



The Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards 2024

Call for Applications

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of the Free State (UFS) is pleased to call on academic and academic support staff to submit applications for the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards 2024.

The UFS Learning and Teaching Awards recognise academic and academic support staff for their innovative learning, teaching, and support practices within different disciplines. The awards also recognise the advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the institution.

CONFERENCE THEME:

Enhancing Quality Blended Learning and Teaching within the UFS Context

The higher education environment is experiencing a dynamic transformation, with blended learning¹ emerging as a cornerstone of pedagogy. This year's conference will focus on enhancing the quality of blended learning and teaching, specifically at the University of the Free State (UFS). The continuous improvement of blended learning practices and standards requires ongoing technology integration, pedagogical enhancements, accessibility, staff development, and standardised quality assurance².

The conference theme aligns with the national Quality Assurance Framework and Standards and the UFS's Quality Assurance Policy, which, as outlined in Vision 130, aims to enhance student success through quality learning, teaching, research, and integrated community engagement.

The conference seeks to facilitate the sharing of ideas, best practices, and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The focus will be on how UFS colleagues ensure that their blended learning and teaching support a high-quality educational experience for UFS students.

¹ *Blended learning, "is the provision of structured learning opportunities using a combination of contact, distance, and/or information and communication technology-supported opportunities to suit different purposes, audiences, and contexts" (Christensen, Horn and Staker, 2013).*

² *Quality Assurance, "in higher education in South Africa involves evaluating and providing evidence of the extent to which institutions have put in place the measures needed to achieve i) the goals and purposes they have identified for themselves and ii) programmes that are able to deliver a set of learning experiences which will support students in attaining the qualifications to which they lead" (CHE, 2022)*



AIMS OF THE UFS LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS

- To promote, recognise, and reward quality, innovation, and excellence in learning and teaching in the South African and UFS contexts;
- To generate debate and public awareness about what constitutes quality and excellence in learning and teaching;
- To share best practices, innovative ideas, and research findings related to learning and teaching; and
- To promote the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the disciplines.

CATEGORIES

The Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards comprise six main categories, namely:

1) Innovation in Learning and Teaching Awards

This category focuses on how academics create academic plans, which incorporate various innovative pedagogical, course design, and assessment strategies. This could include the integration and meaningful design of technology in learning and teaching to increase student engagement, the use of various assessment methodologies, and/or curriculum transformation practices.

There are four sub-categories under this award for which you can enter:

1.1 Innovating my curriculum through assessment

This category considers how assessment in a blended learning environment enhances the quality of learning and teaching and helps students reach module outcomes. Innovating curricula through assessment refers to the integration and use of various assessment strategies, assessment tools, and/or assessment activities (formative and summative) that form part of broader learning and teaching strategies. This includes feedback practices that support student learning as part of assessment.

1.2 Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation

This category considers how academics enhance the quality of blended learning and teaching by creating environments that impact students' motivation and/or engagement. This type of innovation relates to the various methods and practices that create a supportive blended learning environment (both face-to-face and online) for students. Example activities include tutorials, engaging classroom techniques, motivating communication, group work, and universal design for learning. Theories and models of student engagement and/or motivation are the foundation for implementing these innovations.

1.3 Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools

Lecturers use various technologies and online tools in line with blended learning and/or online teaching practices. Innovation through technology shows how technologies are successfully and meaningfully implemented in learning and teaching practices. This includes technologies like Blackboard, free software, and other online applications. Please note that there can be an overlap between this category and the assessment and student engagement categories. The main focus of this category is how the use of *technology* or *online tools* can enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

1.4 Innovating my curriculum by redesigning or renewing my module

Innovation through redesigning and/or renewing a module ensures that curricula are relevant and produce employable graduates. Entries in this category focus on addressing curriculum transformation and design issues, such as blended learning, graduate attributes, decolonising the curriculum, the responsiveness of curricula to changes in the environment/profession, community service-learning, community-based learning, interprofessional learning, and/or clinical learning.



**If your project fits into more than one sub-category, please contact us for assistance in identifying the most relevant sub-category for your application.*

2) **Research in Learning and Teaching Award**

As part of promoting scholarly teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the UFS, this award acknowledges the valuable contributions of academics to research within the field of learning and teaching in their discipline. This award has two sub-categories:

2.1 Emerging: Entries should comprise a teaching philosophy, personal profile, and one accepted or published article, book, chapter, or full conference paper within the field of learning and teaching (the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning).

2.2 Advanced: Entries should comprise a portfolio of evidence of research in learning and teaching, with examples of published articles, books, chapters, or full conference papers within the field of learning and teaching (the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning).

3) **Kovsie Phahamisa Award for Short Learning Programmes**

This award acknowledges the valuable contributions of academics to the design, development, and presentation of short learning programmes, which meet in-time training needs. Furthermore, the award recognises how such programmes enhance the learning and teaching of target audiences and participants.

4) **Most Valued Professional Award**

The Most Valued Professional Award recognises the contribution that academic support professionals have made to the advancement of learning and teaching at the institution. This award acknowledges the dedication, innovation, and excellence demonstrated by specialists in the academic support sphere. Entrants are required to submit a portfolio of evidence. **Academic support staff are encouraged to enter for this award.**

5) **Vice-Chancellor's Award: Learning and Teaching**

The Vice-Chancellor's Award recognises the exceptional performance of academic staff members who have demonstrated overall outstanding excellence and achievement in their learning and teaching activities. Their learning and teaching activities should also align with the University's vision and strategic objectives. Entrants are required to submit a comprehensive, evidence-based teaching portfolio to demonstrate their contributions and excellence in the field of learning and teaching. The portfolio should represent work that has taken place over the past 5 years.

6) **Departmental Learning and Teaching Award**

The award recognises departments that have shown their commitment to improving learning and teaching through various activities and practices. This includes implementing blended learning, innovative assessment, and graduate attributes.

Departments can be nominated by a Dean, Vice-Dean, Assistant Dean, Teaching and Learning Manager (TLM), or other relevant stakeholders. Departments are required to submit a portfolio of evidence (5 – 8 pages) to support their application. Aspects that will be considered include (but are not limited to): departmental participation in learning and teaching workshops, seminars, webinars, and other related activities, as well as departmental learning and teaching practices (such as CoP membership and institutional presentations).



**An award will be given to both a Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa department. Cross-campus departments are encouraged to include contributions from all three UFS campuses.*

OVERALL CRITERIA

- Individuals and/or teaching teams may submit an entry.
- A team is a group of **2 to 4** members who have worked on the same module/project to initiate change and introduce innovation.
- Cross-campus collaboration is permitted.
- An applicant (individual or team) is limited to a total of two entries across all categories.
- Each entry must be unique. The same project and/or study cannot be repeatedly submitted to different categories.
- A project and/or study that has been previously entered and/or has previously received awards can be submitted again for the 2024 awards. It must, however, have evolved in some way, been adjusted over time, or have new/updated findings and contributions.
- The selection and review process will be done by a panel of institutional and external experts in the field of learning and teaching. The entries for all categories will be evaluated according to the criteria outlined by the relevant rubrics.
- Applicants should use the award category rubrics to guide the formulation of their entries.
- Reviewers reserve the right not to confer a specific award.
- **COMPLETE YOUR ENTRY BY:**
 - Submitting your **abstract** online ([click here](#)) on or before **14 June 2024**. Abstract submission feedback will be provided between **15 - 22 July 2024**.
 - Submitting your **portfolio** via email to Thuto Mvimbe (Mvimbetl@ufs.ac.za) on or before **15 July 2024**.
 - Providing a 150-word biography written in the 3rd person. You will also need to submit a professional individual/team headshot with each entry.
- Please ([click here](#)) to access the online submission guidelines. For any enquiries, contact Thuto Mvimbe (Mvimbetl@ufs.ac.za) or Dalene Meintjes (MeintjesM@ufs.ac.za).
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**The format of each category is outlined below.*



THE ENTRY FORMATS

Innovation in Learning and Teaching Awards

Entries are in the format of an online abstract submission ([click here](#)), which will form the basis of a paper presentation to be given at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference. Abstract submissions will be subject to a selection and blind peer review process. Successful applicants will then be invited to present a paper at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards, during which they will be reviewed live to determine the winner of each sub-category.

Abstracts should be between **300 and 350 words in length**.

You should **clearly** state the sub-category for which you are entering:

- Innovating my curriculum through assessment;
- Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation;
- Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools; or
- Innovating my curriculum by redesigning or renewing my module.

The abstract should include the following:

- Introduction;
- Problem statement / research question / aim of the study;
- An explanation of how you approached the problem statement/research question (what was your new idea?);
- A description of how you went about doing the research (outline of methods); and
- A statement about the key impact of your research.

A team application must contain the names of all relevant participants.

Research in Learning and Teaching Awards

Emerging:

Entries must include a learning and teaching philosophy, a personal profile, and one learning and teaching publication:

- Article, or
- Book chapter, or
- Full conference paper

The publications submitted for the award are limited to those that have already been accepted or published.

Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference. **A template will also be provided to guide applicants.**

Advanced:

Entries must include a portfolio of evidence. Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference.

The portfolio should comprise (but is not limited to):

- A brief introduction highlighting your roles and responsibilities at the UFS;
- A description of your learning and teaching context;
- A list of your publications (including discipline-specific publications and those in the field of learning and teaching);
- A list of conference papers delivered (including discipline-specific conference papers and those in the field of learning and teaching); and
- A discussion of the findings and successes of your research and what they have meant for your learning and teaching context.

The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers. The total narrative should not exceed 10 pages.



All claims made in the narrative section need to be substantiated by evidence. This can be in the form of examples described within the reflective narrative itself or references or hyperlinks to appendices. If appendices are included, they should not exceed 20 pages and should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the narrative. Appendices should be sensibly included. **A template will be provided to guide applicants.** The total length of the portfolio should be a maximum of **30 pages**.

Kovsie Phahamisa Award for Short Learning Programmes

Entries must include a portfolio of evidence (SLP portfolio). Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference.

The following information must be provided:

A brief introduction to highlight your current role and responsibilities at the UFS and your approach to the design and presentation of the specific SLP (why you developed the SLP the way you did).

The portfolio should comprise a reflective narrative about:

- The target audience of the SLP;
- The design and development of the SLP in relation to the target audience;
- The teaching approach and practices used, and their effectiveness;
- The promotion of participant learning;
- The development and support of participants;
- The assessment practices;
- The use of feedback and reflection to improve the SLP;
- How the SLP met the needs of the target audience and improved their learning.

The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers. If the portfolio is online, the total reflective narrative should not exceed 6 pages. All claims made in the narrative need to be substantiated by evidence. This can be in the form of examples described within the reflective narrative itself or references or hyperlinks to appendices. If appendices are included, they should not exceed 20 pages and should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the reflective narrative.

Appendices should be sensibly included. A template will also be provided to guide applicants. The total length of the portfolio should be a maximum of 26 pages.

Most Valued Professional Award

Entries will take the format of a portfolio of evidence. Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference.

The portfolio should comprise:

- An introduction containing your learning and teaching context (what you do and why you do it this way);
- A description of your project and/or your contribution to learning and teaching; and
- A reflective narrative about your development.

The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers. The total narrative should not exceed **10 pages**. Contributions should be substantiated by evidence. This can be in the form of examples in the narrative itself or references or hyperlinks to appendices. If appendices are included, they should not exceed **20 pages** and should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the narrative.

Appendices should be included sensibly. A template will be provided to guide applicants. The total length of the portfolio should be a maximum of 30 pages.



Vice-Chancellor's Award: Learning and Teaching

Entries must include a portfolio of evidence (teaching portfolio). Applicants must present during the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Conference.

The following information must be provided:

A brief introduction to highlight your current role and responsibilities at the UFS and your philosophy of teaching (why you teach the way you do).

The portfolio should comprise a reflective narrative about your:

- Teaching approach and practice, and the effectiveness thereof;
- Promotion of student learning;
- Student development and support;
- Curriculum and course development;
- Assessment practices;
- Mentoring and coaching (pertaining to learning and teaching);
- Use of feedback and reflection to improve learning and teaching;
- Professional development and recognition of teaching; and
- Research and scholarship on learning and teaching.

The content can be structured in any way the applicant prefers. If the portfolio is online, the total reflective narrative part should not exceed 10 pages. All claims made in the narrative need to be substantiated by evidence. This can be in the form of examples described within the reflective narrative itself or references or hyperlinks to appendices. If appendices are included, they should not exceed 20 pages and should only include excerpts pertinent to particular statements in the reflective narrative.

Appendices should be sensibly included. A template will also be provided to guide applicants. The total length of the portfolio should be a maximum of 30 pages.

Departmental Learning and Teaching Award

Entries must include a portfolio of evidence and will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers.

This portfolio should comprise:

- An introduction to the department, its learning and teaching philosophy, and the approach the department follows to enhance and develop the quality of learning and teaching;
- A summary of departmental staff members' participation in learning and teaching workshops, seminars, webinars, and other related activities;
- A discussion of departmental initiatives to improve and promote quality learning and teaching (such as learning and teaching projects, CoP membership, institutional presentations, etc.); and
- An appendices section providing evidence of the learning and teaching activities the department has taken part in (e.g., proof of attendance, awards, conference presentations, etc).

The portfolio should be 5 – 8 pages in length (excluding the appendices) and information should be substantiated by evidence. Please note that the focus is on the department as a whole and that the portfolio should highlight the department and staff members' involvement in different activities that promote quality learning and teaching. A template will be provided to guide departments in compiling the portfolio.



LEARNING AND TEACHING REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR 2024

The review panel may consist of but is not limited to Vice-Deans: Teaching and Learning, Faculty Teaching and Learning Managers, Academic Support Professionals, members of CTL Management, previous award winners, and external reviewers from other national/international higher education institutions.

THE AWARDS

Up to 19 awards may be given in total across all six categories. All award winners and runners-up will be announced at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching award ceremony, which will take place in October 2024 at the UFS.

Please note: The best Qwaqwa and the best Bloemfontein/South campus conference paper presentations in the Innovation in Learning and Teaching awards category, will each receive an award. The winners will be determined by the scores of the live reviews during the conference.

Winners in each category are incentivised as follows:

	1 st place	2 nd place
Innovating my curriculum through assessment	R10 000	R5 000
Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation	R10 000	R5 000
Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools	R10 000	R5 000
Innovating my curriculum by redesigning or renewing my module	R10 000	R5 000
Kovsie Phahamisa Award for Short Learning Programmes	R10 000	R5 000
Most Valued Professional	R10 000	R5 000
Research in Learning and Teaching	Emerging R10 000	Advanced R10 000
Best Innovation in Learning and Teaching conference paper	BFN/SC R10 000	QQ R10 000
Departmental award	BFN/SC R10 000	QQ R10 000
Vice-Chancellor's Award	R25 000	

****Incentives are intended to be used for research purposes and will only be paid into the recipient's research entity.***

Should you require more clarity or information regarding the awards or the conference, please contact Thuto Mvimbe (Mvimbetl@ufs.ac.za) or Dalene Meintjes (MeintjesM@ufs.ac.za).



Submission and evaluation process

All abstract and portfolio entries need to be submitted by the following deadlines:

- Abstracts: **14 June 2024** (with feedback between **15 - 22 July 2024**); and
- Portfolios: **15 July 2024**.

Entries are evaluated according to rubric criteria:

- Rubrics will be shared with applicants.
- No fewer than three reviewers are selected per category.

All presentations will be displayed on the BOB Blackboard Organisation and CTL website after the awards ceremony.

Receiving of awards:

- Award winners will receive their certificates at the Annual UFS Learning and Teaching Awards ceremony, which will take place in October 2024 at the UFS.
- All applicants will be invited to the awards ceremony.
- Up to 19 awards can be given across all six categories. Reviewers reserve the right not to confer a specific award.
- Award winners receive a monetary incentive, which will be paid into their research entity.
- In the case of a team entry and/or tie, the award money will be divided equally between the recipients.
- Should a category only receive two entries, the reviewers may decide whether to award a second place depending on the merit and quality of the entry.
- Award recipients are kindly requested to supply the organising team with a research entity number to complete an entity transfer.

We look forward to receiving your submission!