



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY TEACHING AWARDS (NUTA)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2026



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1. PREAMBLE

The National Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers (NFfEAUT), identifies six imperatives for enhancing academics as university teachers, one of which is to ensure that academics are recognised and rewarded for the work that they do as university teachers. In 2019, the National University Teaching Awards (NUTA) was established by a subcommittee of South African University Teachers (SAUT). NUTA is a collaboration with various stakeholders represented on the National Coordinating Committee (NCC). The Minister of Higher Education and Training or its nominee is its patron and will host the award ceremony annually.

In recognising and celebrating exceptional teaching and learning across universities in South Africa, awards are made in four categories: beginner teachers; experienced teachers, teaching collaboration teams and teaching and learning specialists. Awardees are required to demonstrate their exemplary contributions, including leadership and innovation in teaching and learning.

This call must be read in conjunction with the National Framework for the Enhancement of University Teachers (NFfEAUT) – accessible here: <https://sauniversityteachers.org.za/>

2. AIMS OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY TEACHING AWARDS

The aims of the NUTA Awards:

- Recognise innovative teaching and learning in higher education at a national level.
- Generate a cadre of academics who can provide inspiration and leadership in teaching and learning in their disciplines across and beyond the institution.
- Celebrate the unique contextual responsiveness of academics that led to their growth and transformed practice as university teachers.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1. Academics and teaching and learning specialists at all South African public higher education institutions are eligible to participate in the awards.

3.2. Applications are received from individuals or teaching collaboration teams. A teaching collaboration team, (which should not be conflated with Team Teaching), refers to individuals working collectively to design, deliver, and enhance teaching and learning within a university or across universities. This team may comprise academic staff and/or professional support staff who contribute distinct expertise toward a shared teaching goal.

Collaboration is characterised by a sustained and coordinated effort to co-create curricula, innovate pedagogical approaches, and improve student learning experiences and outcomes. The portfolio must indicate the role/s played by each team member. Refer to [Procedures and Processes](#) document for definition of a Team submission.

3.3. Applications, which are not endorsed by a senior executive at the host institution, will be disqualified.

3.4. Recipients of commendations may re-apply after two years of receiving the commendation.

4. CRITERIA

While the selection criteria are cognisant of the inherent inequalities that characterise institutions nationally, the awards recognise and reward exceptional intellectuals and thought - leaders in higher education. To ensure equity of outcomes, four categories of awards have been instituted:

(a) **Beginner teachers** (in their first five years of teaching),

(b) **Experienced teachers** (who have contributed a lifetime of leadership in education),

(c) **Teaching collaboration teams** (teams of academics and/or teaching and learning specialists who demonstrate innovation in teaching and learning).

(d) **Teaching & Learning Specialists**, (who provide professional support, development, and leadership to enhance teaching excellence, student learning, and curriculum transformation)

Both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching will be recognised and evaluated.

4.1. Applicants are invited to submit portfolios containing a reflective analytical narrative, accompanied by relevant substantiating documentation of evidence. The portfolios will be evaluated on four criteria: (1) reflection on students, (2) reflection on context, (3) reflection on knowledge and (4) reflection on professional growth.

4.2. All assertions and claims in the reflective narrative must be supported by documented evidence, which may be provided through selected appendices. The submitted portfolio and accompanying evidence should cover multiple years of teaching experience, while also including current evidence.

4.3. Evidence of outstanding teaching could include, but is not restricted to the following:

- Information about the applicant and their teaching context (position in the institution, part/full-time, discipline taught, size of classes, teaching context, e.g. main/satellite campus, areas of key challenge) and broad social context
- Progressive pedagogies and methodologies
- Peer review of teaching (feedback)
- Student feedback
- Evidence of student progression, including student success data and persistence rates

- Student involvement and successes beyond the classroom
- Evidence includes brief extracts from study guides, multimedia, online materials, innovative student assessment, and photographs.

4.4. The evidence should demonstrate how the applicant's teaching stands out from other good teachers/teaching and learning specialists in promoting student learning and contributing to education for social justice. Evidence of the applicant's involvement with teaching and learning that has a broader impact within the university and beyond should include, but is not restricted to the following:

- Articles or other publications on teaching and learning (citations only or abstracts at the most)
- Papers presented on teaching and learning at conferences, including keynote addresses
- Membership of professional associations to which the applicant is a significant contributor based on evidence of conference attendance, papers presented, review activities, membership of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) or the executive
- Moderation of examinations and examination of dissertations/theses
- Evidence of contribution to curriculum development (regionally, nationally, globally)
- Membership in university committees (national and international) supported by evidence of the applicant's contribution
- Formal and non-formal continuing professional development
- List of students or staff mentored or supervised
- List of awards/recognition received
- Evidence of substantive community engagement: using university knowledge and resources to address societal issues, enrich scholarship, and prepare students for informed civic engagement, strengthen democratic values, and contribute to the public good

In addition to the information provided above, applicants should refer to the [criteria](#) for detailed information on the criteria used for adjudication.

5. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

5.1. The NUTA [call for applications](#) will be sent to all public universities and made available on the DHET, CHE, HELTASA, USAF, and SAUT websites.

5.2. The university identifies and nominates a [maximum of four candidates](#) or teaching collaboration teams through transparent and inclusive processes. This will require universities to publicise and prioritise the NUTA within the institutional environment.

5.3. Each candidate or teaching collaboration team is expected to submit a portfolio of evidence which meets specific NUTA criteria and relevant rubrics.

5.4. Candidates should enquire within their institutions about the support available for preparing portfolios. If a university needs additional support for mentoring institutional academic development staff who provide support to academics, such requests should be sent to the Chair of the NCC within a week after the call has been received.

5.5. An adjudication panel will evaluate candidates' portfolios according to the **set criteria**.

5.6. Each participant is responsible for ensuring that their application is endorsed by the relevant university executive and is successfully submitted **online**. No email submissions will be accepted.

5.7. The due date for submission of portfolios is 30 May 2026. Communication will be sent to all participants to indicate the outcome of their submissions by the end of August 2026.

5.8. The interviews will be in the second week of September 2026. All shortlisted applicants will make a short presentation to the adjudication panel. Final communication to all participants at this stage of the application process will be sent out after 30 September 2026.

5.9. The adjudication panel will communicate the outcomes to all applicants at different intervals of the adjudication process.

6. THE APPLICATION FORMAT

6.1. All applications must be accompanied by the **nomination form** completed and endorsed (signed) by the relevant senior institutional executive.

6.2. The following biographical information must be provided:

- A recent photograph and brief curriculum vitae (**maximum of 2 pages**). The curriculum vitae should emphasise the applicant's teaching and professional growth in higher education.
- A team application should include all participants' names, photographs and abbreviated curriculum vitae (**maximum of 2 pages each**). The curriculum vitae of each person should emphasise their teaching and professional growth in higher education. The application should indicate the team leader/contact person and their contact details.

Portfolios that do not conform to these specifications will be disqualified.

6.3. NB: Guidelines on file types and sizes for uploads:

- Acceptable file types: pdf, doc, docx, jpg, jpeg, png, gif
- Maximum file upload size: 10 MB

- To upload a video, do share a link to the video. Do not upload the video directly to the website. Links should be shared to YouTube, a Google Drive folder or similar platforms.

6.4. The portfolio comprises two parts:

Part 1 should provide a reflective narrative focusing on the teaching and learning capabilities of the nominee or nominees (what they do and why). The narrative should address the four criteria on reflection, i.e. reflection on students, reflection on context, reflection on knowledge and reflection on professional growth. The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers and, in a pdf or multimedia format. The total reflective narrative should be no longer than 10,000 words (12 font, 1.5 line spacing).

Part 2 of the portfolio should include evidence to substantiate the reflective narrative's claims. Appendices should be no more than 10 pages of evidence, which may be in different e-formats and/or two 3-minute audio or video recordings (see guidelines on file types and sizes for uploads on page 7). Appendices should only include excerpts pertinent to statements in the reflective narrative. Appendices should be selectively included, and all appendices must be directly referred to/hyperlinked in the narrative.

All appendices must be assessed and tested for off-campus accessibility and functionality.

NB: Portfolios that do not conform strictly to the specifications and limits in 6.1 to 6.4 above will be disqualified.

7. AWARD-WINNING PORTFOLIOS

- are carefully planned and easily navigable, with specific sections well-demarcated to align the narrative with the appropriate appendices of evidence
- demonstrate, with evidence, exceptional and exemplary teaching capabilities, beyond the mandatory expectations of university professionals
- demonstrate philosophical and theoretical depth, providing evidence of the alignment between theory and practice
- demonstrate innovation and evidence of extending the borders of conventional knowledge and thinking
- transcend superficial reflection: i.e. they move beyond shallow allusions and descriptions to critical reflections
- use data/learning analytics to offer insights into student learning and achievement
- provide evidence of contribution to professional development and curriculum enhancement

HOW TO APPLY ONLINE

Steps to apply online:

- Navigate to the NUTA application form:
<https://sauniversityteachers.org.za/nuta-register/>
- Register to access the form
- Prepare your submission and save it online until you are ready to officially submit your application (before 30 May 2026).

If you have any technical questions or difficulty with the online submission platform (accessing or uploading documents on the website), please contact nuta.support@bromedia.co.za for assistance.

ADJUDICATION PANEL

For a list of adjudication panel members, refer to Addendum A.

THE AWARD

Up to five awards may be made, with awardees in the Experienced Teacher and Collaboration Team receiving a monetary prize of R60 000.00. The Beginner Teacher qualifies for an award of R30, 000. In addition to the monetary awards, the committee may recognise selected applicants with "Commendations". The award winners and those receiving commendations will receive their certificates at the NUTA Gala event on a date to be confirmed. The award winners will be expected to make short presentations on their work at the event. Winners' portfolios will be available on the NUTA website.