The University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards

Information to applicants

Introduction

The Strategic Plan 2013-2020 of The University of Auckland includes a commitment to a “high quality learning environment that maximises the opportunity for all our students to succeed and provides them with an inclusive, intellectually challenging and transformative educational experience” (Objective 7, p.10). The University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards recognise teaching excellence in a way that conveys the importance of teaching to the University and encourages and rewards such excellence. The University values teaching that is student-centred, inclusive and which promotes student engagement and effective learning. Continuing professional development, critical reflection, and leadership in teaching practice within the University and discipline are also important facets of excellence in teaching.

The University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards were established in 2002 and first awarded in 2003. They replaced the former Distinguished Teaching Awards.

Award Categories

There are up to five Teaching Excellence Awards made each year, in the following categories:

- Sustained Excellence in Teaching (two awards)
- Early Career Excellence in Teaching (two awards)
- Leadership in Teaching and Learning (one award, with an alternating focus):
  - Formal leadership: defined as occupying a distinctive office/role, such as associate dean, director, programme leader, or academic head, with an associated workload allocation and/or provision of a VSP (award made in odd years)
  - ‘Informal’ leadership: defined as leadership exhibited in the course of pursuing standard teaching responsibilities (award made in even years)

In a particular year, if an award is not made in one or more of the categories, an award may be reassigned to another category if the next best ranked application in that category is of sufficient merit. The Awards are contestable across the University and carry with them a medal and a monetary prize. Selected recipients of the University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards will usually form the University’s nominees for the national awards. The University, however, reserves the right to approach staff to nominate for the national awards.

Individual faculties are encouraged to recognise excellent teaching within their faculties.

Selection Procedure

The judging of the applications will be carried out by the Teaching and Learning Quality Committee, through a Teaching Excellence Awards Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will be composed of five members of the academic staff and two student representatives. It will be chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or nominee and two of the members must be members of the Teaching and
Learning Quality Committee. The academic members will be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the Teaching and Learning Quality Committee. The student representatives will be selected by and from the Auckland University Students Association (AUSA) and Postgraduate Students Association (PGSA). The Sub-Committee reserves the right to offer an applicant an award in a different category to that which the applicant applied.

Presentation of Awards

The University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards will be presented at the Graduation Ceremony for each awardee’s faculty. Citations for Teaching Excellence Awards may be presented by the Dean of the faculty or a student from the faculty. The financial component of the award will be received as a taxable monetary prize.

Obligations of Award Winners

The awards are designed to promote a culture of high-quality teaching, learning and pedagogical research, as well as to stimulate the sharing of ideas on innovation and excellence in teaching and learning.

Award winners are expected to make their teaching philosophies and/or practices more widely known throughout the University. Examples include:
- a workshop on a specific aspect of teaching;
- a seminar;
- assisting colleagues and the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education in professional development activities.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

1. be current members of the teaching staff of The University of Auckland; and
2. have taught in at least six complete teaching sessions (semesters, summer school, quarters) while holding a tenurable or fixed-term position of 0.5 fulltime equivalence or greater at Senior Tutor, Professional Teaching Fellow or Lecturer level or above at The University of Auckland.

In addition:

- The Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching requires the applicant to show sustained excellence over a minimum period of six years (continuous or non-continuous), some of which time may have been spent in another tertiary education institution.

- The Award for Early Career Excellence in Teaching requires the applicant to be within six years (at the application deadline) of their first appointment to a tenurable or fixed-term academic position of 0.5 fulltime equivalence or greater at Senior Tutor, Professional Teaching Fellow (PTF) or Lecturer level or above at any tertiary education institution.

- The Award for Leadership in Teaching and Learning in rounds focused on ‘informal’ leadership (even years) is for staff who have made leadership contributions while on a standard teaching/research/service weighting of 40:40:20 (or 80:20 for teaching-only roles).

- The Award for Leadership in Teaching and Learning in rounds focused on formal leadership (odd years) is for staff whose educational leadership is part of their position profile with a corresponding workload allocation and/or provision of a VSP (for example, associate deans, directors, programme leaders and academic heads).
In determining eligibility, periods of parental leave of four months or greater are excluded. Staff may apply in one category only. Previous award winners will be ineligible to re-apply in the same category for six years. Members of the Awards Subcommittee will not be eligible to apply in that year.

**Team applications**

Team applications are accepted in the Sustained Excellence category only. In order to be eligible, all members included in the application must be involved in teaching more than one course (which may include teaching beyond the team) and all must meet the eligibility criteria for the Sustained Excellence category.

**Application Procedure**

The University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards operate on the basis of self-nomination. The application form is available on the Learning and Teaching website and must be accompanied by a Teaching or Leadership Portfolio prepared by the applicant and statements of support (maximum one-page each) from three endorsers:

1. a senior member of the academic staff of the University (Associate Professor or PTF Level 4 or above)
2. a current or former student (i.e., has been taught by the applicant within the last five years)
3. a second academic staff member (of any level of seniority); or a second current or former student

The Portfolio must not exceed 6,000 words (i.e. approximately 12 pages of single-spaced text), and should be no smaller than 12 point font. The three one-page statements from the endorsers are not included in the word count. ALL other supporting information including student comments and any additional letters of support must be included in the word count. Additional material may not be submitted. While guidance and feedback may be sought from others, the task of writing the portfolio must be completed by the applicant. Applicants should take care not to include personal or sensitive information about their colleagues and students in their Portfolio.

Eight copies each of the application form, Teaching or Leadership Portfolio, and the three endorsers’ statements should be sent to the TEAs Secretary, Susan McDowell-Watts, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Level 1 the ClockTower, no later than 6 September 2019. Two electronic copies of the portfolio (PDF and MS Word or equivalent) should be emailed to s.mcdowell-watts@auckland.ac.nz for verification of the word count.

Elaborate production of portfolios is discouraged, including the use of ‘professional’ publishing and printing services (within or outside the University), spiral binding, clear files and folders. Portfolios should be simple word-processed documents (which may include images) and should be fastened with a staple.

The Awards Subcommittee reserves the right not to consider applications that do not meet these criteria. Portfolios which are in excess of the 6,000 word limit will not be accepted. When preparing for submission, please refer to the checklist contained in the application form.

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1 In the Leadership in Teaching category only, the student endorsement may be replaced by an additional endorsement from a member of academic staff (any level of seniority).
Selection Criteria

The Subcommittee will make a holistic assessment of each portfolio (including the strength of the applicant’s teaching or leadership philosophy and critical reflection), with particular emphasis on the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustained excellence</th>
<th>Early career excellence</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
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<td>- responsiveness to learner diversity</td>
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<td>- degree of innovation (broadly interpreted as the application of new or different pedagogical approaches, technologies, course design, and assessment)</td>
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<td>- student response (including course and teaching evaluations, evidence of achievement of learning outcomes) and associated critical reflection</td>
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<td>- record of sustained excellence</td>
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<td>- responsiveness to learner diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>- student response (including course and teaching evaluations, evidence of achievement of learning outcomes) and associated critical reflection</td>
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<td>- record of enhanced achievement</td>
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<td>- the scale of the applicant’s impact on:</td>
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<td>(i) student learning; and</td>
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<td>(ii) the way in which teaching is understood or practised by others</td>
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<td>- the nature and extent of the applicant’s role in achieving that impact</td>
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<td>- record of a sustained leadership contribution</td>
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Content of the Teaching or Leadership Portfolio

The Portfolio should provide information about the applicant’s teaching career to date, substantial evidence of the applicant’s effectiveness and ongoing development as a teacher or leader in the university context, and critical reflection on that evidence. Applicants are encouraged to supply evidence of the impact of their teaching or leadership on student learning outcomes.

In the case of a team application (accepted in the Sustained Excellence in Teaching category only), a single portfolio is to be prepared, addressing the criteria in relation to the teaching activities of the team as a whole.

Sustained and Early Career Excellence in Teaching

Excellence across a range of teaching modes will be considered. Portfolios which have a significant component of postgraduate research supervision must also provide evidence of excellence in undergraduate and/or taught postgraduate teaching.

The Portfolio should include the following elements:

1. **Overarching statement**
   - career overview: teaching roles and responsibilities, courses taught, numbers of students, postgraduate supervision;
   - past and current teaching and supervision activities that form the basis for the application;
   - the applicant’s philosophy as a teacher and (optionally) a supervisor;
   - teaching and learning design including course content and design, teaching and learning methods, assessment approaches, including for kaupapa Māori contexts and students with disabilities (where applicable);
   - intended learning outcomes for all students;
   - professional development and leadership;
benefits from the applicant’s teaching or supervision activities for students and the University.

2. Evidence Examples are provided in the appendix.

3. Critical reflection on the evidence. For example:
   - changes made to teaching methods in response to student, peer and self-evaluation;
   - the relevance and impact of the applicant’s work as a postgraduate supervisor (where appropriate);
   - steps taken to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the applicant’s department and/or discipline;
   - case studies of particular courses or assignments that exemplify the applicant’s teaching philosophy (i.e. beliefs and assumptions about student learning).

Leadership in Teaching and Learning

The Leadership in Teaching and Learning award recognises activities that have had a transformative impact on higher education learning and teaching beyond the classroom. Consistent with the University’s Academic Standards, leadership is understood in the context of the University’s 5D Leadership Framework which reflects and encourages a culture of distributed leadership. The purpose of the award is to recognise excellence in leadership of learning and teaching, not leadership of students.

The portfolio should include:
   - a statement describing the applicant’s philosophy of educational leadership in a university setting, including the applicant’s rationale for going beyond their personal teaching practice to enhancing learning and teaching more broadly
   - a description of the leadership contributions which form the basis of the application and demonstration of their impact for teaching and learning at the department, faculty, University, national and/or international level
   - reflection on how the applicant’s approaches to leadership contributed to the success of the outcomes described.

In recognition that leadership often takes place in the context of initiatives which involve a wider team of people, it is expected that portfolios will acknowledge the contributions of others and provide a compelling account of the applicant’s interactions with their team and/or other key contributors.

Enquiries

Enquiries about the Teaching Excellence Awards may be directed to the Academic Reviews Manager, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, cwalters@auckland.ac.nz, ext 87643.
Appendix: Examples of evidence

Evidence of teaching effectiveness may include:
- a summary of standardised student evaluation data. Where student evaluations are provided as evidence, summaries must be included within the portfolio;
- supplemental forms of evaluation, such as informal student feedback and peer observation;
- assessment data, such as improved exam results over time or examples of high-quality student work;
- track record in supervising doctoral students to timely completion;
- students’ academic and professional achievements, such as publications in academic journals, job placements or fellowships and grants received;
- teaching honours and awards.

Evidence of achievement of learning outcomes
Applicants are encouraged to consult the following:
- the document Examples of Evidence of Student Learning (2009) prepared by L. Suskie, former Vice President of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which is accessible on the MSCHE website;
- the online resources relating to the role of evidence in teaching portfolios, accessible through the CLeaR website.

Evidence of ongoing efforts to improve teaching and learning may include:
- inclusive teaching methods and assessment strategies;
- course and curriculum design initiatives;
- relevant professional development activities;
- contribution to the teaching and learning environment within the University and the discipline, including mentoring and leadership in teaching (relative to opportunity for early career applicants);
- leadership of or contribution to teaching collaborations which deliver enhanced learning outcomes;
- development and/or implementation of teaching innovations that are pedagogically sound, sustainable and are transferable or may serve as a model for other areas.

Evidence of commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi may include:
- integration of mātauranga Māori perspectives and world views;
- promoting discussion and use of Māori teaching and learning frameworks;
- contribution to the University's particular responsibilities to Māori students.

Evidence of support for Pacific learners may include:
- development of community relationships and teaching and learning practices that enhance participation and success.

Evidence of teaching scholarship may include:
- contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning, such as articles or conference papers;
- presentations of teaching methods and/or teaching innovation.

Evidence of leadership in teaching may include (but is not limited to):
- instigation and/or coordination of major learning and teaching projects;
- substantial contributions to course and curriculum review or other development initiatives (for example, converting a programme to new forms of delivery);
- a major role in initiating a step change in teaching and learning and/or in curriculum;
- creation and maintenance of learning and teaching collaborations and communities of practice;
- leadership and active involvement in the mentoring and development of other university teachers;
- contribution to development of higher education teaching standards and/or teaching and learning policy at a national or international level;
- significant leadership of engagement with industry to establish a professional/internship/clinical programme;
– development of teaching materials to support university teaching that have been evaluated for their impact on learners and/or widely adopted by others (for example, text book publication);
– public dissemination of innovative or experimental teaching practice and their impact, e.g. via research publication, conference presentations, invited lectures on teaching, visiting professorships focused on teaching, published reports, social media;
– feedback from individuals or teams who have experience of the applicant’s leadership.