

UCW Teaching and Learning Awards: Guidelines

Revised February 2023

University Canada West (UCW) recognizes teaching excellence and values teaching that is student-centred, inclusive, 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. These guidelines outline the process for recognizing teaching and learning excellence at UCW.

Award Categories

1. Sustained Excellence in Teaching (2 awards/year)
2. Sessional Excellence in Teaching (2 awards/year)
3. Leadership in Teaching and Learning (1 formal & informal award/year – see eligibility section)

If an award is not made in one or more categories in a particular year, an award may be assigned to another category if the next best ranked application in that category is of sufficient merit.

Benefits to Receiving an Award

1. Receiving an institutional-level award provides a basis for applying for external awards and recognition by external to UCW.
2. The recognition can be listed on your CV.
3. You will be recognized at an upcoming fall and spring/summer convocation ceremonies. (Where applicable, efforts will be made to present the award at the ceremony for the program in which the recipient teaches).
4. You will be showcased to the broader community by the UCW & GUS through various means such as newsletters, stories, or presentation opportunities.
5. Your name will be added to the UCW Wall of Teaching & Learning Excellence.
6. You will receive a monetary prize of \$1,000.
7. You will have a reason to pause, reflect and celebrate your own successes when putting together your application.
8. If you are ranked faculty, the award may be noted and contribute to your promotion and merit pool applications.

Selection Procedure

Members of the Honorary Degrees and Awards Senate Committee will adjudicate these awards. The adjudication committee reserves the right to offer an applicant an award in a different category than applied.

Community Opportunities for Award Recipients

The awards are designed to promote a culture of high-quality teaching, learning and related research, and to stimulate sharing of ideas on innovation and excellence in teaching and learning. Award recipients will have the opportunity to make their teaching philosophies and/or practices more widely known throughout the University. Activities may include seminars/workshops on a specific aspect of teaching, sharing created resources, assisting colleagues in professional development, mentoring, etc.

Eligibility

Applicants *must be current employees* at UCW. In addition:

- The **Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching** requires the applicant show sustained excellence **over a minimum of 3 years** (full-time course load) **at UCW**. The applicant must be in a full-time faculty role at the time of application. However, the period of sustained excellence may include previous years and courses as a UCW sessional instructor.
- The **Award for Sessional Excellence in Teaching** requires the applicant to have completed **4 teaching terms at UCW with a minimum of 4 courses**.
- The **Award for Leadership in Teaching & Learning**:
 - **Formal leadership** as part of their position profile (e.g., faculty, chairs, deans, faculty-specific educational leadership roles, directors)
 - **Informal leadership** for staff who do not hold formal leadership positions but have a sustained and beneficial influence on others' teaching and the advancement of student learning more broadly while pursuing standard teaching and service responsibilities.

Application Stand-down Periods

- **Previous University award applicants:** Stand-down period of at least 2 rounds for those who applied for an award in any category (i.e., 1 year). For example, an applicant who was unsuccessful in both rounds in 2022 would next be eligible in the 2nd round of 2023.
- **Current members of the Awards Committee** are not eligible to apply.

Application Procedure

UCW Teaching Excellence Awards operate on self, peer, student, or Chair-nominations. If self, peer, or student-nominated, please ensure your Chair is informed about your application.

The application form **must be accompanied** by a Teaching or Leadership Portfolio *prepared by the applicant* and one-page (maximum) statements of support from *two* endorsers or groups of endorsers:

1. **Endorsement Statement 1:** A full-time/continuing UCW faculty member or instructor (or group of faculty/instructors) employed in their role for more than 3 years.
2. **Endorsement Statement 2:**
 - a. *Teaching or Leadership Award for a faculty member:* A current or former UCW student (or group of students) who has/have been taught by the applicant within the past 3 years. Note: for student-nominated applications, submit one statement written and signed by all four nominees.
 - b. *Leadership Award for a staff member:* A current UCW colleague (or group of colleagues) who work(s) with the nominee and can speak to their leadership activities.

The Portfolio must not exceed **5,000 words** (approximately 9 pages of single-spaced text in 11-point font). The one-page statements *including* student/peer comments and any additional letters of support are part of the word count. Additional material may not be submitted. While guidance and feedback may be sought from others, the task of writing the Portfolio should be completed by the applicant. Please take care not to include personal or sensitive information about colleagues or students in your portfolio.

Applications are to be submitted electronically to UCW Senate Secretariat senate@ucanwest.ca by the date indicated on the application form.

Electronic applications must comprise:

- A single collated PDF with:
 - The application form (cover page)
 - Two (2), one-page endorser statements, and
 - The applicant's Portfolio.
- A MS Word copy of the Portfolio only for verification of word count.

Elaborate production of portfolios is discouraged including the use of "professional" publishing services. Rather, they should be simple word-processed documents which may include images.

The Awards committee reserves the right not to consider applications that do not meet the criteria including Portfolios exceeding the 5,000-word limit.

Selection Criteria

Sustained Excellence in Teaching

- Student and learning effects (including course and teaching evaluation summaries, evidence of achievement of learning outcomes) and associated critical reflection by the applicant
- Responsiveness to learner diversity
- Degree of innovation (application of new or different pedagogical approaches, technologies, course design and assessments)
- Commitment to UCW goals to foster a diverse and challenging learning environment focused on practical application of knowledge, be relevant, accessible, and innovative and, build student competencies in scholarship, leadership, and responsible citizenship
- Contributions to the teaching community

Sessional Excellence in Teaching

- Student and learning effects (including course and teaching evaluation summaries, evidence of achievement of learning outcomes) and associated critical reflection by the applicant
- Responsiveness to learner diversity
- Degree of innovation (application of new or different pedagogical approaches, technologies, course design and assessments)
- Commitment to UCW goals to foster a diverse and challenging learning environment focused on practical application of knowledge, be relevant, accessible, and innovative and, build student competencies in scholarship, leadership, and responsible citizenship

Leadership in Teaching & Learning

- Scale of the applicant's impact on 1. Student learning and 2. The way in which teaching is understood or practiced by others
- The nature and extent of the applicant's role in achieving that impact

- Commitment to UCW goals to foster a diverse and challenging learning environment focused on practical application of knowledge, be relevant, accessible, and innovative and, build student competencies in scholarship, leadership, and responsible citizenship
- Record of sustained leadership contribution

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 on the impact of their teaching or leadership on student learning outcomes.

Sustained & Sessional Excellence in Teaching

Excellence across a range of teaching modes will be considered. The Portfolio should be written in an engaging and accessible manner and include the following statements:

1. **Overarching statement**

- Career overview: teaching roles and responsibilities, courses taught, numbers of students, student supervision
- Past and current teaching and supervision activities that form the basis for the application
- Applicant's philosophy as a teacher and (optionally) a supervisor
- Teaching and learning design including course content and design, teaching, and learning methods, and assessment approaches
- Intended learning outcomes for all students
- Professional development and leadership
- Benefits from the applicant's teaching, mentorship or supervision activities for students, colleagues, and the University

2. **Evidence** See the Appendix for examples.

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 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 & Learning

This award recognizes activities that have had a transformative impact on higher education learning and teaching beyond the classroom and encourages a culture of distributed leadership. The purpose of this award is to recognize *excellence in leadership of teaching and learning*, not leadership of students.

The Portfolio should include:

- A statement describing the applicant's philosophy of educational leadership at UCW, including the applicant's rationale for going beyond their personal teaching or training practice to enhance teaching and learning more broadly.



- A description of the leadership contributions that form the basis of the application and demonstrates their impact for teaching and learning at the department, program, University, national and/or international level
- Reflection on how the applicant's approaches to leadership contributed to the success of the outcomes described

Appendix: Examples of Evidence for Sustained & Sessional Excellence in Teaching Applications

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. When 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 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 learning outcomes achievement

- Evidence & Documentation section of [TeachWell@UoA](#) (p.11), University of Auckland
- [Documenting Teaching Effectiveness](#), Ohio State University
- Chapter III of Cornell University's [Teaching Evaluation Handbook](#)

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
- 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 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

- Integration of Indigenous perspectives and world views
- Promoting discussion and use of Indigenous teaching and learning frameworks
- Contribution to the University's responsibilities to Indigenous students
- 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
- Presentations of teaching methods and/or teaching innovation

Evidence of leadership in teaching may include

- 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 instructors
- Contribution to development of higher education teaching standards and/or teaching and learning
- Significant leadership of engagement with industry to establish a professional/internship program
- Development of teaching materials to support university teaching that have been evaluated for their impact on learners (e.g., open educational resources/texts) and/or widely adopted by others (e.g., textbook 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

Reference & Credit

These guidelines were adopted and adapted from the University of Auckland's website: *University of Auckland Teaching Excellence Awards* (July 23, 2022) <https://bit.ly/3zy2KwL>