



## Regional Awards for Excellence in Higher Education Teaching

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. Application Process

Who can be considered for the award?

The award is open to all teaching staff in the partner institutions of the Midwest regional cluster (i.e. MIC, TUS and UL).

How does the award application process work?

Teaching staff may nominate themselves, or indeed nominate a colleague, for the award. In order to nominate yourself or a colleague, you will be invited to submit a nomination form to your local, employing institution by 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2023. Support will be provided to assist you in the preparation of your initial teaching portfolio which is to be submitted to your local institution by 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2024. This is reviewed by an external expert who will provide a short-list of no more than three candidates in each of the participating institutions to progress to the final stage of the process. In April 2024, each local institution will then forward a shortlist of nominees to the External Panel for consideration for the regional award.

Do I need to have a teaching qualification to enter?

No.

#### 2. Short-listing

If I apply for the award, will I automatically be short-listed?

No. The process for consideration for the regional award requires applicants to first apply to their local, employing institution. Screening will take place and following same, successful applicants will be invited to submit for the regional award.

How many people will be short-listed?

It is envisaged that a maximum of 9 people (a maximum of three applications from each partner institution) from within the regional cluster will be short-listed.

How much of a time commitment is likely to be involved if I am short-listed?

The time commitment will really depend on how much work you have already done in reflecting on and providing evidence of your performance and impact as a teacher. Therefore, it is likely to differ from candidate to candidate.

If I entered last year, can I enter again this year?

Applicants can enter once in a two year period. The rationale for this re-application period is that it allows enough time to evolve and develop one's practice based on feedback and to reflect on it within a portfolio. The experience of reflecting on your teaching that this process encourages should strengthen your practice as a teacher and should put you in a stronger position when you enter a second or subsequent time.

### 3. Process

What forms of information can I use to provide evidence of my teaching effectiveness?

Within your teaching portfolio you can include voluntary and confidentially gathered feedback on teaching, evidence of innovative approaches, data about learner impact or other sources of information such as student surveys, focus group feedback, peer observation reports, video evidence, student performance data, teaching materials, published or unpublished reflective/research/reports or papers, and evidence of innovation to provide evidence of your teaching effectiveness. All evidence gathered and used at every stage in the process will be completely voluntary and confidential, and you can choose whether or not you want to invoke certain types of evidence at each stage in the process.

If you make it to the final shortlist, you will be asked to provide a recording of one of your teaching sessions, or a sample of no more than three teaching sessions, totalling 50 minutes. This recording will be reviewed as part of the final award decision process. An international panel, comprised of expert teaching and learning specialists from Ireland and the UK, have been recruited to adjudicate the awards.

What is the recommended word limit guiding the design of a teaching portfolio?

The teaching portfolio should not exceed 4,000 words. A selection of appropriately signposted appendices may accompany each portfolio. Should you be short-listed you will then be required to provide your entire portfolio in one electronic file or as an eportfolio using a platform of your choice for consideration by the external panel.

When is the deadline?

Completed portfolios will need to be submitted to your local, employing Institute by the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.

What will happen if I win?

The overall award winner will be presented with an award at a special ceremony and will receive a financial award which can be used to develop and promote his/her teaching activities.

### 4. Preparation and Support

Where can I get advice about preparing my application?

On-going support will be available from Teaching and Learning personnel throughout the process. An initial workshop on the process will take place online in mid-November with a follow-up supports and seminars later in the process.

Will I get feedback?

Yes. Your application will be reviewed by an external expert, who will provide in-depth feedback on your portfolio which might help you to sustain and enhance your teaching performance impact in the future.

What if my subject area is very technical? Will that put me at a disadvantage?

No. Differences between disciplinary areas will be taken into account and you will not be disadvantaged if you teach in an area that students typically find difficult or challenging.

### 5. Professional Benefits

How will this process benefit me professionally?

As teaching and learning is becoming an increasing focus of strategic attention across further and higher education, being short-listed for or winning this award provides clear evidence of your commitment to teaching and your performance as a teacher. The process of preparing a teaching portfolio will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on and gain increased insight into your practice as a higher education teacher.

Will this award system give me a teaching qualification?

No. However, a detailed portfolio, produced according to principles of international best practice, may position you very well for achieving accreditation if you decide to pursue this option subsequently.