



Wayamba University of Sri Lanka Award for Excellence in Teaching

1. Purpose and Context

- 1.1 Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (WUSL) recognises staff achievements in teaching by offering teaching awards.
- 1.2 The awards support the strategic goals of the University and act as a mode for monitoring, recognizing and celebrating achievements of the teachers.
- 1.3 This document applies to currently-employed permanent academic staff.
- 1.4 The teaching awards acknowledge staff whose outstanding dedication, creativity and excellence in performance and service have had, or are having, a significant impact on the University's progress towards achieving its mission.
- 1.5 The Awards for Teaching Excellence are annual awards issued by the Vice-Chancellor of WUSL.
- 1.6 The aims of the awards are to:
 - a) recognise and reward excellence;
 - b) impart the best-practice and excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning at the University;
 - c) boost morale and productivity of staff;
 - d) foster ongoing professional development;
 - e) encourage loyalty and commitment to the University; and
 - f) provide a platform to showcase staff achievements.
- 1.7 The categories of awards are:
 - a. **Early Career Teaching Excellence Award**, which supports the work done by early career academic staff in providing outstanding learning experiences for students;
 - b. **The Vice-Chancellor's Award for the Excellence in Teaching**, which is the premier University teaching award for individual Senior Academic staff who demonstrate the capacity to work innovatively and in an exemplary manner and who achieve excellence in the nominated area of activity related to student learning.

1.8 Presentation of Awards

The WUSL Teaching Excellence Awards will be presented at a special ceremony presided by the Chancellor/Vice Chancellor. Citations for Teaching Excellence Awards may be presented by the Dean of the Faculty or the Head/Director of the Unit/Center of the winner. Winners will receive a Certificate and Engraved Plaque.

Further, the WUSL will use the following mechanisms to acknowledge a teaching ward:

- The name of the award recipient is placed on a plaque in the department/faculty
- The individual is acknowledged as the award recipient in university newsletter and website.
- An email message is sent to all staff of the university indicating that the individual has received the award.

1.9 Obligations of Award Winners

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.

This has to be arranged by the Faculty of which the winner belong to.

1.10 Application stand-down periods:

For previous award winners, there is a stand down period of three (3) years for re-application in the same category of the 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.

Members of the Awards Selection Committee are not eligible to apply in that year.

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

2. The Early Career Teaching Excellence Award

The Early Career Teaching Excellence Award category recognises learning and teaching contributions of Early Career Academics demonstrated by evidence of positive impact on student learning.

Eligibility

The Early Career Teaching Excellence Award is open to permanent academic staff of the WUSL with no more than five years cumulative experience after promoted or recruited as a Senior Lecturer Grade II. The five years can be non-sequential and must be counted on a semester basis. Breaks in continuity, periods of maternity leave of four months or greater, research and study leave will be excluded in calculating the time period and such approved leave do not have an impact on eligibility.

The applicant must have fulfilled academic accountability (work norms) according to the WUSL accepted criteria during the past 3 years. The workloads must have been accepted by the Faculty and the Senate.

A teacher is eligible only once for the Early Career Teaching Excellence Award in his/her career.

3. The Vice-Chancellor's Award for the Excellence in Teaching

Eligibility

The Vice-Chancellor's Award for the Excellence in Teaching is open to all academic staff who lead innovation and drive transformation in learning and teaching in their academic units that enables staff and students to succeed.

The applicant must have fulfilled academic accountability (work norms) according to the WUSL accepted criteria during the past 3 years. The workloads must have been accepted by the Faculty and the Senate.

4. Application Procedure

A call for teaching excellence award nominations is typically advertised at the beginning of each year by the Office of the Vice Chancellor. Each application for an award should contain the following elements;

1. A completed nomination form;
2. A teaching portfolio with a written statement addressing the award criteria; and
3. Three (3) endorsements (endorsed by the relevant Dean or Director of Teaching Center / Unit and at least another one from an internal academic)
4. Curriculum vitae

Additional supporting evidence may also be submitted where required. Supporting evidence should be explained in the portfolio. Supporting evidence may include short videos, websites, teaching survey or benchmarking results, teaching materials, public recognition of excellence, peer review feedback, student feedback, testimonials, or other appropriate content as specified below.

1. Application form (including details of two referees)

Details must be provided of at least one internal referee who is able to comment on the applicant's contribution. The persons endorse the applicant should not be the referees of the same applicant. Referees may be contacted for additional commentary on the application.

The application form must also include a short summary of the application (maximum 100 words), written in third person by the nominee.

2. Teaching Portfolio prepared by the applicant

The Portfolio must not exceed 6,000 words (i.e. approximately 12 pages of single-spaced text), and should be in 11 point Arial or Calibri standard font.

The Portfolio must contain a written statement. The written statement is the main part of the application. It provides detailed description of their activities and contributions, and should demonstrate a reflective approach, in which the applicant/s not only describe the nature of the activities, but demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the impact that the activities have had on student learning and engagement.

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.

3. Statements of support (maximum one page each) from three (3) endorsers:

Three one-page statements from the endorsers must be included. They are not included in the word count.

The completed application must have the endorsement of the Dean of the Faculty or Director of the Center or Head of the Unit.

The Second endorser must be a Senior Professor/Professor/Associate Professor and the third endorser can be anyone in the Senior Lecturer Grade II category or above. The second and third endorsers may be from WUSL or any other University/ recognized Higher Education Institute

4. Curriculum Vitae (a condensed CV with maximum 3 pages)

The curriculum vitae should outline the nominee's educational qualifications, employment history, teaching positions held and teaching experience.

Six (6) copies each of the application form, Teaching Portfolio, and the three (3) endorsers' statements (including the Dean's/Director's/Head's endorsement) should be sent to the Senior Assistant Registrar/Academic before the deadline given in the advertisement. An electronic copy of the portfolio (PDF and MS Word or equivalent) should be emailed to Senior Assistant Registrar / Academic for verification of the word count.

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

The Awards Selection Committee 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.

Content of the Teaching 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. Excellence across a range of teaching modes will be considered. Portfolios may have a significant component of postgraduate research supervision and evidence of excellence in undergraduate and/or taught postgraduate teaching. Applicants are encouraged to supply evidence of the impact of their teaching on student learning outcomes.

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;
- 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).

Evidence

Applicants must provide evidence in support of their claims against the selection criteria, and will be expected to draw upon a variety of evidence, which may include:

- Self-assessment, reflection professional development, and scholarship/publications
- Student and/or staff feedback (e.g. surveys and evaluations, unsolicited feedback),
- Student learning (e.g. assessment results, grade distributions, retention and completion data, learning analytics).
- Peer review (e.g. review classroom practice, curriculum content, or learning materials, mentoring relationships, review of scholarly contribution and research relating to teaching and learning).
- 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
- 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 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;
 - 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, textbook publication);

5. Selection Procedure

The judging of the applications will be carried out by the **Award Selection Committee**, appointed by the Senate. The Committee will be composed of three members of the Senate (preferably, Senior Professor/Professor/Associate Professor categories in any discipline) and two external members affiliated to another University or Higher Education Institute with high calibre of teaching and learning. The Committee will be chaired by the Vice Chancellor.

The Award Selection Committee will make a holistic assessment of each portfolio (including the strength of the applicant's teaching or leadership philosophy, critical reflection and significant impact on student learning typically over at least a two year period), with particular emphasis on the five (5) criteria given below.

Selection criteria

All nominees for a Teaching Award will be assessed on evidence they provide in relation to the following criteria:

1. Approaches to learning and teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn

These may include: fostering student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning; contributing to the development of students' critical thinking skills, analytical skills and scholarly values; encouraging student engagement through the enthusiasm shown for learning and teaching; inspiring and motivating students through high-level communication, presentation and interpersonal skills.

2. Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field

These may include: developing and presenting coherent and imaginative resources for student learning; implementing research-led approaches to learning and teaching; demonstrating up-to-date knowledge of the field of study in the design of the curriculum and the creation of resources for learning; integrating student and industry (where relevant) perspectives into developing curriculum; demonstrating innovation to improve integration and delivery of a unit; communicating clear objectives and expectations for student learning

3. Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning

These may include: integrating assessment strategies with the specific aims and objectives for student learning; providing timely, worthwhile feedback to students on their learning; using a variety of assessment and feedback strategies; implementing both formative and summative assessment methods to different contexts and diverse student needs.

4. Respect and support for the development of students as individuals

These may include: participating in the effective and empathetic guidance and advising of students; assisting students from equity and other demographic subgroups to participate and achieve success in their courses; influencing the overall academic, social and cultural experience of higher education

5. Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching

These may include: showing advanced skills in evaluation of teaching and reflective practice; using student/peer feedback to reflect on and enhance unit development; identifying challenges encountered and developing methods to respond to these challenges; participating in and contributing to professional activities related to learning and teaching; coordination, management and leadership of courses and student learning; conducting and publishing research related to

teaching and learning; demonstrating leadership through activities that have broad influence on the profession; demonstrating leadership and teamwork to enhance coursework teaching and student experiences such as curriculum development with colleagues, involvement in mentoring and/or peer review.

Applicants for Excellence in Teaching Awards must address above five (5) teaching excellence criteria in their written statement.

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria used by the Selection Committee to evaluate applications are:

- Strength of Evidence: the extent to which the claims for excellence are supported by the evidence provided;
- Range of evidence: a range with different types of evidence provided;
- Impact: evidence of positive impact on student learning;
- A scholarly approach: evidence of applied scholarship or the applicant's engagement with the learning and teaching literature and the application of that literature to their teaching practice;
- Innovation: the degree of creativity, innovation and resourcefulness demonstrated; and,
- Sustained effectiveness: evidence of sustained effectiveness over time;
- Recognition: evidence of recognition gained from fellow staff, the institution, the broader professional community, and/or the higher education sector.

While most awards celebrate achievement over the most recent two years, submissions may include further background to contextualise applications.

The Selection Committee members will evaluate each applicant for above five criteria independently based on the documents submitted and average marks are calculated by the Chairperson of the Committee to decide the award.

The five (5) criteria will be given equal weight (20% each).

Marks are assigned in assessment of each criterion as follows:

- Outstanding Indicators: 16-20 marks
- Good quality indicators: 11-15 marks
- Satisfactory indicators: 6-10 marks
- Marginal indicators: 0-5 marks

Member of the Selection Committee should provide a brief justification in writing for the marks given for each criterion.

An applicant must aggregate a minimal overall average of 70% for the eligibility of an award. The Selection Committee reserves the right not to give out a Teaching Excellence Award if nominees fail to satisfy minimal eligibility requirements or if there are fewer than 3 nominees per award category. The Selection Committee has the right to extend the application period in the case that there are less than three nominations. Award nominees must be notified by the committee chair if an award is not given.

The final award shall be approved by the Senate and Council.