



**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
TEACHING AWARDS (NUTA)**

**PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES
2026**



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Processes and Procedures for the National University Teaching Awards

The Processes and Procedures for the National University Teaching Awards (NUTA) as outlined in this document, should be read in conjunction with the accompanying NUTA Framework.

1. Call for Applications

The NUTA call for applications will be made by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Chair of the National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) to Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors: Teaching and Learning of public higher education institutions. The call will also appear on the websites of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Council on Higher Education (CHE), Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA), South African University Teachers (SAUT), as well as on professional association websites.

A marketing and communication strategy will be developed to raise awareness of NUTA and provide relevant information on processes and outcomes.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Academics and teaching and learning specialists at all South African public higher education institutions are eligible for this award.

2.3. Applicants must be nominated by a senior executive of the institution. A senior executive is the VC, or a relevant DVC or designated senior executive. Submissions that are not endorsed/signed by senior executives will be disqualified.

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

3. Process

3.1. Each university may nominate up to four candidates through a process that is transparent and inclusive. Institutions are responsible for determining their internal nomination procedures and ensuring that the NUTA is widely publicised within the university community.

3.2. Each applicant is expected to submit a portfolio of evidence which meets specific NUTA criteria and relevant rubrics. [Refer to Addendum B of this document.] It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application and all attachments are loaded successfully onto the NUTA website. Applicants are encouraged to make use of a variety of curated resource materials.

3.3. Institutions may choose to offer advice and feedback from their own institutional teaching and learning centre peers, or to make use of the NUTA mentors in the workshop and mentoring programme. [Refer to the Workshops and Mentoring document on the SAUT website which may be accessed on: <https://sauniversityteachers.org.za/national-university-teaching-awards/>]

3.4. Applicants may apply for one of four categories, namely:

- (1) **beginner teachers** and teaching and learning specialists (in their first five years of teaching),
- (2) **experienced and mid-level teachers** (who have made contributions over a lifetime and shown leadership in discipline-specific teaching.
- (3) **teaching and Learning collaboration teams**, which have a sustained demonstrable history of collaboration on shared scholarly work.
- (4) **teaching and learning specialists**, who provide professional support, development, and leadership to enhance teaching excellence, student learning, and curriculum transformation.

Category (1): Beginner Teachers

Primary definition: Academics and teaching and learning specialists in their first five years of teaching at South African public higher education institutions.

Key characteristics:

Eligibility and scope:

- This category recognises early-career educators who are establishing their teaching practice and developing their pedagogical identity in higher education
- Both academics (lecturers, senior lecturers in teaching-focused or research-teaching roles) and teaching and learning specialists (based in centres for teaching and learning or academic development units) are eligible
- The five-year timeframe marks the boundary between "beginner" and "experienced" categories, recognising that the first five years represent a distinct developmental phase in building teaching expertise
- Both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching are recognised, as are hybrid roles involving classroom teaching and teaching development work
- The category is inclusive of educators across diverse institutional contexts: research-intensive universities, comprehensive universities, and universities of technology; urban and rural settings; well-resourced and under-resourced contexts

Characteristics of emerging teaching excellence:

- Demonstrated commitment to reflective practice and continuous improvement, showing evidence of learning from experience, peer feedback, student feedback, and engagement with scholarship of teaching and learning
- Thoughtful alignment between teaching philosophy, teaching methods, and the specific context in which teaching occurs (student profile, institutional setting, disciplinary requirements)
- Evidence of student-centred approaches that engage diverse learners, promote inclusive learning environments, and support students from varied backgrounds and levels of preparedness
- Innovative thinking and willingness to experiment with new teaching strategies, technologies, assessment methods, or curricular approaches, even at an early career stage
- Engagement with the broader teaching and learning community through participation in institutional teaching development programmes, teaching and learning conferences or workshops, or collaboration with colleagues on pedagogical matters
- Awareness of and responsiveness to contemporary higher education challenges including transformation, decolonisation, equity, diversity, technological change, and evolving student needs

Expected portfolio depth:

- Portfolios should demonstrate emerging pedagogical identity and developing teaching philosophy, showing evidence of thoughtful engagement with questions of what it means to teach well in the applicant's particular context
- Evidence should be drawn from the applicant's actual teaching practice over their career to date, acknowledging that the scope and scale of evidence will necessarily be more limited than that of experienced educators
- Portfolios should show engagement with educational theory and scholarship of teaching and learning appropriate to career stage - this might include references to teaching and learning literature, application of theoretical frameworks to practice, or systematic inquiry into one's own teaching
- Portfolios should include relevant evidence such as: teaching materials and resources developed; student feedback and testimonials; peer observations or evaluations; examples of innovative assessment or teaching strategies; documentation of professional development undertaken; evidence of engagement with teaching communities; reflections on teaching challenges and growth
- Portfolios should demonstrate trajectory of growth and development, showing how the applicant's teaching has evolved even within the relatively short timeframe of early career

Rationale:

The selection criteria for this category consider the inherent inequalities that characterise higher education institutions across the country, and this separate category allows for recognition of excellence among teachers who are still developing their practice, rather than comparing them directly with more established educators.

The category acknowledges that innovative, reflective teaching can be demonstrated early in one's career, while recognizing that the depth of evidence and scope of impact may differ from those with longer teaching histories.

The category also acknowledges that beginner teachers bring fresh perspectives, contemporary pedagogical knowledge from recent studies, and innovative approaches that can invigorate teaching practice, and that this contribution deserves recognition alongside the accumulated wisdom of more experienced colleagues.

Category (2): Experienced and Mid-level Teachers

Primary definition: Academics and teaching and learning specialists who have made contributions over a lifetime and shown leadership in discipline-specific teaching at South African public higher education institutions.

Key characteristics:

Experience threshold:

- Educators beyond their first five years of teaching, distinguishing them from the beginner category and recognizing that pedagogical expertise deepens substantially with sustained practice
- Sufficient career span to demonstrate sustained contributions and leadership - typically six or more years of teaching in higher education, though exceptional cases of accelerated development may be considered
- The category encompasses a wide range of career stages from mid-career educators establishing leadership to senior academics with extensive teaching histories, united by evidence of sustained excellence rather than years alone
- For academics: This includes lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors whose work demonstrates sustained commitment to teaching excellence alongside research or other scholarly activities
- For teaching and learning specialists: This includes educational developers, academic staff developers, curriculum specialists, and senior professionals in teaching and learning centres who have established track records of supporting teaching excellence

Scope of contributions:

- Lifetime contributions: Evidence of sustained, impactful teaching over an extended period, demonstrating consistency of excellence, continuous refinement of practice, and deepening pedagogical sophistication. This includes evolution of teaching approaches in response to changing student cohorts, institutional contexts, technological advances, and disciplinary developments
- Leadership in discipline-specific teaching: Demonstrated influence, innovation, and advancement within disciplinary or professional fields. For academics, this means contributions that advance how the discipline is taught, not merely excellence in teaching the discipline. For teaching and learning specialists, this means recognized expertise in supporting teaching within specific disciplinary contexts or across disciplines
- Recognition of both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, including supervision of postgraduate students, mentoring of junior academics, facilitation of professional development, and support for emerging teachers in the discipline or field
- Breadth and depth of impact: Contributions extend beyond individual classrooms or modules to influence programmes, departments, institutions, or the broader higher education sector. Impact may be evidenced through curriculum transformation, policy influence, mentorship of colleagues, scholarly contributions to teaching and learning discourse, or innovation that has been adopted by others.

Characteristics of sustained teaching excellence:

- Demonstrated evolution of teaching practice over time, showing capacity to learn from experience, respond to feedback, engage with scholarship of teaching and learning, and adapt to changing contexts while maintaining core pedagogical principles
- Evidence of pedagogical leadership through mentorship of colleagues (formal or informal), contributions to departmental or institutional teaching and learning initiatives, participation in curriculum review and development, or advocacy for teaching excellence within academic communities
- Sophisticated understanding of the relationship between discipline/field, pedagogy, and context - demonstrating how disciplinary ways of knowing and practicing inform teaching approaches while remaining responsive to student needs, institutional priorities, and societal imperatives
- Engagement with transformation imperatives including decolonisation of curriculum, promotion of epistemic justice, creation of inclusive learning environments, responsiveness to diverse student populations, and advancement of social justice through teaching practice
- Scholarly engagement with teaching and learning, evidenced through: systematic inquiry into own practice, engagement with educational theory and SoTL literature, dissemination of pedagogical innovations through publications or presentations, or contribution to institutional or sectoral knowledge about effective teaching

- Innovation and creativity in addressing persistent teaching and learning challenges, developing new pedagogical approaches, designing effective assessments, integrating technology meaningfully, or creating learning experiences that transform students' disciplinary understanding and capabilities

Expected portfolio depth:

- Portfolios should demonstrate reflection and growth "over time and in response to changing contexts or new understandings" - this requires evidence spanning multiple years, showing how teaching has evolved in response to: changing student demographics and needs; institutional restructuring or policy shifts; technological advances; disciplinary developments; insights from scholarship of teaching and learning; feedback from students, peers, and self-evaluation; societal changes.
- Evidence of impact "within the university and beyond" - portfolios should demonstrate influence at multiple levels: Programme/departmental level: curriculum transformation, programme quality enhancement, influence on colleagues' practice; Institutional level: contribution to teaching and learning policy, leadership in institutional initiatives, recognition through awards or appointments; National/international level: publications on teaching, conference presentations, external examining, contributions to disciplinary or professional teaching communities, recognition by peers beyond the institution
- Portfolios should be theoretically grounded, showing engagement with educational theory, learning theory, assessment theory, or discipline-specific pedagogical literature that informs and justifies teaching approaches. Portfolios should demonstrate sophisticated pedagogical reasoning - the ability to articulate not just what is done in teaching but why, grounded in understanding of students, context, discipline, and educational principles. This includes capacity to critically evaluate own practice, identify areas for improvement, and engage in ongoing professional development
- Evidence should be substantial and varied, including: comprehensive teaching materials demonstrating sophistication and evolution over time; longitudinal data on student performance, retention, or progression; multiple sources of feedback (student evaluations, peer observations, external evaluations, self-assessments); examples of innovations implemented and their documented impact; records of scholarly dissemination through publications, presentations, or workshops; testimonials from students, colleagues, or external reviewers; evidence of recognition through awards, invitations, or appointments

Rationale:

This category recognises educators who have established substantial track records of teaching excellence, demonstrated leadership within their disciplines or fields, and contributed meaningfully to the scholarship and practice of teaching and learning across their careers.

These are the educators who form the backbone of teaching excellence in South African higher education - individuals who have committed themselves to pedagogical development over many years, who have refined their practice through cycles of teaching, reflection, and improvement, and who have influenced not only their own students but also their colleagues, programmes, and institutions.

The category acknowledges that teaching excellence is not static but evolves through sustained engagement, deep reflection, and continuous learning. Experienced and mid-level teachers bring accumulated wisdom from navigating multiple student cohorts, institutional changes, and pedagogical challenges, while also bringing fresh thinking informed by ongoing engagement with scholarship of teaching and learning.

Category (3): Teaching and Learning Collaboration Teams

Primary definition: A TEAM submission refers to a collaborative application made by **two or more academics or teaching & learning specialists** who have worked together meaningfully in teaching and learning innovation.

Rationale: This category recognises that excellence in teaching and learning often emerges from collaborative practice, where educators work together synergistically to achieve innovations and improvements that transcend individual contributions. It validates collective pedagogical scholarship and shared commitment to transformative teaching.

Essential qualifying criteria:

1. Sustained collaboration:

- Worked together meaningfully over a period of time on common projects, initiatives and solutions - NOT ad hoc or incidental engagement

2. Shared goals:

- Common teaching or development objective focused on innovation, renewal, transformation, or delivery

3. Shared responsibility:

- Jointly contributed to the design, development, delivery, or renewal of a module, course, or programme

4. Collective innovation:

- Engaged in collaborative innovation and co-developing teaching resources, pedagogical strategies, and assessment frameworks

5. Portfolio clarity:

- The submission must explicitly map contributions to outcomes
- Must show how the team worked together
- Clearly articulated contributions of each member (e.g., curriculum design, assessment innovation, digital pedagogy, facilitation, evaluation)
- Indicate the duration of collaboration

6. Complementary roles and Collective impact:

- Clear articulation of each member's specific contributions in the portfolio
- Evidence that the collaboration produced outcomes **greater than the sum of individual efforts**

What a Team Submission is NOT:

The document explicitly excludes submissions that represent:

- **Parallel work** by individuals without genuine collaboration (e.g., each teaching separate modules without integration)
- **Short-term or incidental cooperation** (e.g., guest lecturing or occasional consultation)
- **Work of one individual** with others listed nominally or for administrative purposes
- **Lack of shared planning**, decision-making, and delivery
- **No collective impact** beyond what each member could have achieved independently

Submission requirements:

- Must include names, photographs, and abbreviated curriculum vitae of all participants
- Must clearly indicate the team leader/contact person with contact details
- Applicants should clearly indicate the role of each team member in the portfolio

Category (4): Teaching and Learning Specialists

Primary definition: Teaching and learning specialists at South African public higher education institutions who provide professional support, development, and leadership to enhance teaching excellence, student learning, and curriculum transformation across diverse disciplinary and institutional contexts.

Key characteristics:

Professional role and scope:

- Work within teaching and learning centres, academic development units, centres for innovation in learning and teaching, or equivalent institutional structures
- Primary focus on supporting academics to enhance their teaching practice, curriculum design, assessment strategies, and student learning outcomes
- May or may not have direct classroom teaching responsibilities, but work is fundamentally oriented toward improving teaching and learning across the institution
- Engage in work that transcends individual disciplinary boundaries while remaining responsive to disciplinary-specific pedagogical needs

Core functions and contributions:

- Professional development: Design and facilitate workshops, programmes, and interventions that build academics' capacity as teachers
- Curriculum and programme development: Provide expert consultation and support for curriculum renewal, programme design, and course development
- Educational technology and innovation: Support integration of technology-enhanced learning, digital pedagogies, and innovative teaching approaches
- Assessment design and quality assurance: Advise on assessment strategies, moderation practices, and alignment of assessment with learning outcomes
- Scholarship of teaching and learning: Conduct research, publish, and present on teaching and learning practices, contributing to the broader SoTL discourse
- Strategic leadership: Contribute to institutional policy development, quality enhancement initiatives, and strategic planning related to teaching and learning
- Recognition of both support for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, as well as development of early-career and experienced academics

Expected portfolio depth:

- Portfolios should demonstrate a coherent professional philosophy grounded in educational theory, evidence-based practice, and contextual understanding of South African higher education
- Evidence of sustained professional impact through testimonials, case studies, data driven evidence of changes in teaching practice, and improved student learning outcomes
- Evidence of impact "within the university and beyond" - this may include institutional influence, contributions to national teaching and learning initiatives, engagement with professional communities and disciplinary associations), publications, and recognition by peers
- Leadership may be demonstrated through: mentoring academics and fellow teaching and learning specialists, leading institutional teaching and learning initiatives,

contributing to policy development, scholarly publications and presentations, innovation in professional practice, and building communities of practice

Rationale:

This category recognises the critical and distinctive role that teaching and learning specialists play in advancing teaching excellence and student success across South African higher education. It recognises that teaching and learning specialists make unique contributions that differ from, but are equally valuable to those of classroom-based academics, and that their work is fundamental to building institutional capacity for teaching excellence, advancing transformation agendas, and ensuring that all students have access to high-quality learning experiences.

4. Award Structure

4.1 Adjudicators will apply criteria specifically calibrated for each category, expecting comprehensive evidence of sustained excellence and broader impact. The evaluation focuses on: depth and sophistication of pedagogical practice; evidence of sustained excellence over time; breadth and significance of impact; quality and extent of leadership; contribution to scholarship of teaching and learning; capacity for critical reflection and continuous improvement; responsiveness to context and transformation imperatives

4.2 All shortlisted applicants will be required to make a short presentation to the adjudication panel. The presentation may be in-person or online.

4.3 A maximum of TEN awards may be made annually in the four categories.

4.4 The committee may also recognise up to 10 selected applicants with commendations.

4.5 The due date for all applications is the end of May each year. Shortlisted candidates will be informed by the NUTA Secretariat by the end of July.

4.6 Awards will be made at the annual NUTA Gala event in November. Winners receive a monetary award of between R30,000 and R60,000. This amount is subject to annual review, based on available funding.

5. Adjudicators

Adjudicators serve as custodians of a fair and transparent process that acknowledges the historical and contextual differences across South Africa's public higher education institutions. While the awards themselves are not developmental in nature, the adjudicators play a developmental role by providing constructive feedback on submissions. This feedback is intended to encourage broader participation by universities and to strengthen future applications. In addition to selecting award

winners, adjudicators highlight areas requiring improvement and share these insights with the committee responsible for supporting and mentoring potential candidates.

5.1 Composition of adjudicating panel

The adjudication panel will consist of 12 members, of which four should be teaching and learning specialists. The Chairperson of the adjudication panel may co-opt additional members if necessary. The committee will have a convenor who will chair the meetings and a scribe who will note all decisions.

- Adjudicators will be selected based on representation and requisite expertise
- Workshops with adjudicators will be facilitated to clarify expectations and understandings on criteria and rubrics for portfolio evaluation.
- The Adjudication panel will be periodically refreshed to accommodate changing membership and required expertise

The panel will include members who are appointed on an annual basis and may serve for a maximum of five years. The chairperson of the adjudication panel and the NUTA Secretariat will periodically refresh the panel, ensuring that in selecting adjudicators, continuity of the committee's work is maintained, while ensuring depth of experience and expertise as well as representativity is maintained.

- two representatives from the Council on Higher Education (CHE).
- two representatives from the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA)
- five members identified by NUTA/USAF/DHET, who could serve as adjudicators or appointed observers
- one student representative selected by the national students' organisation, who will serve as an observer.
- representatives on the panel should include research-led universities, comprehensive universities, Universities of Technology, urban and rural universities.
- additional members, who may be co-opted to ensure that there are adequate specialist skills and representativity on the panel.

The Chair of the National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) will provide letters of appointment for adjudicators to serve on the adjudication panel.

5.2 Responsibilities of adjudicators:

5.2.1 In preparation of the awards, the adjudication panel will collaborate in designing and/or regularly updating criteria for assessing the awards. It will prepare the call for applications document after reflecting on previous awards processes with reference to the NUTA Framework. The panel will determine the dates for meetings and all related adjudication process.

5.2.2 Evaluation of submissions

5.2.2.1 First round of adjudication, adjudicators will:

- Peruse applications to determine whether applications/portfolios have been compiled and submitted according to the submission guidelines and criteria.
- Applications that do not meet the criteria are disqualified at this stage and do not progress to the next stage.

5.2.2.2 Second round of adjudication, adjudicators will:

- read and assess portfolios based on the published criteria to identify submissions that meet the NUTA published requirements; applications that do not meet the requirements are disqualified at this stage.
- attend meetings and share feedback with peers to evaluate, and ensure fairness of the process.
- identify and inform applicants who will go to the next round of the process. Applicants who are not shortlisted will also be informed.
- agree on the nature of activities in round three of the selection process.

5.2.2.3 Third round of adjudication, adjudicators will:

- thoroughly read and assess each portfolio assigned to respective adjudicators in preparation for interviews with candidates.
- develop and/or review interview questions and probes, relevant to the award category
- conduct face to face or online interviews with shortlisted candidates.
- confer with peers to identify award winners based on the published criteria and the candidate's presentation.

6. The Application

6.1 Cover page

All applications must be preceded by the cover page, (refer to Addendum A of this document.)

The cover page should be completed by the applicant and endorsed (signed) by the relevant DVC or designated senior institutional authority.

6.2 Personal information

The following personal information must be provided:

- A photograph and brief curriculum vitae of no more than 2 pages (CVs that exceed this limit will disqualify the applicant). The evidence-based curriculum vitae should emphasise the applicant's teaching and professional growth in higher education.
- A collaboration team application should include the names, photographs and abbreviated curriculum vitae of all participants. The application should clearly indicate the team leader/contact person and provide their contact details.

6.3 The portfolio comprises two parts

6.3.1. Reflective narrative

Applicants must submit a reflective narrative that provides substantiated, evidence based details of their teaching and learning practices, what they do and why they do it.

- **Scope of reflection:** The narrative must address the four criteria: reflection on students, reflection on context, reflection on knowledge, and reflection on growth.
- **Format:** The narrative may be presented in PDF or multimedia format.
- **Length and style:** The reflective narrative must not exceed 20 printed pages, formatted in Arial, font size 11, with 1.5 line spacing. The online submission platform has a strict limit of 10,000 words; any content beyond this threshold will not be accepted.
- **Evidence:** All claims must be substantiated with evidence. This may include curated exemplars integrated into the narrative or references/hyperlinks to appendices.

6.3.2 Appendices of evidence

In addition to the reflective narrative, applicants must provide appendices that substantiate the claims made.

- **Length and format:** Appendices should not exceed 10 pages and may include various electronic formats. Applicants may also submit up to two audio or video recordings, each no longer than three minutes.
- **Relevance:** Appendices must contain only examples directly linked to specific statements or claims in the reflective narrative.
- **Structure:** The portfolio should be carefully planned and easy to navigate, with clear demarcation of sections to align the narrative with the corresponding appendices.
- **Accessibility:** All appendices must be tested to ensure functionality and accessibility from off-campus locations

6.3.3. Note on Artificial Intelligence (AI) usage in portfolio preparation

Applicants making use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to support the preparation of their portfolios (e.g., for formatting, language refinement, or structuring content) are required to declare such usage, providing details of the tool used and for what purpose.

Candidates must ensure:

- **Originality:** The portfolio must remain the applicant's own work, reflecting their authentic teaching philosophy, practices, and evidence.
- **Transparency:** Any use of AI tools should be acknowledged briefly in the portfolio (e.g., "AI-assisted editing was used for formatting").
- **Integrity:** AI-generated content may not substitute for personal reflection, evidence of practice, or scholarly engagement.
- **Verification:** All claims and examples must be substantiated with verifiable evidence from the applicant's teaching and learning context.

Portfolios, suspected of AI abuse, will be subject to an AI similarity index check to ensure originality, authenticity, and academic integrity. This process verifies that the portfolio reflects the applicant's own work and prevents undue reliance on AI-generated content.

7. Structuring and compiling the narrative

7.1 Reflection on context

Guiding questions:

What is your teaching context and environment? What are the macro, meso and micro issues that you take into account in your teaching? How do your curriculum decisions and teaching approaches reflect the geographical, historical and social context of your classroom? In what ways does your context enable or constrain how you teach and assess? How do you integrate pertinent local and topical issues into your curriculum? What are the institutional, student body, professional, national and international contextual issues that affect your teaching and learning context? How does your curriculum address concerns affecting the planet? What changes have you made to the curriculum to ensure it addresses your context? How does your teaching promote a consciousness/awareness of the global context? How have you adapted teaching, learning and assessments to challenging contexts such as COVID-19 and student protests? How have multimodal/blended/flexible teaching methods influenced your practices?

7.2 Reflection on students

Guiding questions:

Who are your students? How does your teaching ensure that all students feel included and are engaged actively in their own learning? How do you get to know what your students bring with them to your classroom? How do you teach in ways that encourage students to participate in knowledge production processes? How do you address problems of student under-preparedness in your curriculum? How does your curriculum structure provide sufficient support for students? How do you develop your students' capacities and prepare them to be the critical citizens of the future? How do your curriculum and teaching strategies enrich students who have exceptional abilities? How have

you adapted teaching, learning and assessments to respond to challenging contexts such as COVID-19 and student protests. How have you pursued student-centred teaching during remote/blended/flexible learning?

7.3 Reflection on knowledge

Guiding questions:

What is your discipline / profession and what are its key features? What aspects of the course or programme do your students struggle with and how have you addressed this through your teaching approach? How do your teaching and assessment approaches ensure that the practices of the discipline and/or profession become accessible to all? In what ways does your teaching allow students to have access to the discipline? What do you do to make sure your students can contribute to knowledge production and not just to knowledge consumption? How do you ensure that you maintain disciplinary depth? How does being an active scholar affect your teaching? How do your contributions to your discipline improve your teaching? How do you draw on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning literature to remain current with teaching, learning and assessment theories to support student learning within your particular context?

7.4 Reflection on growth

Guiding questions:

What innovative approaches enhance your teaching? How has technology been used to improve the student experience and enable better understanding of core concepts? How do you use alternative teaching and learning techniques to improve student engagement? How do you critically evaluate your own teaching? How do you actively solicit peer evaluation and critique to enhance your teaching? How do you think you have developed as an excellent teacher over time? How have you contributed to curriculum development? How does your approach to assessment enhance learning? How has your scholarship contributed to institutional development (and beyond)?

8. Criteria

The selection criteria take into account the inherent inequalities that characterise higher education institutions across the country. As such, three categories of awards are instituted, namely, beginner teachers and/or teaching and learning specialists (in their first five years of teaching), experienced teachers and/or teaching and learning specialists (who have made contributions over a lifetime, shown leadership in discipline-specific teaching) and collaborative teams. Both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching will be recognised.

Applicants submit portfolios containing a reflective narrative and substantiating evidence and/or documentation. The portfolios will be evaluated using four criteria: reflection on students, reflection on context, reflection on knowledge and reflection on growth. A detailed rubric with criteria is provided in Addendum B.

Claims made in the reflective narrative should be substantiated by evidence. This could be in the form of examples in the reflective narrative itself or in the form of brief appendices. It is advisable that the portfolio submitted for the award spans several years of teaching and must include current evidence.

9. Evidence of Innovative Teaching

Evidence of innovative teaching may include, but is not limited to:

- Teaching context:

Information about the applicant's role and environment (e.g., position in the institution, full-time/part-time status, discipline taught, class size, teaching context such as main or satellite campus, areas of key challenge, and broader social context).

- Peer feedback:

Formal or informal evaluations from colleagues that highlight teaching effectiveness and innovation.

- Student feedback:

Evidence of student experiences of teaching quality, engagement, and inclusivity.

- Retention and success data:

Student progression rates and success indicators that demonstrate the impact of teaching practices.

- Student engagement beyond the classroom:

Records of student involvement in co-curricular or community-based learning activities.

- Teaching artefacts:

Examples such as extracts from study guides, multimedia resources, online materials, innovative assessments, or photographs that illustrate teaching practice.

- Conference engagement:
- Papers or presentations delivered at local, national, or international conferences on teaching and learning.

- Evidence of keynote addresses, invited talks, or panel participation that highlight recognition of expertise.
- Documentation of conference proceedings or peer-reviewed abstracts.
- Scholarly publications:
 - Articles, book chapters, or reports on teaching and learning, preferably peer-reviewed.
 - Online publications, blogs, or multimedia outputs that demonstrate thought leadership in pedagogy.
 - Citations, links, or abstracts that verify dissemination and accessibility of the work.
- Professional association contributions:
 - Active membership in professional associations, with evidence of significant contributions such as conference organisation, paper reviewing, or leadership roles in Special Interest Groups (SIGs).
 - Participation in executive committees or working groups that shape teaching and learning agendas nationally or internationally.
- Academic quality promotion:
 - Records of moderation of exams, dissertations, or theses, demonstrating commitment to academic standards.
 - Evidence of external examining or peer-review activities that contribute to quality assurance across institutions.
- Institutional and national service:
 - Membership of university committees, task teams, or national/international boards, with clear evidence of contributions to policy, curriculum reform, or institutional development.
 - Documentation of leadership roles in initiatives that advance teaching and learning.
- Professional development:
 - Lists of formal and non-formal continuing professional development activities undertaken, including workshops, courses, or certifications.
 - Evidence of how these activities have informed and enhanced teaching practice.
- Mentorship and supervision:
 - Records of students or staff mentored or supervised, highlighting outcomes such as improved teaching practice, successful postgraduate completions, or career progression.
 - Testimonials or feedback that demonstrate the impact of mentorship.
- Recognition and awards:
 - Details of awards or commendations received for teaching excellence, innovation, or leadership.
 - Evidence of institutional, national, or international recognition.
- Societal contributions:
 - Initiatives that address social issues through teaching and learning, such as community engagement projects, service-learning programmes, or curriculum innovations that promote social justice.

- Evidence of impact on broader societal challenges (e.g., sustainability, equity, inclusion).

10. Guidance for applicants

- Evidence should be authentic, verifiable, and relevant to the claims made in the reflective narrative.
- Applicants should contextualise each piece of evidence, explaining its significance and impact rather than simply listing achievements.
- Where possible, evidence should demonstrate sustained contributions over time and highlight influence at institutional, national, or international levels.
- Multimedia or digital artefacts (e.g., recordings, online resources) may be included to illustrate innovative practices.

In addition to the information provided above, refer to the attached rubric in Addendum B for detailed information on the criteria to be used for adjudication.

11. Portfolio attributes

11.1 Portfolio that portrays innovation (NUTA Framework)

An innovative portfolio demonstrates excellence and forward-thinking practice. It should:

- Contextual reflection: Reflect comprehensively on multiple aspects of context, including students, the institution, and the discipline/programme.
- Teaching philosophy: Clearly describe teaching practices and articulate the applicant's teaching philosophy.
- Theoretical foundations: Demonstrate that teaching is underpinned by sound theoretical insights and engagement with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).
- Alignment of methods: Show that teaching methods are contextually nuanced and aligned with the stated philosophy.
- Evidence: Provide robust and diverse evidence to substantiate claims.
- Growth and improvement: Demonstrate continuous improvement and reflection on growth over time, in response to changing contexts or new understandings.
- Impact: Illustrate positive influence at institutional, national, or international levels.
- Exemplary practice: Serve as a model of student-centred, innovative, and holistic teaching practice that inspires others.

11.2. Noteworthy Portfolio

A noteworthy portfolio demonstrates strong teaching practice and emerging innovation. It should:

- Contextual reflection: Show meaningful reflection on students, the institution, and the discipline/programme.
- Teaching philosophy: Clearly describe teaching practices and explain the rationale behind the applicant's chosen approach.
- Theory: Teaching is grounded in theoretical insights and SoTL
- Alignment of methods: Demonstrate that teaching methods are adapted to the specific context and aligned with the stated philosophy.
- Evidence: Provide credible and relevant evidence to substantiate claims made in the portfolio.
- Growth and improvement: Reflect on ongoing development, showing how the applicant seeks to improve and has grown over time.
- Impact: Illustrate positive influence on teaching and learning in higher education beyond the immediate classroom.
- Innovation: Highlight innovative practices that promote better teaching, encourage improved practice, and inspire colleagues.

11.3. Developing Portfolio

A developing portfolio demonstrates emerging practice and the early stages of scholarly reflection. It should demonstrate:

- **Contextual reflection:** Begin to show engagement with aspects of context, including students, the institution, and the discipline/programme.
- **Teaching philosophy:** Describe teaching practices and provide a rationale for the applicant's chosen approach, even if alignment between philosophy and methods is still evolving.
- **Teaching methods:** Demonstrate adaptation of teaching methods to context, though alignment with the stated philosophy may be partial or inconsistent.
- **Evidence:** Provide some supporting evidence for claims, while acknowledging that certain claims remain unsubstantiated or underdeveloped.
- **Growth and improvement:** Indicate a commitment to improvement, with evidence that the applicant or team is actively seeking ways to enhance teaching practice.
- **Impact:** Show positive influence on teaching, even if the scope of impact is limited or primarily within the immediate classroom.
- **Scholarly development:** Reflect the beginnings of scholarly engagement with innovative teaching, signalling potential for deeper reflection and broader impact over time.

Note:

1. The evaluation rubric for this category is provided in Addendum B.

2. All portfolio submissions **can only be submitted online** and no emailed submissions will be accepted. Portfolios must be uploaded by the end of May each year. Incomplete applications will be not be considered.

12. The Award

The award ceremony will be held in person during the annual gala dinner, at a venue to be confirmed. Awards will be presented to both individuals and teams in recognition of their achievements.

12.1 Video presentation requirement

Award winners are required to prepare and submit a 2-minute edited video presentation showcasing their teaching and learning achievements. This video will be featured during the awards ceremony. The final version must be submitted to the NUTA Secretariat no later than 15 October 2026.

12.2 Publication of winners' portfolios

Winners' portfolios will be made publicly available on the official NUTA website to showcase exemplary teaching and learning practices. Applicants who do not wish their portfolios to be published must formally decline in writing at the time of acceptance of the award.

13. Mentoring

A mentorship system will be in place to support universities as required. This process will include:

- Selecting mentors at universities – mentors should be teaching and learning specialists and/or Teaching Advancement at Universities (TAU) fellows;
- Developing a mentorship programme for specific mentor roles as identified, for example, mentors for institutional representatives who will act as mentors, and mentors to support NUTA applicants;
- Facilitating regional, online workshops to develop regional mentorship hubs, or workshops for all regions with university mentors;
- Clarifying understandings of criteria and rubrics for portfolio evaluation for mentors to appropriately assist applicants; and
- Developing support contacts for mentors who might need assistance.

14. Timelines

The dates for each year will be confirmed in that respective year. The specific proposed dates for 2025 will be confirmed on the NUTA and other websites.

Activity	Proposed Date
Call for applications	February 2026
Portfolio Submission Date	End of May 2026
Time period for evaluations to be completed.	June to September 2026
Final date for evaluation discussions	End of September 2026
Date of finalisation of awardees and commendations	End of September 2026
Awards Ceremony	November 20 2026

15. Contact details

For queries on NUTA applications:

info@sauniversityteachers.org.za

For technical support:

Bro Media: nuta.support@bromedia.co.za

Addendum A: Cover Page for Applications

National University Teaching Awards

2026

This cover page must precede all applications and must be endorsed and signed by the relevant DVC or designated senior authority

Category of Submission

Select the appropriate category for this application:

Beginner teachers (applicants are in their first five years of teaching)	
Experienced teachers (who have made contributions over a lifetime/shown leadership in discipline-specific teaching)	
Teaching & Learning Specialists	
Teaching and Learning Collaboration Teams	

Applicant Information

Name and Surname: (individual and team submissions)	
University:	
Faculty/Department/Centre:	

Postal address:	
Email:	
Telephone number:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Nominator's Information: DVC or designated senior representative of university executive

Name and Surname:	
Position:	
Email address:	
I, the undersigned do hereby declare that the abovementioned applicant is the official university nominee.	
Signature:	
Date:	

Addendum B: Criteria for Portfolio Evaluation

Portfolios that demonstrate exceptional performance and innovation will be considered for an award.

CATEGORY 1: THE BEGINNER TEACHER

Criterion	Portfolio portrays innovation	Portfolio is noteworthy	Portfolio is developmental
Reflection on the teaching context	Presents an in-depth understanding of the geographical, historical and social contexts of place and space and explains how and why this impacts teaching; presents a critical reflection of how institutional, national, and international factors affect the teaching context.	Some knowledge of geographical, historical, and social contexts of place and space are presented and some reference is made to how this impacts teaching. Attempts to understand how institutional, national, and international factors affect the teaching context; contextual factors are noted but not extended to show critical reflection on context.	Limited knowledge of selected external contexts regarding place and space are presented in terms of how this impacts teaching; institutional and national factors are identified but not explained with reference to the teaching context. Contextual factors have not been fully noted.
Co-curricular factors that impact teaching contexts	Presents evidence of being knowledgeable of national and international co-curricular factors of social and global concern. Clear evidence of adaptation to relational aspects of curriculum (content,	Alludes to national and international co-curricular factors and adapts some aspects of curriculum to changing contexts in higher education and/or the	Limited reference is made to national and international co-curricular factors with limited curriculum adaptation to changing contexts.

	teaching approach, interactive activities, assessments) to changing contexts that affect higher education and/or the field of study and society.	field of study and society.	Limited or no reference to seminal changes in higher education and how these relate to changing teaching contexts.
Teaching philosophy	Teaching philosophy presents alignment between personal teaching values, teaching context, student profile, and student needs; provides detailed explanation(s) of why specific teaching approaches are used in relation to the subject(s) and field of study. Clear evidence of a reflective and scholarly approach to teaching based on theory, practice, and research.	Teaching philosophy presents personal teaching values with commentary on the teaching context and/or student profile. Teaching approaches are noted in relation to the subject(s) and field of study with some justification for selected teaching approaches. Evidence that a scholarly approach supports teaching practice is noted.	Teaching philosophy alludes to teaching values with limited reference to teaching context. Teaching approaches are noted with limited justification for selected approaches used. Limited evidence of a reflective and scholarly approach to teaching.
Engaged teaching for interactive learning	Teaching includes varied learning styles based on theoretical principles; interactive learning activities are designed to encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. Innovative learning environment using LMS, e-applications, media, texts, ICTs for teaching, learning and assessment is evident; learning environment is relevant to the subject and	Teaching includes some learning styles for variation; some interactive learning activities draw on critical thinking and problem-solving with limited substantiation; some examples of ICT and teaching with technology relate to the subject; understanding of how ICT can support	Teaching includes some learning styles for variation; interactive learning activities are limited and not substantiated; teaching with ICT is alluded to but not expounded on in relation to student learning; some reference to using ICT and technology

	conducive to effective student learning.	student learning is noted.	for a learning-centred environment.
Support for underprepared and exceptional students	Evidence of innovative strategies to identify underperforming students and effective interventions for students needing additional support (by applicant or tutorials); interventions are effective in improving student learning; evidence of reflection on the intervention is provided. Evidence of effective strategies to support exceptional students to achieve their full potential.	Strategies to identify underperforming students are detailed with concomitant support strategies in place; evidence of interventions made to improve student learning and/or reflection on intervention is included. Evidence of strategies to support exceptional students.	Strategies to identify underperforming students are noted; support strategies are in place; limited information on impact of selected strategies. Limited evidence of reflection on selection and implementation of support strategies for underprepared and exceptional students.
Teaching materials	Teaching materials and interactive activities are exceptional and varied according to media types and learning styles, designed well, engaging, and appropriate for the subject(s) and the particular higher education level.	Teaching materials and interactive activities are evident; there is evidence of student engagement for learning. Learning materials are mostly appropriate for the subject(s) and the particular higher education level.	Some teaching materials and interactive activities are designed; some are engaging and appropriate for the subject(s) and the particular higher education level. Limited substantiation of selection and application.

<p>Innovative teaching for remote/hybrid learning</p>	<p>Evidence of understanding the innovative use of technology for effective teaching; students without appropriate learning devices are acknowledged and alternate/supportive materials are developed; technology promotes interactive engagement with subject content.</p>	<p>Some evidence of understanding the use of technology for effective teaching with elements of student engagement in place; students without appropriate devices are noted and attempts are made to support them; technology promotes engagement with the subject content.</p>	<p>Use of technology for effective teaching is alluded to with limited evidence of student engagement; students without appropriate devices are noted, reference to providing support is limited; technology supports student learning in some instances.</p>
<p>Reflection on knowledge</p>	<p>Ample evidence of being a specialist in the discipline/field of study; teaching approaches encourage students to have positive interactive disciplinary learning experiences. Challenging concepts/constructs/areas of learning are identified with appropriate curriculum amendments for effective student learning.</p>	<p>Some evidence of being knowledgeable in the discipline/field of study; awareness that teaching approaches encourage interactive disciplinary learning experiences. Challenging concepts/constructs identified and attempts to address these are in place; student support provided to clarify difficult areas of subject content.</p>	<p>Specialist knowledge in the discipline/field of study is noted with limited reference to how this impacts students' positivity about the subject; certain subject areas identified as challenging with some reference to support provided.</p>

<p>Teaching to improve the discipline</p>	<p>Teaching approaches engage students effectively to contribute to knowledge production; clear evidence of scholarship within the discipline to maintain depth of knowledge; evidence of how disciplinary scholarship positively impacts teaching practices.</p>	<p>Teaching approaches promote student thinking and contributions to knowledge production; some evidence of scholarship within the discipline; some evidence that disciplinary scholarship impacts teaching practices.</p>	<p>Teaching approaches support knowledge production with limited explanations of how this impacts student development in the discipline; some evidence of scholarship within the discipline; minimal supporting evidence on how scholarship impacts teaching practices.</p>
<p>Reflection on professional growth and development</p>	<p>Detailed evidence of reflection in, on, and about learning and on development as a university teacher; innovative learning and teaching practices are described and justified with reference to practice, theory, research, student evaluation, and peer evaluation; these practices are the norm and are used to support the improvement of teaching; curriculum renewal is ongoing for the subject and the programme of study.</p>	<p>Some evidence of reflection in, on, and about learning and on development as a university teacher; innovative learning and teaching practices are described and justified with some reference to theory and research; student and peer evaluation are sometimes used to reflect on the improvement of teaching; curriculum renewal occurs as required by the department/institution.</p>	<p>Limited evidence of reflection in, on, and about learning and/or on development as a university teacher; innovative learning and teaching practices are described without specific reference to practice, theory, and research; student and peer evaluation are conducted as required but do not necessarily inform teaching improvements.</p>

CATEGORY 2: THE EXPERIENCED TEACHER

Criterion	Portfolio portrays innovation	Portfolio is noteworthy	Portfolio is developmental
Reflection on the teaching context	Presents an in-depth understanding of the geographical, historical and social contexts of place and space and explains how and why this impacts teaching; presents a critical reflection of how institutional, national, and international factors affect the teaching context.	Reflection on geographical, historical and social contexts of place and space are presented and reference is made to how this impacts teaching; shows cognisance of how institutional, national, and international factors affect the teaching context, i.e. contextual factors are noted but have not been extended to show critical reflection on context.	Reflection on selected external contexts regarding space and place are presented in terms of how this impacts teaching; institutional and national factors are identified but not explained with reference to the teaching context. Contextual factors have not been fully noted.
Co-curricular factors that impact teaching contexts	Presents evidence of being knowledgeable of national and international co-curricular factors of social and global concern. Clear evidence of adaptation to relational aspects of curriculum (content, teaching approach, interactive activities, assessment) to changing contexts that affect higher education and/or the field of study and society.	Alludes to national and international co-curricular factors and adapts some aspects of curriculum to changing contexts in higher education and/or the field of study and society.	Limited reference is made to national and international co-curricular factors with limited curriculum adaptation to changing contexts. Limited or no reference to seminal changes in higher education and how these relate to changing teaching contexts.

<p>Teaching philosophy</p>	<p>Teaching philosophy shows alignment between personal teaching values, teaching context, student profile, and student needs; provides detailed explanation(s) of why specific teaching approaches are used in relation to the subject(s) and field of study. Clear evidence of a reflective and scholarly approach to teaching based on theory, practice, and research.</p>	<p>Teaching philosophy presents personal teaching values with commentary on the teaching context and/or student profile. Teaching approaches are noted in relation to the subject(s) and field of study with some justification for selected teaching approaches. Some evidence that a scholarly approach supports teaching practice.</p>	<p>Teaching philosophy alludes to teaching values with limited reference to teaching context. Teaching approaches are noted with limited justification for selected approaches used. Limited evidence of a reflective and scholarly approach to teaching.</p>
<p>Engaged teaching for interactive learning</p>	<p>Teaching includes varied learning styles based on theoretical principles; interactive learning activities are designed to encourage critical thinking and problem-solving; varied innovative learning environment is created using LMS, e-applications, media, texts, ICTs for teaching, learning and assessment; learning environment is relevant to the subject and conducive to effective student learning.</p>	<p>Teaching includes some learning styles for variation; some interactive learning activities draw on critical thinking and problem-solving with limited substantiation; some examples of ICT and teaching with technology relate to the subject; ICT and teaching with technology supports student learning in some instances.</p>	<p>Teaching includes some learning styles for variation; interactive learning activities are noted but not substantiated; teaching with ICT is alluded to but not expounded on in relation to student learning. Learning-centred environment is created using limited LMS, e-applications, media, and texts.</p>

<p>Support for underprepared and exceptional students</p>	<p>Evidence of innovative strategies to identify underperforming students and effective interventions for students needing additional support (by applicant or tutorials); interventions are effective in improving student learning; evidence of reflection on intervention is provided. Evidence of effective strategies to support exceptional students to achieve their full potential.</p>	<p>Strategies to identify underperforming students are detailed with concomitant support strategies in place; evidence that interventions are made to improve student learning and/or reflection on intervention is included. Evidence of strategies to support exceptional students.</p>	<p>Strategies to identify underperforming students are noted; support strategies are in place; limited information on impact of selected strategies. Limited evidence of reflection on selection and implementation of support strategies for underprepared and exceptional students.</p>
<p>Teaching materials</p>	<p>Teaching materials and interactive activities are exceptional and varied according to media types and learning styles, designed well, engaging, and appropriate for the subject(s) and the particular higher education level.</p>	<p>Teaching materials and interactive activities are evident; there is evidence of student engagement for learning. Learning materials are mostly appropriate for the subject(s) and the particular higher education level.</p>	<p>Some teaching materials and interactive activities are designed; some are engaging and appropriate for the subject(s) and the particular higher education level. Limited substantiation of selection and application.</p>

<p>Innovative teaching for remote/hybrid learning</p>	<p>Evidence of innovative use of technology for effective teaching; students without appropriate learning devices are acknowledged and alternate/supportive materials are developed; technology promotes interactive engagement with subject content.</p>	<p>Some evidence of use of technology with elements of student engagement in place; students without appropriate devices are noted and attempts are made to support them; technology promotes interactive engagement with the subject content.</p>	<p>Some reference to use of technology; student engagement with technological modalities are noted but not justified; students without appropriate devices are acknowledged but reference to providing support is limited; technology in hybrid learning supports student learning in some instances.</p>
<p>Reflection on knowledge</p>	<p>Ample evidence of being a specialist in the discipline/field of study; teaching approaches encourage students to have positive interactive disciplinary learning experiences. Challenging concepts/constructs/areas of learning are identified with appropriate curriculum amendments for effective student learning.</p>	<p>Some evidence of being knowledgeable in the discipline/field of study; awareness that teaching approaches encourage interactive disciplinary learning experiences. Challenging concepts/constructs are identified and attempts to address these are in place; student support is provided to clarify difficult areas of subject content.</p>	<p>Specialist knowledge in the discipline/field of study is noted with limited reference to how this impacts students' positivity about the subject; certain subject areas identified as challenging with some reference to support provided.</p>

<p>Teaching to improve the discipline</p>	<p>Teaching approaches engage students effectively to contribute to knowledge production; clear evidence of scholarship within the discipline to maintain depth of knowledge; evidence of how disciplinary scholarship positively impacts teaching practices.</p>	<p>Teaching approaches promote student thinking and contributions to knowledge production; some evidence of scholarship within the discipline; some evidence that disciplinary scholarship impacts teaching practices.</p>	<p>Teaching approaches support knowledge production with limited explanations of how this impacts student development in the discipline; some evidence of scholarship within the discipline; minimal supporting evidence on how scholarship impacts teaching practices.</p>
<p>Reflection on professional growth and development</p>	<p>Detailed evidence of scholarly reflection in, on, and about learning and on development as a university teacher; innovative learning and teaching practices are described and justified with reference to practice, theory, and research; student and peer evaluation are the norm and are used to support the improvement of teaching; curriculum renewal is ongoing for the subject and the programme of study.</p>	<p>Some evidence of scholarly reflection in, on, and about learning and on development as a university teacher; innovative learning and teaching practices are described and justified with limited reference to theory and research; student and peer evaluation are sometimes used to reflect on improvement of teaching; curriculum renewal occurs as required by the department/institution.</p>	<p>Limited evidence of scholarly reflection in, on, and about learning and/or on development as a university teacher; innovative learning and teaching practices are described without specific reference to practice, theory and research; student and peer evaluation are used as required but do not necessarily inform teaching improvements.</p>

CATEGORY 3: TEACHING & LEARNING COLLABORATION TEAMS

Note: This rubric evaluates collaborative teaching and learning teams based on their **collective work, shared responsibility, synergistic innovation, and sustained collaboration**. Evidence must demonstrate how the team works together to achieve outcomes that transcend individual contributions.

Criterion	Portfolio portrays innovation	Portfolio is noteworthy	Portfolio is developmental
Reflection on the collaborative teaching context	Presents comprehensive understanding of how geographical, historical, and social contexts shape the team's collaborative work; explains how institutional, national, and international factors influenced their collective approach. Demonstrates critical reflection on how the team navigated contextual challenges together and adapted their collaborative strategies accordingly. Clear evidence of shared understanding of context among all team members.	Shows awareness of geographical, historical, and social contexts and their impact on collaborative teaching; references how institutional and national factors affected the team's work. Some evidence of collective reflection on context, though connections between context and collaborative strategies may not be fully developed across all team members.	Limited reflection on how external contexts specifically affected the collaborative work; identifies some institutional factors but does not explain how the team collectively responded. Contextual factors noted but not comprehensively addressed in relation to the team's collaborative practice.
Co-curricular factors that impact collaborative teaching contexts	Team demonstrates sophisticated knowledge of national and international co-curricular factors of social and global concern. Clear evidence is presented demonstrating that the team collectively adapted curriculum (content, teaching	Team alludes to national and international co-curricular factors and shows some collective adaptation of curriculum to changing contexts. Evidence of team	Limited collective reference to co-curricular factors; minimal evidence of team-based curriculum adaptation. Little indication of how

	<p>approaches, interactive activities, assessments) to changing contexts affecting higher education, their field, and society. Collaborative innovations address contemporary challenges in coordinated, mutually reinforcing ways.</p>	<p>discussion and shared decision-making regarding curricular adaptations, though implementation may be uneven across team members.</p>	<p>the team worked together to address changing contexts in higher education.</p>
<p>Collaborative teaching philosophy and shared vision</p>	<p>The team articulates a coherent, shared teaching philosophy that aligns personal teaching values with collaborative practice, teaching context, student profile, and student needs. Provides detailed explanations of why specific collaborative approaches were chosen in relation to subject(s) and field of study. Clear evidence of reflective, scholarly approach to collaborative teaching based on theory, practice, and research. Team members demonstrate complementarity and synergy in their roles.</p>	<p>The team presents a teaching philosophy with some evidence of shared values and commentary on teaching context and student profile. Collaborative approaches are noted with some justification. Some evidence that scholarly principles inform the team's practice, though integration across team members varies.</p>	<p>Limited articulation of shared teaching philosophy; individual values mentioned with minimal connection to collaborative practice. Teaching approaches noted with limited justification for collaborative strategies. Little evidence of a collective scholarly approach to teaching.</p>

<p>Collaborative engaged teaching for interactive learning</p>	<p>Team's collaborative teaching includes varied, complementary learning styles based on theoretical principles; interactive learning activities are co-designed to encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. Evidence of innovative, coordinated use of LMS, e-applications, media, texts, ICTs for teaching, learning and assessment is presented. The collaborative learning environment is relevant, coherent across team members, and conducive to effective student learning. Clear synergy in how team members support each other's teaching.</p>	<p>Team shows some coordination in teaching styles and interactive activities; some collective use of technology and teaching resources. Evidence of attempted collaboration in creating learning environments, though integration may be incomplete. Some instances where team members support student learning collectively.</p>	<p>Some variation in teaching styles noted but limited evidence of coordination; interactive learning activities not clearly collaborative. Limited collective use of ICT. Minimal evidence of how team members work together to create a coherent learning environment.</p>
<p>Collective support strategies for diverse student needs</p>	<p>Team provides evidence of coordinated, innovative strategies to identify and support underperforming students through collective interventions. Clear division of labour and mutual reinforcement in support approaches. Evidence that team interventions are more effective than individual efforts would be. Demonstrates collective strategies to support exceptional students to achieve full potential through</p>	<p>Team has identified strategies to support underperforming students with some evidence of coordination in implementation. Some collective reflection on interventions. Evidence of team discussions about supporting exceptional students, with some</p>	<p>Strategies to support students are noted but with limited evidence of team coordination. Support approaches appear more individual than collaborative. Limited information on collective impact of support strategies.</p>

	complementary team expertise.	coordinated approaches in place.	
Collaborative development of teaching materials	Team has co-developed exceptional, coherent teaching materials and interactive activities that are varied, well-designed, engaging, and appropriate for subject(s) and higher education level. Clear evidence of collaborative design process, with each member contributing distinct expertise. Materials demonstrate integration and consistency across the team's shared curriculum. Innovation emerges from the collaboration itself.	Team has developed teaching materials and interactive activities with some evidence of collaboration in design. Materials show some coherence across team members. Evidence of collective input, though integration may be incomplete.	Some teaching materials and activities developed but limited evidence of truly collaborative design. Materials appear more individually created than collectively developed. Limited substantiation of collaborative development process.
Innovative collaborative teaching for hybrid/remote learning	Team demonstrates coordinated, innovative use of technology for effective collaborative teaching. Evidence of complementary technological approaches where team members' strengths reinforce each other. Collective strategies to support students without appropriate devices, with alternate materials developed collaboratively. Technology use promotes interactive engagement through team-designed approaches that leverage collective expertise.	Team shows some coordinated use of technology with elements of collective engagement. Some evidence of team discussion about supporting students without devices. Technology use shows some coordination across team members.	Technology use noted but limited evidence of team coordination. Student engagement with technology mentioned but not clearly collaborative. Limited reference to collective approaches for supporting students without devices.

<p>Collective reflection on disciplinary knowledge and pedagogy</p>	<p>Team provides ample evidence of collective disciplinary/field expertise that is greater than sum of individual knowledge. Collaborative teaching approaches encourage students to have positive, integrated disciplinary learning experiences. Challenging concepts addressed through coordinated curriculum amendments where team members' complementary expertise enhances student learning. Clear evidence that the collaboration deepens disciplinary teaching.</p>	<p>Team demonstrates disciplinary knowledge with some evidence of how collaborative approaches support integrated learning experiences. Some collective identification and response to challenging concepts. Evidence of team discussions about disciplinary pedagogy.</p>	<p>Disciplinary knowledge noted but limited evidence of how collaboration enhances students' disciplinary experience. Challenging areas identified with minimal collective response strategies.</p>
<p>Collaborative teaching to advance the discipline</p>	<p>Team's collaborative approaches engage students effectively in collective knowledge production. Clear evidence of team scholarship that maintains disciplinary depth and demonstrates how collaboration advances the field. Compelling evidence of how collective disciplinary scholarship positively impacts the team's teaching practices in ways that transcend individual contributions. Team produces scholarly outputs on their collaborative teaching.</p>	<p>Team approaches promote student contributions to knowledge production with some coordination. Some evidence of collective scholarship and how it informs collaborative teaching practices. Evidence of team reflection on disciplinary scholarship's role in their teaching.</p>	<p>Teaching approaches support knowledge production but with limited explanation of collaborative dimension. Some evidence of scholarship with minimal substantiation of how it collectively impacts teaching practices.</p>

<p>Reflection on collective professional growth and collaborative development</p>	<p>Detailed evidence of scholarly collective reflection on learning and development as a collaborative teaching team. Innovative collaborative practices are described and justified with reference to theory, research, and collective evaluation (student feedback, peer review of the team). Evidence that the team uses evaluation to improve their collaborative practice. Curriculum renewal is ongoing and driven by the team's collective insights. Clear evidence that collaboration itself drives professional growth for all members. Team produces scholarship on their collaborative practice.</p>	<p>Some evidence of collective reflection on team learning and development. Collaborative practices described with some reference to theory and research. Some use of student and peer evaluation to reflect on improving team practice. Evidence of curriculum renewal as required, with team input.</p>	<p>Limited evidence of collective reflection on team development. Collaborative practices described without specific reference to theory or research. Evaluation conducted but does not clearly inform team improvement. Minimal evidence that the collaboration drives professional growth.</p>
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The evaluation recognises that collaboration teams may include members at different career stages, and adjudicators will assess the collective contribution while being cognisant of the composition and context of each team.

CATEGORY 4: TEACHING & LEARNING SPECIALISTS

Criterion	Portfolio portrays innovation	Portfolio is noteworthy	Portfolio is developmental
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<p>Co-curricular and systemic factors</p>	<p>Presents comprehensive evidence of engagement with national and international teaching and learning discourse, trends, and innovations. Demonstrates sophisticated theoretically grounded and contextually responsive understanding of how artificial intelligence, learning analytics, and emerging technologies impact teaching and learning. Provides clear evidence of how professional interventions address systemic issues in higher education (access, success, retention, curriculum transformation).</p>	<p>Demonstrates awareness of national and international teaching and learning trends. Shows engagement with contemporary issues (technology, decolonization, access). Provides evidence of professional interventions that address institutional teaching and learning challenges. Demonstrates some adaptation of practice to sectoral changes. Interventions show engagement with relevant theory and evidence. Shows some awareness of the impact of these factors on student learning.</p>	<p>Shows limited awareness of teaching and learning trends. Makes limited reference to contemporary issues. Provides some evidence of professional interventions with limited connection to systemic issues. Limited evidence of adaptation to sectoral changes. Interventions are described but with limited theoretical grounding.</p>
<p>Professional Philosophy and Approach</p>	<p>Articulates a clear, coherent professional philosophy that demonstrates alignment between values, theoretical foundations, contextual understanding, and professional practice. Philosophy is explicitly connected to educational theory, SoTL literature, and evidence-based practice. Demonstrates sophisticated</p>	<p>The philosophy presents personal values with commentary on the institutional context and/or staff/student profile. Development approaches are noted with some justification. Some evidence that a scholarly approach</p>	<p>Describes professional values and approach. Makes limited connections between philosophy and practice. Shows emerging understanding of academic development principles. Provides</p>

	<p>understanding of how adults learn and how academics develop as teachers. Professional approach is grounded in principles of social justice, inclusion, criticality, and transformation.</p>	<p>supports practice and personal growth.</p>	<p>limited theoretical grounding for professional approach. Rationale for interventions is present but with limited depth. Limited evidence of critical reflection on professional practice.</p>
<p>Engaged support for learning and teaching</p>	<p>Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the diverse needs, contexts, and developmental stages of academics supported. Provides compelling evidence of how interventions are differentiated for early-career vs. experienced academics, for different disciplines, for different institutional contexts. Shows innovative strategies for needs assessment, consultation, and co-design of interventions. Demonstrates how professional work is grounded in understanding of student learning needs and promotes student-centred, inclusive pedagogies. Provides robust evidence of impact on academics' teaching capacity (testimonials, case studies, before-after comparisons, adoption of new practices).</p>	<p>Demonstrates good understanding of academics' professional development needs. Provides evidence of interventions adapted for different contexts or career stages. Describes strategies for understanding academics' needs and designing responsive interventions. Shows how professional work promotes student-centred learning. Provides evidence of impact on academics' teaching practice. Demonstrates contribution to fostering teaching and learning communities.</p>	<p>Describes constituencies served with limited analysis of needs. Provides limited evidence of differentiated interventions. Describes some strategies for engaging with academics. Makes connections to student learning but with limited evidence. Provides limited evidence of impact on teaching practice. Limited evidence of community-building or collegiality promotion.</p>

<p>Professional resources and interventions in enhancing staff and student success</p>	<p>Resources, tools, and interventions developed are exceptional in quality, innovation, and pedagogical soundness. Demonstrates sophisticated instructional design, educational technology use, and curriculum development expertise. Resources are evidence-based, theoretically grounded, contextually appropriate, and inclusive. Examples provided are well-curated, clearly presented, and demonstrate professional expertise. Evidence of resources being adopted, adapted, or recognized beyond immediate context. Resources demonstrate understanding of diverse learning styles, accessibility principles, and Universal Design for Learning. Impact of resources on teaching practice is clearly evidenced.</p>	<p>Resources and interventions developed are of good quality and demonstrate professional competence. Shows engagement with instructional design principles and educational theory. Strategies to support staff and students are detailed with concomitant interventions. Evidence is provided that interventions improve the teaching and learning environment and support student success. Reflection on intervention is included.</p>	<p>Some resources and interventions are described. Quality and pedagogical soundness are emerging. Resources show engagement with professional practice standards. Examples provided are basic. Limited evidence of innovation in delivery modes. Limited evidence of uptake beyond immediate context. Some attention to inclusivity. Limited evidence of impact.</p>
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<p>Development materials, resources and Technology-enhanced learning support</p>	<p>Demonstrates exceptional expertise in educational technology and digital pedagogy. Shows innovative use of technology to enhance teaching, learning, and assessment. Provides evidence of leadership in technology adoption, learning management system optimisation, or digital transformation initiatives. Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of how technology enables inclusive, flexible, and student-centred learning. Shows critical engagement with technology for pedagogical purpose. Provides evidence of supporting academics to use technology effectively and equitably. Evidence of technology-enhanced interventions improving teaching practice and student learning.</p>	<p>Demonstrates good expertise in educational technology. Shows effective use of technology to support teaching and learning. Provides examples of technology-related professional development or support. Demonstrates understanding of digital pedagogy principles. Shows engagement with learning technologies in pedagogically sound ways. Provides evidence of supporting academics with technology integration. Evidence of positive impact of technology and some evidence of engagement by staff and students.</p>	<p>Provides limited examples of technology-related work. Limited evidence of technology expertise. Some attention to accessibility. Limited evidence of impact of technology interventions. Describes some engagement with educational technology. Shows emerging understanding of digital pedagogy. Some development materials are designed; some are engaging and appropriate. Limited substantiation of selection and application of resources.</p>
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<p>Professional knowledge and disciplinary expertise</p>	<p>Demonstrates exceptional depth and breadth of professional expertise in area(s) of specialisation. Shows comprehensive engagement with SoTL, academic development, and higher education literature. Demonstrates sophisticated theoretical knowledge that informs professional practice. Provides evidence of being recognised as an expert in the field (invitations, peer review, consultations). Shows contribution to knowledge production through publications, presentations, or innovative practice. Shows engagement with international discourse while remaining grounded in South African higher education realities.</p>	<p>Demonstrates professional expertise in area(s) of specialisation. Shows engagement with relevant literature and educational theory. Demonstrates emerging theoretical knowledge that informs practice. Provides some evidence of recognition in the field. Shows contribution to knowledge through scholarly activities. Demonstrates ability to apply theory to practice. Evidence of ongoing professional development.</p>	<p>Describes professional area of work with emerging expertise. Shows some engagement with relevant literature. Demonstrates emerging theoretical knowledge. Limited evidence of field recognition. Limited scholarly contributions. Some evidence of theory informing practice. Limited engagement with broader teaching and learning discourse. Some evidence of professional development.</p>
<p>Leadership and innovation</p>	<p>Demonstrates leadership in teaching and learning development at institutional, national, or international levels. Provides evidence of leading transformative initiatives that advance teaching excellence. Shows innovative thinking, including developing new approaches, tools, frameworks, or practices. Demonstrates thought leadership through publications, presentations, or influential practice. Provides</p>	<p>Demonstrates leadership in teaching and learning initiatives. Provides evidence of innovative interventions or approaches. Shows contribution to advancing teaching practice. Evidence of influencing institutional practices or policies. Demonstrates</p>	<p>Describes some leadership activities. Shows emerging innovation in professional practice. Provides limited evidence of influence. Limited evidence of mentoring or capacity development. Limited engagement in strategic work. Some attention to</p>

	<p>evidence of mentoring other T&L professionals or building institutional capacity. Demonstrates influence on institutional strategy, policy, or culture related to teaching and learning. Evidence of being sought out for expertise or taking initiative to address critical challenges.</p>	<p>mentorship or capacity development. Shows engagement in strategic teaching and learning work. Evidence of addressing equity and transformation.</p>	<p>equity and transformation. Limited evidence of proactivity or thought leadership.</p>
<p>Contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)</p>	<p>Provides evidence of deep, sustained scholarly engagement with teaching and learning. Demonstrates substantial contribution to SoTL or academic development scholarship through peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, research projects. Shows sophisticated engagement with educational theory, research methods, and evidence. Provides evidence of substantial professional development undertaken (qualifications, courses, certifications, fellowships). Shows engagement with national and international professional communities. Demonstrates how scholarship directly informs and improves professional practice. Evidence of professional recognition (fellowships, awards, invitations).</p>	<p>Provides evidence of scholarly engagement with teaching and learning. Demonstrates contribution to SoTL through publications or presentations. Shows engagement with educational theory and research. Demonstrates reflective practice and professional growth. Provides evidence of professional development undertaken. Shows engagement with professional communities.</p>	<p>Describes some scholarly engagement. Limited evidence of SoTL contributions. Shows emerging engagement with educational theory. Demonstrates some reflection on professional development. Limited evidence of formal professional development. Limited engagement with professional communities. Limited evidence of scholarship-practice links. Limited professional recognition. Some commitment to professional growth.</p>

<p>Reflection on professional growth and development</p>	<p>Provides compelling, multi-faceted evidence of substantial impact on teaching and learning at institutional and beyond levels. Impact is demonstrated through: significant number of academics supported with sustained engagement, transformation of teaching practice documented through case studies, programmes or modules redesigned resulting in improved student outcomes, institutional policies or practices influenced, national or international recognition of work, resources widely adopted or cited, research demonstrating impact of interventions. Uses varied forms of evidence (quantitative and qualitative). Shows systematic approach to evaluating impact and using evaluation for improvement. Demonstrates scalable impact that extends beyond individual interventions to systemic, cultural, or structural change.</p>	<p>Provides good evidence of impact on teaching and learning. Shows reach to substantial number of academics or programmes. Provides testimonials or feedback demonstrating positive reception. Evidence of teaching practice changes following interventions. Some influence on institutional practices. Evidence of recognition beyond immediate unit. Uses multiple forms of evidence. Shows attention to evaluation and improvement. Evidence of sustained impact over time.</p>	<p>Provides limited evidence of impact. Describes reach but with limited documentation. Provides some feedback or testimonials. Limited evidence of sustained teaching practice change. Limited influence on institutional practices. Limited recognition beyond immediate context. Limited variety in evidence types. Emerging attention to evaluation. Limited evidence of sustained or scaled impact.</p>
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