you:

- 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, and technical production



4. Preparing your entry: Division 2:



Channels

Important!

3 pages
Work plan: 50%
Work sample: 50%
Up to 5 samples

Every entry must include the following information: [Click here](#) to use the entry form on the website to provide the information for your entry. This table is on the entry form.

4.1 Entrant and project detail

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	The project lead. Even if a team worked on the project, it should be entered under one name.
The team, if it was a team effort	The names of the people that invested 20% or more of their time on the project. Limit it to 5 team members, 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 at the institution.
Timeline of the project	When the communication channel was published or used.
Name of the entry	Be creative. Make it short. Try to limit it to five words. This is what will be on your award.
Email address	This will be used to share information with the entrant.
Mobile number	To be used to contact the entrant for clarification.
URL and passwords	URL and necessary passwords, if necessary, to be used to access the work sample.

4.2 Create your work plan

The purpose of the work plan is to convince the evaluators that you approached the communication channel you are entering strategically, aligned it with the institution's strategy and need, and based your decisions on well-motivated facts.

Remember you have only three pages for an entry in Division 2. Every word counts!

4.2.1 Background

4.2.2 The need for the channel

4.2.3 The target audience

4.2.4 Goal and objectives

4.2.5 The strategic approach

4.2.6 The implementation process

4.2.7 Measurement and evaluation

4.2.1 Background

Start your entry with a contextualisation of the institution. Describe the circumstances and events that had a bearing on the campaign that the communication channel you are entering. This will help the evaluator to understand the background of the channel.

The evaluator will ask to what extent the entrant:

- Explained the institution and provided context for the communication channel being entered.



Your score will improve if you:

- Provide background about the institution that will enable the evaluator to understand the context of this communication channel.
- The evaluator feels familiar with your environment.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Just include the history of the institution and do not relate it to the communication channel you are entering.

4.2.2 The need for the channel

In this section, you must explain why this communication channel was necessary. What measurement or research did you use to determine whether this communication channel will address institutional needs?



Your score will improve if you:

- Explain the institutional need that triggered the communication channel.
- Explain how the communication channel had the potential to address the need or helped leverage an opportunity.
- Indicate how formal or informal research was used to define the need. You may use public-domain information.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Make generalisations about the need for the communication channel.
- Use statements like “Management thought it would be a good idea”.
- Assume needs because there was a trend among tertiary institutions to do it.

4.2.3 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 demographic (age, language, education level, gender, etc), psychographic (their values, attitudes, opinions, interests) characteristics and communication preferences. Use research and measurement to support your definition of the target audience and why this was an appropriate channel.



Your score will improve if:

- Information about the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the target group/s motivates the use of the channel.
- An explanation of how the factors you mentioned influenced the channel choice.

You will score less if you:

- Missed an obvious audience or audience characteristic relating to the communication channel.
- View an audience collectively, without identifying characteristics, e.g. the general public.

4.2.4 Goal and objectives

The key question is: What was your overarching goal with this communication channel, and what were your output and outcome objectives?

Both outcome and output objectives must be formulated in SMART terms.

4.2.4.1 Starting SMART objectives

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



The following framework can help you formulate your objectives.

What do you want to achieve?	The outcome you want to achieve	Measurement	By when?
• Increase • Decrease • Maintain (if already high)	Message • Knowledge about • Interest in • Understanding about • Emotion about Channel • Usage • Access to • Usefulness • Attendance Behavior change • Positive • Negative	• By x% over the current level • From x% to y% • From x# to y#	• By end of year (or quarter) • Within 12 months • By a specific time

Your objectives, be they outcome or output, will be a sentence in which you apply SMART thinking using the process in the table above. **DO NOT STATE A DEFINITION OF A SMART OBJECTIVE, JUST REFLECT IT IN YOUR STATEMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.**

4.2.4.2 Output objectives

Output-based objectives measure volumes or increases, things you can count.

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.

If you only state output-based objectives, the highest score you will earn is 4.

Outcome objectives

Outcome-based objectives measure what you want the audience to gain through awareness, understanding, recall, changed perceptions, and quantifiable change in attitudes, opinions, and behaviour.

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 practise the customer experience standards daily.
- Enrolment to increase by 10% and market share by 2%.



Your score will increase if you:

- Goal is over-arching and supported by SMART objectives.
- Objectives are stated in terms of the impact the communication channel will have on the institution and the target audiences.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Just state an overall big-picture goal.
- List the objectives, but not in SMART terms.
- Have objectives that are vague, irrelevant or not measurable, such as "Our objective was to win the hearts".
- Have objectives that are production or deadline focused, or based on tactics such as "produce a newsletter".

4.2.5 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, the audience analysis, the goal, and the objectives, how effective will the selected communication approach be?



You can expect a higher score if you:

- Provided and explained the primary and supporting messages in your channel.
- If the messages as presented in the channel would connect emotionally and intellectually with the target groups.
- Provided the rationale on how you linked the target audience(s) and objectives to tactics and the communication channel plan.
- Used an innovative approach.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Did not indicate the primary and secondary messages.
- Did not explain how the characteristics of the target groups were taken into account when the communication channel was planned.
- Used a dated approach to address a new problem communication problem.

4.2.6 The implementation process

In the previous section, you explained how you decided on and planned the communication channel; now, you must explain how you executed it within the budget allocated and within the institution's realities. Remember to explain how you had to navigate challenges such as tight deadlines, changes in direction, small budgets, stubborn decision-makers, staff turnover, or whatever you faced. You need to include a timeline.

The evaluator would also like to know your budget and how you used it. As well as the time you had to deliver the channel and team, if you had one, that worked with you. While it doesn't have to be detailed, provide information to convince the evaluator that your resources were used wisely, regardless of how limited or generous they were. Just by indicating what percentage of your budget you used for this communication channel, how many hours or portion of your time, and the time your team worked on the communication channel, the evaluator will be able to form an opinion on the effective utilisation of resources. If you outsourced the production of the communication channel, explain why and how you collaborated with these groups. Remember to indicate the amount you used to outsource some elements.

You must indicate the percentage of the communication channel you outsourced or syndicated material you used.



Your score will improve if you:

- Provide a reasonable budget, given the institution and scope of the channel and if you make good use of your resources – money, time and team.
- Explain how you addressed challenges and yet delivered the channel in time and on budget.
- Indicate your role in the production of the channel and, if applicable, how and why you outsourced some elements of the communication channel.
- Indicate how you collaborated with other people, for example a videographer.
- Provide a timeline.

You will score only 4 or 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 communication channel was implemented.
- Did not indicate any challenges and did not indicate why there were no challenges.
- Did not provide a timeline.

4.2.7 Measurement and evaluation

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

Continue on the next page >

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 set and the results achieved. Your measurement should be thorough and convincing. Reporting results against objectives in a table format is a good idea. List and compare the original objectives and targets with the outcomes or outputs achieved.



Your score will be high if you:

- Demonstrate alignment between the objectives and the measurement.
- Show credible results that support the needs of the institution.
- Use more than one measurement method to determine the impact of the communication channel.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Do not measure the objectives set out in the beginning.
- Only report on outputs.
- Only include anecdotal measurements.
- Measure aspects that were not aligned with the needs of the institution.



This is your work plan for Division 2

- Page limit: Division 2: Three pages.
- Do not use a typeface smaller than 10pt, and use standard margins.
- An entry exceeding this limit will be disqualified or points will be deducted.

4.3

Compile your work sample

This is the opportunity you have been waiting for – to display the result of your thinking, planning and execution.

The work sample elements you include must convince the evaluators of the quality of the channel you are entering.

4.3.1 Alignment with the objectives and the target audience's characteristics & needs

4.3.2 The creative approach

4.3.3. Professional execution overall

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 communication channel was executed.
- Well-chosen samples reflecting what you explained in the work plan.

Remember:

- The evaluator has limited time to form an impression of the campaign's elements. Be selective in what you include and ensure that the context is in the work plan.
- You will be penalised if your work sample is just a graphic format of your work plan.
- 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 must be submitted. Include photographs of the elements and how and where they were applied.
- Consider creating one PowerPoint presentation and embedding all your samples into that document, including links to your communication channel.
- Check if all the links work before submitting your communication channel.

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

When evaluating your work sample, the evaluators will **consider the following:**

4.3.1 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 that facilitates the achievement of the objectives, everything else is in vain.

The evaluators will look for a match between how the audience was described and how the communication channel 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 the channel matches the audience's profile?
- Will the channel 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.

You will score only 4 or 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.

4.3.2 The creative approach

Creativity is when you do something new, but it can also be when you use something old in a completely new way. Now is the time to WOW the evaluator.



Expect a higher score if:

- The evaluators wonder why they never thought of doing it this way!
- The approach is creative while matching the characteristics of the target audience.
- There is evidence of some smart thinking that addressed the needs.
- It is likely to leave a lasting impression on the target audience.

You will score only 4 or less if:

- The approach and application are so creative that the key messages are lost.
- The elements are creative but do not reflect the institution's brand.
- It is creative but inconsistent.
- The different elements are confusing and poorly presented.
- There is an apparent mismatch between the audience and the creative approach.

4.3.3 Professional execution

This is the last aspect that the evaluator will use to form an opinion about your work. The work plan and the work sample must be aligned. The work plan must describe the context, challenges, and solution for the communication opportunity, and the work sample should demonstrate it.

The evaluator will ask the following questions:

- Does how this communication channel is used reflect good use of the budget and other resources?
- Is there consistency between the communication channel, the project it was part of and the institution?
- Does it reflect good taste and respect for the audience?
- Is there alignment between the work plan and the work sample? The sample must be strategic, not just look great. If the work sample was 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?



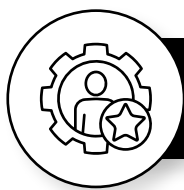
You will score higher if your entry reflects:

- High-quality writing and superior production.
- Inspirational, superior thinking and strategic alignment.
- Thorough cross-referenced documentation that supports the work plan.
- Evidence of care and attention being devoted to preparing the entry.
- Respect for the evaluator.

You will score only 4 or less for:

- Amateur work or dated approaches, unless supported by the strategy.
- Inconsistent use of images and language.
- Poor technical production.
- An overused approach or one that's likely to bore the audience.
- Inconsistency or lack of clarity between the work plan and the work sample.
- Poor proofreading, photography, and technical production

5. Preparing your entry: Division 3



Skills

Important!

2 pages
Work plan: 40%
Work sample: 60%
Up to 5 samples

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

[Click here](#) to use the entry form on the MACE website to provide the information for your work plan and work sample. If you do not use the entry form, your entry will be disqualified and not evaluated.

5.1 Entrant and project details

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	The person whose skill is being profiled
The team, if it was a team effort	The names of the people that invested 20% or more of their time on the project. Limit it to 5 team members, 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 at the institution.
Timeline of the project	When the sample was used
Name of the entry	Be creative. Make it short. Try to limit it to five words. This is what will be on your award.
Email address	This will be used to share information with the entrant.
Mobile number	To be used to contact the entrant for clarification.
URL and passwords	URL and necessary passwords, if necessary, to be used to access the work sample.

5.2 Create your work plan

The purpose of the work plan is to convince the evaluators that your skill contributed strategic value to the institutional need that had to be addressed.

Remember you have only two pages for an entry in Division 3. Every word counts!

5.2.1 Background

5.2.2 The need for the skill

5.2.3 The target audience

5.2.4 Goal and objectives

5.2.1 Background

Start your entry with a contextualisation of the institution and the project this skill formed part of. Describe the circumstances and events that had a bearing on the institution when the skill you are entering was planned and implemented. You also need to convince the evaluator that you made good use of the funds and the time allocated to delivering this skill.

The evaluator will ask to what extent the entrant:

- Explained the organisation and provided context regarding the project this skill was part of.



Your score will improve if you:

- Provide background about the institution that will enable the evaluator to understand the context of this skill.
- Provide the budget and the roles of the project team that worked on delivering this skill.
- Explained the process used to deliver the skills project.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Just include the history of the institution and do not relate it to the project or the skill you are entering.
- You do not provide information about the process used or the resources you had access to, e.g. money, people, technology, etc.

5.2.2 The need for the skill

In this section, you must explain how this skill addresses an institutional need. Avoid generalising; be specific and use research to motivate your statement. **The institutional need is the golden thread that must run through the entry.**



Your score will improve if you:

- Explain the institutional need that triggered the project of which this skill was part of.
- Use formal or informal research to indicate how this skill contributed to addressing an institutional need.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Make generalisations about the need for the project and the skill.
- Use statements like “Management thought it would be a good idea”.
- Assume needs because there was a trend among tertiary institutions to do it.

5.2.3 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 demographic (age, language, education level, gender, etc), psychographic (their values, attitudes, opinions, interests) characteristics and communication preferences. Use research and measurement to support your definition of the target audience.



Your score will improve if you:

- Differentiate your audiences based according to primary, secondary and tertiary.
- Use research not more than two years old to define audience characteristics relevant to this skill.

You will score less if you:

- Just list audiences.
- Did not indicate why these groups were relevant to the skill you are entering.
- Use vague, unsupported assumptions about audience needs and characteristics, e.g. "We thought they might like..."

5.2.4 Goal and objectives

The key question here is: what was the overarching goal you wanted to achieve with this goal, and what were the output and outcome objectives? Output objectives are related to tactics, such as producing a monthly electronic newsletter. Outcome objectives relate to the impact on knowledge, the attitude to be created, and the behaviour in which it should result. Both outcome and output objectives must be formulated in SMART terms.

5.2.4.1 Starting SMART objectives

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



The following framework can help you formulate your objectives.

What do you want to achieve?	The outcome you want to achieve	Measurement	By when?
• Increase • Decrease • Maintain (if already high)	Message • Knowledge about • Interest in • Understanding about • Emotion about Channel • Usage • Access to • Usefulness • Attendance Behavior change • Positive • Negative	• By x% over the current level • From x% to y% • From x# to y#	• By end of year (or quarter) • Within 12 months • By a specific time

Your objectives, be they outcome or output, will be a sentence in which you apply SMART thinking using the process in the table above.

5.2.4.2

Output objectives

Output-based objectives measure volumes or increases, things you can count.

For example:

- The video must be viewed 20,000 times in a week.
- The news report must be downloaded 10,000 times during the first 12 months.
- The photograph must be clicked on 2,000 within a week.

Remember, advertising value equivalency (AVE) is not a valid impact measurement. Outcome measurements must always support it.

5.2.4.3

Outcome objectives

Outcome-based objectives measure what you want the audience to gain through awareness, understanding, recall, changed perceptions, and quantifiable change in attitudes, opinions, and behaviour.

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%.

5.2.4.4

The difference between output objectives and tactics

A news report, a video, and a report are tactics. Skills are related to tactics. Examples of tactics and output objectives are:

For example:

- Write a report for the staff newsletter (tactic) to achieve 1,000 monthly downloads (output objective).
- Create a video (tactic) to share the Principles message with 1,000 people (output objective).
- Create a social media post (tactic) to engage 1,000 students in an online conversation about campus safety.



Your score will increase if you:

- Goal is over-arching and supported by SMART thinking in your objectives.
- Objectives are linked to the institutional needs and linked to the characteristics of the target groups.
- Measurement indicate to what extent the objectives were achieved.

You will score only 4 or less if you:

- Just state an overall big-picture goal.
- List the objectives, but not in SMART terms.
- Use vague, irrelevant or not measurable objectives, such as “Our objective was to win the hearts”.
- Have objectives that aren’t aligned with the needs of the audience or institution.



This is your work plan for Divisions 3

- Page limit: Division 3: Two pages.
- Do not use a typeface smaller than 10pt, and use standard margins.
- An entry exceeding this limit will be disqualified or marks will be deducted.

5.3

Compile your work sample

This is the opportunity you have been waiting for — to display the result of your thinking, planning, and execution.

The work sample elements you include must convince the evaluators of the excellence of your skill.

- 5.3.1 Alignment with the objectives, the target audience’s characteristics & the institutional needs**
- 5.3.2 The creative approach**
- 5.3.3 Professional execution**

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 way you practised the skill.
- Well-chosen samples reflecting what you explained in the work plan.

Remember:

- The evaluator needs evidence to form an impression of your skill, be selective in what you include and ensure that the context is in the work plan.
- You will be penalised if your work sample is just a graphic format of your work plan. Only provide samples that are relevant to the institutional need.
- You may include supporting information in your work sample to substantiate the work plan, e.g. perception surveys and media reports that resulted in the skill.
- Number the different elements in your skills work sample 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 must be submitted. Include photographs of the elements and how and where they were applied.
- Consider creating one PowerPoint presentation and embedding all your samples into that document, including video links.
- Check if all the links work before submitting your project.

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

When evaluating your work sample, the evaluators will **consider the following:**

5.3.1 Alignment with the objectives, the target audience's characteristics and the institutional 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 that facilitates the achievement of the objectives, everything else is of no value.

The evaluators will look for a match between how the audience was described and how the skill 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 channel match the audience's profile?
- Will the application of this skill facilitate the addressing of institutional needs?



You will score higher if:

- The application of the skill would resonate with specific characteristics of the audience.
- The application of the skill would connect emotionally and intellectually with the audience.

You will score only 4 or less if:

- The message, visuals and design are boring and old-fashioned and would probably not resonate with the target audience.
- The application of the skill would be too complicated or inappropriate for the audience.
- The application of the skill would patronise or insult the target or any other audience.

5.3.2 The creative approach

Creativity is when you do something new, but it can also be when you use something old in a completely new way. Now is the time to WOW the evaluator.



Expect a higher score if:

- The evaluators are wondering why they never thought of doing it this way!
- The skill was applied in a creative way while matching the characteristics of the target audience.
- The way the skill was applied is likely to leave a lasting impression on the target audience.

You will score only 4 or less if:

- The approach and application are so creative that the key messages are lost.
- The elements are creative but do not reflect the institution's brand.
- It is creative but inconsistent

5.3.3 Professional execution

This is the last aspect that the evaluator will use to form an opinion about your work. The work plan and the work sample must be aligned. The work plan must describe the context, challenges, and solution for the communication opportunity addressed by this skill, and the work sample should demonstrate it.

The evaluators will ask the following questions:

- Does how this skill was applied reflect good use of the budget and other resources?
- Does it reflect good taste and respect for the audience?
- Is there alignment between the work plan and the work sample?



You will score higher if your entry reflects:

- High-quality skills application.
- Inspirational, superior thinking and strategic alignment with the institutional need.
- Evidence of care and attention being devoted to preparing the entry.
- Respect for the evaluator.

You will score only 4 or less for:

- Amateur work or dated approaches, unless supported by the strategy.
- 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.
- Spelling, grammatical or structural errors.

6. A last couple of things

6.1 A useful timeline

ACTION

Step 1	Get all the elements required for the entry, e.g. research, public-domain information, examples of the outputs, and findings on the impact of the project.	16 Hours
Step 2	Study the Call for Entries and the Preparing for Excellence documents.	8 Hours
Step 3	Select the material for the work sample and number them.	4 Hours
Step 4	Write the work plan and build the work sample.	8 Hours
Step 5	Review the work plan and the work sample.	4 Hours
Step 6	Ask somebody else to evaluate the entry using the Preparing for Excellence Guide to score your entry.	4 Hours
Step 7	Discuss the entry and make adjustments.	4 Hours
Step 8	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?	20 Minutes
Submit your entry! 1 second		

6.2 Questions

If you have any questions about the MACE Excellence Awards programme in general, please contact Ms Lacea Loader at lacealoader@gmail.com.

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 get in touch with Ms Mari Steenkamp at mari@businessdna.co.za.

6.3 In closing

Remember that MACE Excellence Awards are given to communication campaigns, channels, and skills that are 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.

Good luck!