



The University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards

Information to applicants

Introduction

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. *Taumata Teitei* (the University's Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan 2025) expresses our belief that "excellence in teaching and research provides a means of engendering transformation in the lives of many people" (p.3). As reflected in the education and student experience priorities (p.5), the University values teaching that is student-centred, inclusive, research-informed, transdisciplinary and which promotes student engagement and lifelong 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 seven Teaching Excellence Awards made each year, in the following categories:

- Sustained Excellence in Teaching (three awards)
- Early Career Excellence in Teaching (two awards)
- Outstanding Service to Teaching and Learning Environment (one award)
- Formal Leadership in Teaching and Learning (one award)

In a particular year, if an award is not made in one or more of the categories, an award may be re-assigned 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 PVC Education 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 in professional development activities.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

1. be current members of the teaching or professional staff of The University of Auckland; and
2. for teaching staff, 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 Outstanding Service to Teaching and Learning Environments is for staff whose primary role is one of support or service to teaching and learning, for example, Learning Designers, Technicians, Learning Technologists or Curriculum Development Managers etc.
- The Award for Leadership in Teaching and Learning is focused on formal leadership and is for staff whose educational leadership is part of their position profile. This includes roles within the first and second levels of the [Academic Leadership Framework](#) (e.g. Associate Deans, Academic Heads, Programme Directors, and major/specialisation leaders), as well as faculty- specific educational leadership roles where these involve a corresponding workload allocation and/or provision of a VSP.

In determining eligibility, periods of parental leave of four months or greater are excluded. Staff may apply in one category only.

Application stand-down periods:

- **For previous award winners (at the University and/or national level):** there is a stand- down period of six years for re-application in the same (or equivalent) category of the University awards. After this period, previous awardees may reapply in the same category provided they

have developed a new portfolio that reflects substantively new directions in their teaching/ leadership and includes a short summary of the previous portfolio.

- **For previous University award applicants:** there is a stand-down period of at least two rounds for those who apply for an award in any category and are twice unsuccessful within three rounds. For example, an applicant who was unsuccessful in both the 2020 and 2022 rounds would next be eligible to apply in 2025.
- **For unsuccessful national award nominees:** an application stand-down for the University awards (in any category) of at least two rounds applies.
- Members of the Awards Subcommittee are not 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 or developing more than one course 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 two endorers:

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)¹

The Portfolio must not exceed **4500 words** (i.e. approximately 10 pages of single-spaced text), and should be no smaller than 12 point font. The one-page statements from the two endorers 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. Please note, if you intend to include screenshots in your portfolio, ensure that the word count of the text within the screenshots is also included in the total 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.

Applications are to be submitted electronically to the TEAs Secretary, Emma Smyth, no later than the close of business on the day applications are due. Hard copies are not required. Electronic applications must comprise (i) a single collated PDF of the application form, two endorser statements, and the applicant's Teaching Portfolio; and (ii) an electronic MS Word copy of the Teaching Portfolio only for verification of the word count.

Elaborate production of portfolios is discouraged, including the use of 'professional' publishing services (within or outside the University). Portfolios should be simple word-processed documents (which may include images).

The Awards Subcommittee reserves the right not to consider applications that do not meet these criteria. Portfolios which are in excess of the 4,500 word limit will not be accepted. When preparing for submission, please refer to the checklist contained in the application form.

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:

Sustained excellence	Early career excellence	Outstanding Service	Leadership
- responsiveness to learner diversity and a sustained contribution and impact on learner success, and a wider impact (e.g. on whanau, communities and employment outcomes) - degree of innovation (broadly interpreted as the application of new or different pedagogical approaches, technologies, course design, and assessment) - are student-centred, meet the needs of students from different backgrounds and capabilities, encourage diversity, and reflect on Aotearoa/ New Zealand as appropriate - student response (including course and teaching evaluations, evidence of achievement of learning outcomes) and associated critical reflection - contribution to the teaching community and demonstrated proactiveness in their own professional development as educators and content specialists	- responsiveness to learner diversity and a sustained contribution and impact on learner success, and a wider impact (e.g. on whanau, communities and employment outcomes) - degree of innovation (broadly interpreted as the application of new or different pedagogical approaches, technologies, course design, and assessment) - are student-centred, meet the needs of students from different backgrounds and capabilities, encourage diversity, and reflect on Aotearoa/ New Zealand as appropriate - student response (including course and teaching evaluations, evidence of achievement of learning outcomes) and associated critical reflection - trajectory of significant qualitative enhancement - demonstrated proactiveness in their own professional development as educators and content specialists	- the scale of the applicant's impact and/or influence on: (i) student learning and/or student success (ii) the way in which teaching or learning is understood or practised by others (iii) wider impact, e.g. whanau, communities or employers - the nature and extent of the applicant's role in achieving that impact and/or influence *nominees 'may' choose to focus on one, or more, depending on role Additionally - commitment to meeting the needs of students from different backgrounds and capabilities, encourage diversity, and reflect on Aotearoa/New Zealand as appropriate - record of outstanding contribution	- the scale of the applicant's impact on: (i) student learning; and (ii) the way in which teaching is understood or practised by others - the nature and extent of the applicant's role in achieving that impact - commitment to meeting the needs of students from different backgrounds and capabilities, encourage diversity, and reflect on Aotearoa/ New Zealand as appropriate - record of a sustained leadership contribution

Note: 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) or by a relevant stakeholder external to the University.

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 be written in an engaging and accessible manner and 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 and learning design including course content and design, teaching and learning methods, and assessment approaches, 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 Director of Learning and Teaching, Dr Gayle Morris, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, gayle.morris@auckland.ac.nz, or Emma Smyth, TEAs Secretary, emma.smyth@auckland.ac.nz

Appendix: Examples of evidence

Evidence of teaching effectiveness may include:

- assessment data, such as improved exam results over time, pre and post-test results, student performance by gender, ethnicity etc., or examples of high-quality student work
- analysis of and responses to student misunderstandings, confusions, successes, and insights as revealed in their work/performance
- a summary of standardised student evaluation data, including response rates (%) and number of respondents. 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;
- track record in supervising Post-Graduate students to timely completion;
- students' academic and professional achievements, such as publications in academic journals, job placements or fellowships and grants received;
- comments from community, industry and professional partners, including graduate employers
- teaching honours and awards.

Evidence of achievement of learning outcomes

Applicants are encouraged to consult the following online resource relating to the role of evidence in teaching portfolios:

- The Evidence & Documentation section of [TeachWell@UoA](#) (p.11)

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, informed by student feedback, sustainable and are transferable or may serve as a model for other areas.

Evidence of commitment to meeting the needs of students from different background and capabilities, encouraging diversity, and reflecting on Aotearoa/New Zealand, 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;
- contribution to supporting our Pacific students
- contribution to Learner Success initiatives
- 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 and/or through sharing good practice through faculty and/ university forums;
- 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.