Teaching and Learning Awards 2025-26

Award for Exceptional Contribution to Learning:
Guidance on completing the application form

This award recognises individual UCD employees, engaged directly in teaching and or facilitating student learning, for their exceptional contribution to the enhancement of the learner experience. Examples of employees that this award may apply to include tutors, teaching assistants and laboratory demonstrators, occasional lecturers, fieldwork instructors, teaching fellows, clinical tutors, language assistants/instructors, researchers, career & skills consultants, educational technologists, librarians, technical officers and entrepreneurial specialists. This is not an exhaustive list.

Eligibility

This award is open to individual UCD employees who are engaged directly in teaching and or facilitating student learning. UCD faculty are **not** eligible to apply for this award.

Important Note: Recipients of a 2023-24 College-level Teaching and Learning Award are not eligible to apply in this 2025-26 award cycle. Recipients of a University-level Teaching and Learning Award in any previous award cycle are not eligible to reapply at College or University level.

Please consult the UCD T&L Awards webpage for fuller details and FAQs about eligibility.

Adjudication Criteria – Award for Exceptional Contribution to Learning
1. Approaches to teaching and learning that engage, motivate, and inspire students to learn;
2. Development and or use of effective learning resources/tools/technologies that support and enhance student learning;
3. Significant impact on the quality of the student educational experience;
4. Provision of effective feedback and academic mentoring to students.

For the Exceptional Contribution to Learning Award applicants should address **any three of the four** adjudication criteria. You are not expected to provide evidence of excellence in all areas but should build a profile that highlights your achievements. The award focuses on exceptional contribution to the enhancement of the learner experience.

Your application should provide a reflective and evidence-based account of your contribution to teaching and or facilitating student learning. In addressing the criteria, you should include a **rationale** for the approaches you take and **evidence the impact** of your practice on student learning. Your account should be based around carefully selected

examples from your practice and should make clear **what** you do, **why/how** you do it and **how you know** that this is effective.

You are advised not to duplicate examples and evidence across your three chosen criteria. The quality of the examples is more important that the quantity of examples that you provide. Focusing on 'why' you took a particular approach and 'how you know' that it is effective will enable you to include the **evidence-base** that informs and underpins your practice.

The adjudication panel will receive access to view your nomination(s); therefore, there is no need to quote nomination text directly in your application. Other forms of evidence should be incorporated into your application.

The maximum word count permissible for the combined responses to your chosen three criteria is 1200 words. The application is intended to be a text-based application. You may choose to include a table and or figure to illustrate a key point or present evidence, however, the total word count of your application includes all words and numbers, including those presented in a table and or figure. The inclusion of weblinks is not permitted. These are considered supplementary information to the application and therefore should not be included. Failure to comply with the word count and or inclusion of web links may result in your application being deemed ineligible. This is in the interest of fairness to all applicants.

You may wish to use the list of examples below to identify area/items that you feel that you could provide evidence of effective and impactful practice. Not all examples will be relevant to individual applicants, and you should not feel limited to the examples provided.

Approaches to teaching and learning that engage, motivate and inspire students to learn

> For example:
> - encouraging student engagement through a variety of active learning methods
> - inspiring and motivating students through the use of authentic (real-world) profession/discipline specific problems, cases and/or examples
> - inspiring and motivating students through effective communication, presentation and interpersonal skills
> - fostering student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning
> - contributing to the development of students' critical thinking skills, analytical skills and scholarly values
> - organising effective laboratory work, fieldwork, seminars or discussion groups that maximise student learning
> - actively seeking, reflecting upon and responding to student feedback.

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Development and or use of effective learning resources/tools/technologies that support and enhance student learning

For example:
- development of high-quality learning materials that enrich teaching, learning and assessment of your subject
- development of resources that support the introduction of an entirely new or challenging topic within the subject
- effective use of equipment and or technologies to support learning and or aligns with what graduates might be expected to utilise in their future careers
- using current issues/research in your subject to assist students to engage with and relate to the subject matter
- demonstrating specialist knowledge through the design and or use of innovative/ novel teaching, learning and assessment materials.

Significant impact on the quality of the student educational experience

For example:
- commitment to an equitable learning experience supporting all students to achieve their full potential
- facilitating the development of inclusive communities that reflect the diverse cultural mix of our students
- engaging with students as partners in enhancing their educational experience
- creating and supporting opportunities for students to engage in co-curricular activities, work placements or study abroad
- influencing the overall academic, social and cultural experience of a UCD education.

Provision of effective feedback and academic mentoring to students

For example:
- adopting effective approaches to enhancing student learning through feedback on students' assessment and/or their learning activities (formative assessment)
- utilising a variety of feedback strategies, including opportunities for students to judge their own work and or that of their peers (e.g. self-assessment, peer review)
- participating in the effective and empathetic mentoring and advising of students
- demonstrating respect and support for the development of students as individuals.

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Use of Generative AI in the Application Writing Process

The principles of integrity, fairness and trustworthiness are critical to the reputation and value of the UCD Teaching and Learning Awards. Your application must be your own work, reflecting your voice, ideas and experience.

In the final section of the application you must disclose if they have used AI in the application writing process. Where an applicant has used AI, details of the tools used and the tasks performed must be specified. Disclosing the use of AI supports transparency and trust between applicants, reviewers and the wider university community.