

**HELTASA**



HIGHER EDUCATION LEARNING & TEACHING ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**National Excellence in  
Teaching and Learning  
Awards  
2019**

**Call for applications**

The Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) in collaboration with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) is pleased to call on universities to nominate candidates for the annual National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Awards for 2019.

These awards are an opportunity to recognise and reward reflective, critical and contextually aware teaching across our diverse sector. The importance and significance of these awards is heightened given recent events and the renewed imperative for transformation in higher education in South Africa.

A maximum of five awards will be made. Each university is requested to nominate up to three (3) individuals/teaching teams for these awards. Ideally, the nominated candidates/teams should have been recognised through the university's internal teaching excellence awards.

## **AIMS OF THE NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AWARDS**

- To show support at a national level for excellence in teaching and learning in higher education
- To recognise a cadre of academics who are identifiable and able to provide inspiration and leadership in teaching in their disciplines, institutions and regions
- To generate debate and public awareness about what constitutes teaching excellence.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Academics and Academic Development professionals at all South African public higher education institutions are eligible for this award. Applications can be from individuals or from a teaching team.

An excellent teacher is aware of her or his context and reflects on the ways in which his or her discipline, institution, own history and students' lived experiences affect teaching and learning. An excellent teacher is a reflective practitioner who has grown more effective over a number of years in relation to increasing knowledge of teaching and learning, experience in teaching and the facilitation of learning, and systematic observations of what happens in the classroom with a view to improving student engagement and learning outcomes. An excellent teacher has a clearly articulated teaching philosophy, informed by educational theory, and appropriate for a university teaching context. Teaching experience can include both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

'Teaching' can be interpreted broadly to include curriculum design and delivery, the latter in class, online or through materials development.

A 'teaching team' is a group of two or more academics or academic development practitioners who collaborate over a sustained period of time to develop and deliver a module/course/programme. This can include the development of an innovative programme that results in excellent teaching as a team. The portfolio should clearly indicate the role played by each of the team members.

## **CRITERIA**

Applicants submit portfolios containing a reflective narrative and substantiating documentation. The portfolios will be evaluated using four criteria: reflection on students, reflection on context, reflection on knowledge and reflection on growth. Questions to guide applicants in addressing each of these areas are provided on page 6 of this call. While applicants need to show engagement with all four areas, the questions are provided to stimulate ideas and applicants are not expected to respond to every question. 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.

Evidence of excellent teaching could include but is not restricted to the following:

- Information about the applicant and the applicant's teaching context (position in the institution, part/ full time, discipline taught, size of classes, teaching context e.g. main/ satellite campus, areas of key challenge) and broad social context;
- Peer feedback;
- Student feedback;
- Student retention rates;
- Student success data;
- Student involvement beyond the classroom;
- Artefacts such as brief extracts from study guides, multimedia, online materials, innovative student assessment, photographs.

The evidence should demonstrate in what ways **the applicant's teaching stands out from that of other good teachers** in terms of promoting student learning and contributing to education for social justice.

Evidence of the lecturer's involvement with teaching and learning that has a broader impact within the university and beyond could include, but is not restricted to, the following:

- Papers presented on the subject of teaching and learning at conferences;
- Articles or other publications on teaching and learning (citations only or abstracts at the most);
- Membership of professional associations to which the applicant is a significant contributor based on evidence of conference attendance, papers presented, review activities, membership of SIGs or of the executive;
- Moderation of exams and dissertations/theses;
- Names of university committees and national or international committees and evidence of the applicant's contribution;
- List of formal and non-formal continuing professional development the applicant has undertaken;
- List of students or staff mentored or supervised;
- List of awards received (where relevant);
- Contributions to addressing social issues.

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. The Council on Higher Education and HELTASA send out the call to the Executive of the university and the head of the academic development / teaching and learning centre.
2. A brochure outlining the aims of the awards and the processes whereby they are awarded is circulated as widely as possible. The Dean/Director of Teaching and Learning (or equivalent) at every university is asked to circulate this brochure electronically to all academics.
3. The university identifies possible candidates through processes that are transparent and inclusive. Contact details for a representative of the Executive of the university should be identified on the application cover sheet.
  - a. Institutions may consider nominating winners of the university's own teaching awards.
  - b. A university may nominate a previous recipient of a commendation or an unsuccessful candidate but only after one year has elapsed since the previous application, and provided that the application has undergone some revision.
4. Each candidate prepares a portfolio with due attention to the criteria in this call. The candidate might choose to receive critical advice and feedback from their own institutional teaching and learning centre or other peers. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application and any attachments are loaded successfully onto the HELTASA website. Applicants are encouraged to make use of resource materials supporting the application process, such as winners' portfolios, which are available on the HELTASA website. <http://heltasa.org.za/awards/2019-call-for-applications/>

5. The due date for all applications is: **28 June 2019**. Shortlisted candidates will be informed of the outcome by the end of August. All shortlisted applicants will be required to make a short presentation to the selection committee via Skype in September 2019. Final awards will be announced by 30 September 2019 and will be handed out at the HELTASA annual conference, which will take place from 27 to 29 November 2019 in Grahamstown/Makhanda.

Requests for clarity on the nomination process should be directed to the chair of the awards committee, Langutani Mary Masehela (mary.masehela@univen.ac.za).

## THE APPLICATION FORMAT

1. All applications must be accompanied by the cover sheet provided below, to be completed by the applicant, and signed by the relevant institutional authority (**1 page**).
2. The following personal information must be provided:
  - 2.1. A photograph and brief curriculum vitae (**2 pages**).
  - 2.2. A 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.
3. The portfolio comprises two parts:
  - 3.1. A reflective narrative about the teaching and learning of the nominee (what s/he does and why) (**10 to 20 pages long**). The narrative should address the four criteria detailed on page 6 though the content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers and can be in any format. If the portfolio is online, the total reflective narrative part should be no longer than 20 pages if printed out. All claims made in the narrative need to be substantiated with evidence. This can be in the form of examples described within the reflective narrative itself or by reference/hyperlink to appendices.
  - 3.2. The portfolio may include appendices of evidence to substantiate claims made in the reflective narrative. If appendices are included, they should be not more than 10 pages of appendices and/or two 3-minute audio or video recordings. If appendices are included, they should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the reflective narrative. Appendices should be judiciously included and all appendices must be directly referred to/hyperlinked in the narrative and these should be tested for off-campus accessibility and functionality.

**Incomplete applications will NOT be considered. Applications that do not adhere to specified length / page numbers will be returned. All returned portfolios should be re-submitted within two days from the time of receiving communication from the Awards committee.**

## HOW TO APPLY ONLINE

Please upload your portfolio online at this address:  
<http://heltasa.org.za/awards/2019-call-for-applications/>

If you have any technical questions or difficulty with uploading to the website, contact Liz Fletcher ([liz@pomegranite.co.za](mailto:liz@pomegranite.co.za))

## CHE-HELTASA TEACHING AND LEARNING AWARDS COMMITTEE FOR 2019

Name	Institution	Email address
Dr Rubby Dhunpath	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Dhunpath@ukzn.ac.za

Dr Rejoice Nsibande	Wits University	rejoice.nsibande@wits.ac.za
Dr Mary Masehela	HELTASA Representative	Mary.Masehela@univen.ac.za
Dr Luke Mlilo	Council on Higher Education	Mlilo.L@che.ac.za
Dr Kasturi Behari-Leak	HELTASA Chairperson	Kasturi.behari-leak@uct.ac.za
Prof Lindsay Clowes	University of Western Cape	lindsaydowes@gmail.com
Dr Joe Makua	Mangosuthu University of Technology	Makua@mut.ac.za

## THE AWARD

Up to five awards may be made, for which winners will receive R30 000 each. In addition, the awards committee may recognise selected applicants with commendations.

The award winners and those receiving commendations will receive their certificates at the 2019 HELTASA conference, which will take place from November in Makhanda. The award winners will be expected to make a short presentation on their work at a panel discussion at the conference. Winners' portfolios are made available on the HELTASA website.

**National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Awards 2019  
Cover Sheet**

This cover sheet should accompany the application.

**Applicant Information**

Name:  
Department/Centre:  
University:  
Postal address:  
Email:  
Telephone number:

Signature:

Date:

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**Nominator's Information (Representative of University Executive)**

Name:  
Position:  
Email address:

Signature:

Date:

In your portfolio, you are expected to describe how you teach (critical reflection on practice) and why you do it in the way that you do (philosophy of teaching). Your portfolio should show some deliberation on the four overlapping areas:

- Reflection on context
- Reflection on students
- Reflection on knowledge
- Reflection on growth

1.	<p><b>Reflection on Students</b></p> <p>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 underpreparedness 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 does your curriculum and teaching strategies enrich students with exceptional abilities?</p>
2.	<p><b>Reflection on Context</b></p> <p>Where does your teaching take place? 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?</p>
3.	<p><b>Reflection on Knowledge</b></p> <p>What is your discipline / profession and what are its key features? What aspects of the course or programme do your students battle 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 does your contributions to your discipline improve your teaching?</p>
4.	<p><b>Reflection on Growth</b></p> <p>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)?</p>

- The questions provided for each area above should help you to brainstorm the kinds of issues you might like to reflect upon in your application but they are not an exhaustive list and there is no requirement that you answer them all.
- You are welcome to structure your portfolio in any way that you wish.
- You need to provide evidence of all claims you make about your practice, in the form of examples and explanations in the reflective narrative itself or through reference to appendices.
- Your application will be read by a committee from a wide variety of disciplines, so you need to articulate what makes your approach to teaching excellent in a way that is accessible to all.

## **Description of Portfolios:**

### **EXCELLENT PORTFOLIO**

The portfolio makes a convincing case for excellence in that the academic/academic team has reflected on multiple aspects of their context, including their students, their institution and their discipline/programme. The portfolio clearly describes the teaching and provides an explanation of why the applicant adopts the approach that s/he does (teaching philosophy). Teaching methods used are contextually nuanced and are aligned to the stated philosophy. Robust and diverse evidence has been provided for the claims made in the portfolio. The academic/academic team is constantly looking for ways of improving and can reflect on growth over time and in response to changing contexts or new understandings. The academic/academic team has had a positive institutional, national or international impact on teaching in higher education. The portfolio demonstrates excellence in teaching that can serve as an inspiration or can deepen our understanding of this crucial aspect of higher education.

### **NOTEWORTHY PORTFOLIO**

The portfolio makes a case for excellence in that the academic/academic team has reflected on aspects of their context, including their students, their institution and their discipline/programme. The portfolio describes the teaching and provides an explanation of why the applicant adopts the approach that s/he does (teaching philosophy). Teaching methods used are adapted to context and aligned to the stated philosophy. Evidence has been provided for the claims made in the portfolio. The academic/academic team looks for ways of improving and can reflect on growth over time. The academic/academic team has had a positive impact on teaching in higher education beyond their classroom. The portfolio demonstrates excellence in teaching that can promote better practice and encourage others.

### **DEVELOPING PORTFOLIO**

The portfolio begins to construct a case for excellence in that the academic/academic team has reflected on aspects of context. The portfolio describes the teaching and provides an explanation of why the applicant adopts the approach that s/he does (teaching philosophy). Teaching methods used are adapted to context but perhaps not very well aligned to philosophy (or vice versa). While evidence has been provided for some of the claims made in the portfolio, some claims are not substantiated. The academic/academic team looks for ways of improving. The academic/academic team has had a positive impact on teaching. The portfolio demonstrates the development of excellence in teaching.

**We look forward to reading about your teaching!**

**We would love to have applicants from every university in South Africa this year.  
Please contact us if you would like any assistance or if you have any questions.**