Thinking about applying for a National Teaching Fellowship?

A series of workshops run by the Association of National Teaching Fellows in association with the HEA, March 2018
Background

- The purpose of the NTFS is to recognise, reward and celebrate individuals who make an outstanding impact on student outcomes and the teaching profession.
- The scheme is organised and run by the Higher Education Academy.
- The UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel advises on the criteria, the processes of assessment and moderation, and the selection of the winners. The panel includes representatives from the UK nations and other relevant stakeholders.

Most of the text in these slides is taken directly from the HEA wguidance, [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/awards#section-2](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/awards#section-2) to which you should refer for more details.
A developing scheme

• It’s been running since 2000;
• There are now 815 NTFs across all disciplines and types of HEI.
• The scheme has changed over the years and is changing further now.
• In 2018 the HEA wants to emphasise the accolade itself and the benefit of being an NTF even though there isn’t necessarily a cash award.

Advice from ANTF: It’s still really worth doing!
Key things to note for 2018!

• Closing date **15.00 30\(^\text{th}\) April 2018**
• Nominations must be submitted by NTFS institutional contact.
• email now [ntfs@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:ntfs@heacademy.ac.uk) for more information

**ANTF advice: don’t leave submission to the last minute and get a time for signing it into the VC’s diary!**
What’s worth noting this year?

- Increase in word length to 1,500 per criterion;
- Potentially no prize fund.
- No CV to be included.
- Opened to all HEA subscribers as a benefit of subscription, and to non-subscribers for a nominal charge.
- A nominee should be a Fellow (any category) of the HEA or be working towards Fellowship.
- The marking scheme shows clearly how points are awarded;
- There’s an emphasis on the importance of it being one’s own work and the HEA will use plagiarism software to check applications;
- There is a greater emphasis on the student voice and evidence from students, together with demonstrating your impact;
- You need to pre-register in order to upload an application. In the new NTFS guidelines HEA specify that institutional contacts need to re-register due to the new data protection legislation, since HEA need their systems to be up to date and for consent to be given: this is a change from previous years.

ANTF advice: pre-register now!
In 2018 the scheme has opened up to all HE providers across the four nations of the UK, including HE in FE and independent ‘alternative’ providers. Each institution in the UK is invited to nominate up to three individual members of staff who can clearly demonstrate having an outstanding impact on student outcomes and the profession. If you are a subscribing institution of the HEA, participation in the scheme is a benefit of subscription. For non-subscribing institutions, there is a nominal charge of £1,500 inclusive of VAT for up to three nominees.
Eligibility

- Eligible institutions are invited to nominate up to three individual members of staff who clearly demonstrate having an outstanding impact on student outcomes and the teaching profession.
- Guidance on selection by HEIs according to equality and diversity has been strengthened to avoid unconscious bias following feedback from ANTF.
- Applicants can be full time, part-time, fixed-term or permanent and can be in a wide variety of teaching and learning support roles.
- The text of the Claim should be the work of the nominee only.
What factors can influence success in NTF applications? (one NTF's view)

Importance of institutional support statement

Who?  
- proactive?
- where located?

Internal champions
- short AND long-term objectives

Development planning
- support for non-winners
- suggest 2 rounds of feedback
- need clear and well-publicised schedule

Timely internal process
- understanding and applying the criteria
- value of feedback from critical friend(s)

Integration with internal awards
- use of similar criteria in internal awards
- clear pathway from internal to external awards
- does the scheme and selection process have internal credibility?

Success at NTF is influenced by...

Culture of support and acceptance
- genuine interest from senior management
- teaching valued across the institution?

Track record
- Leeds (1) Now at 26 awards overall
- De Montfort (2) Has claimed to be "2nd highest" 20 'past and present'
- Huddersfield (3) 'leading for the last nine years'

Post-award follow-up and support
- supportive and efficient financial admin IF AWARDED
- using winners effectively: not using them as 'tokens'

Community support/review and feedback
- suggest a mix of internal and external review

Fair selection process
- Application must be 'individual's own work'

Links
3. https://www.hud.ac.uk/about/our-awards/first-for-teaching/

Peter Hartley  
prof peter1@me.com  
March 2018
Advice from Helen May, HEA on factors which can contribute to a successful application. NB these are not a tick list!

- Clearly defined context
- Structured narrative
- Use of publications
- Selective use of scholarly references, relevant to the individual’s context and claim
- Plain English
- Clearly expressed, reflective narrative
- Use of different sources of evidence, considering reach, value and impact
- Balance of both qualitative and quantitative evidence
- Use of cross-references within the claim.
From Helen May: common misconceptions about NTF applications:

• NTF is only for experienced professionals (No, it is open to staff at all stages of their career including early career)
• To be successful you need to have published (you can evidence impact without having done so)
• An NTF needs to evidence that their practice is innovative or creative (No, some practices are indeed innovative in a particular context but assessing outstanding impact, doesn’t depend on an individual being innovative or indeed creative)
• It is easier to get an NTF if you are using technology enhanced learning (No, some nominees are using TEL but others are not and having TEL doesn’t enhance a nominee’s chance of being successful)
• NTF need to have had international reach and impact (No, nominees can evidence high impact locally to be successful and this can be backed by the institutional support statement from the VC).
Question: can applicants whose HEI is not submitting candidates this year submit themselves? Answer from Helen May:

Yes, by representing themselves. They would still need a signed and completed statement of support from their institution VC/Principal. This is required and taken into account in the review process and acts as verification of the nominee’s claim. For those institutions, who subscribe to the HEA this is a benefit of subscription. For non-subscribing institutions, the fee of £1500 should be covered, ideally from the institution. Any queries related to charging should be sent by email to ntfs@heacademy.ac.uk.
What are the benefits to individuals?

• It is widely recognised in HE in the UK and internationally as an accolade that is difficult to achieve and is a mark of quality as awards are made each year from a large number of nominations.
• It opens doors: many NTFs find they can use the award as a springboard to progress their careers.
• You join a national community of like-minded professionals who are passionate about teaching.
• The ANTF network is a fantastically supportive community of learning and their annual symposia are enjoyable networking events.
What are the benefits for institutions?

• The scheme is increasingly used as a model to develop and extend university-wide schemes, aiming to raise the status of teaching and instil pride in the profession and student learning, and enhance universities’ reputations.

• It can be a focal point for discussions about professional development – past awards have enabled NTFs to capitalise on their status and bid for extra funding for research and projects to enhance learning and teaching, and achievement can also be used in evidence of institutional excellence e.g. for TEF.

• It can enable staff to cross boundaries, collaborating with colleagues in other disciplines and forging links with universities nationally and internationally.
Career stage, sustained impact and equal opportunities

- Eligible institutions are strongly encouraged to nominate individuals at any stage of their career who undertake any role(s) which clearly contribute to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- Nominees should demonstrate impact on student learning over a sustained period.
- The HEA is committed to equality of opportunity. In this process it ensures that no nominee is treated less favourably than others on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious or political beliefs, disability, marital status, social background, family circumstances, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, spent criminal convictions, age, or for any other unlawful reason. The HEA and the funders expect institutions to ensure their own processes to identify nominees are grounded in appropriate equality and diversity good practice.
Important to note:

- Nominations are made by a central contact at the institution (NTFS institutional contact) through an online system hosted by the HEA’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- The NTFS institutional contact will have been issued with a username and password for this system. Full instructions will be provided.

ANTF advice: institutional contacts need to familiarise yourselves with the portal soon!
Nomination documents should comprise as separate documents:

- Claim for National Teaching Fellowship: a statement written by the individual of how they demonstrate impact relevant to each of the three award criteria (maximum 4500 words).
- Signed Statement of Support from the institution’s Vice-Chancellor or equivalent, this document should be submitted as a Word document, however can also be submitted as a scanned PDF to include the signature (maximum 1000 words).
- Nomination Form available via the HEA website.
The three criteria

Criterion 1: Individual excellence:
Evidence of enhancing and transforming student outcomes and/or the teaching profession: demonstrating impact commensurate with the individual’s context and the opportunities afforded by it.

Criterion 2: Raising the profile of excellence:
Evidence of supporting colleagues and influencing support for student learning and/or the teaching profession; demonstrating impact and engagement beyond the nominee’s immediate academic or professional role.

Criterion 3: Developing excellence:
Evidence of the nominee’s commitment to and impact of ongoing professional development with regard to teaching and learning and/or learning support.
The Claim for National Teaching Fellowship:

- nominees are required to present their excellence claim against the three criteria (up to 1,500 words per criterion) with reference to examples of supporting evidence, which may include (but need not be confined to): student feedback and evaluations, feedback from peer observations, feedback from other national engagements, student support materials, work with other partner institutions and organisations.

- The decision of what constitutes appropriate evidence rests with the nominating institution and the individual nominee but nominees are encouraged to ensure that the student voice is explicit in their nomination.

- Individuals from various academic disciplines inevitably demonstrate different communication and analytical styles and this will be accounted for in the assessment process. As such there is no ‘style’ that is expected in applications and examples will be assessed and marked for their contribution to the criteria as a whole.
Signed Statement of Support:

- A statement made and signed by from the institution’s Vice Chancellor or equivalent using the downloadable pro-forma (max 1,000 words)
- It is recommended that the nominee’s claim for a NTF is read prior to composing the institutional supporting statement.
- Please provide evaluative comments under the 3 criteria. In particular, the statement should:
  - endorse the validity of the nominee’s claim for excellence,
  - provide an institutional context within which the nominee has been identified as outstanding,
  - provide confirmation of support of the nominee, should they be successful, in terms of carrying out the requirements associated with a National Teaching Fellowship,
  - provide any additional supporting information which might be most appropriately expressed by the Vice-Chancellor or equivalent rather than the nominee her/himself.
  - provide the name, job title and signature of the supporter (electronic signatures are permitted within this document)
Nomination Form:

• An on-line form completed by the nominee and available via the appropriate link. This covers background information about the nominee, 350 word personal profile, 50 word summary profile and two 20-word quotes.

• All sections must be completed in full.

• Personal profiles will not be assessed as part of the application. However, please note that personal profiles and quotes are a required component for a complete submission to the NTFS. These will be used by the HEA for promotional purposes when the winners are announced.

• In submitting images to the HEA, you are providing consent for the HEA to use your images for promotional purposes or publicity (the “Purpose”). You confirm that you are the owner of any intellectual property rights or have an appropriate licence to share your images with the HEA and for the HEA to use your images for the purpose.
Assessing the three criteria

• All nominees will be assessed on the evidence provided in the core nomination documents (Claim, and Statement of Support) in relation to each of the three criteria.
• You should ensure the relevant evidence is included under the correct criterion.

ANTF advice: when writing your application, be careful to note equal wording for each criterion.
Criterion 1: Individual excellence:
Evidence of enhancing and transforming student outcomes and/or the teaching profession; demonstrating impact commensurate with the individual’s context and the opportunities afforded by it.

This may, for example, be demonstrated by providing evidence of the impact of:

• stimulating students’ curiosity and interest in ways which inspire a commitment to learning;

• organising and presenting high quality resources in accessible, coherent and imaginative ways which in turn clearly enhance students’ learning;

• recognising and actively supporting the full diversity of student learning requirements;

• drawing upon the outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and professional practice in ways which add value to teaching and students’ learning;

• engaging with and contributing to the established literature or to the nominee’s own evidence base for teaching and learning.
Criterion 2: Raising the profile of excellence
Evidence of supporting colleagues and influencing support for student learning and/or the teaching profession; demonstrating impact and engagement beyond the nominee’s immediate academic or professional role.

This may, for example, be demonstrated by providing evidence of the impact of:

- making outstanding contributions to colleagues’ professional development in relation to promoting and enhancing student learning;
- contributing to departmental/faculty/institutional/national initiatives to facilitate students’ learning;
- contributing to and/or supporting meaningful and positive change with respect to pedagogic practice, policy and/or procedure.
Criterion 3: Developing excellence
Evidence of the nominee’s commitment to and impact of ongoing professional development with regard to teaching and learning and/or learning support.

This may, for example, be demonstrated by providing evidence of the impact of:

• on-going review and enhancement of individual professional practice;
• engaging in professional development activities which enhance the nominee’s expertise in teaching and learning support;
• specific contributions to enable significant improvements in students’ outcomes and/or experience.
It’s important to note that

• nominees should address and make a specific claim against each criterion in turn;
• each of the three criteria above is given **equal consideration** in the assessment process;
• **Evidence is now asked for particularly in terms of impact.**
• nominees should not feel limited by the illustrative examples: these are designed to provide indicative areas of evidence for each criterion;
• the scheme recognises impact and engagement **beyond a nominee’s immediate academic or professional role**;
• the **nature of the institutional context and each individual nominee’s opportunity to contribute** will be taken into account and therefore should be made explicit in the submission. A nominee may, for example, have made a significant contribution to learning and teaching in an area that falls outside his/her substantive institutional role.
Assessment by Reviewers and Marking Scheme

• Nominations are considered by independent, external peer reviewers who will judge nominations on the information submitted against the three headline criteria. No information other than the core nomination documents submitted will be taken into consideration.

• The reviewers are all experienced in criteria-based assessment and have undertaken training before they review nominations.

• All nominations are **triple reviewed** and a 10% sample is reviewed by a fourth reviewer as part of our Quality Assurance process.
Please note that: (1)

• nominees should address and make a specific claim against each criterion in turn;
• nominees should demonstrate impact on student outcomes over a sustained period;
• each of the three criteria above is given equal consideration in the assessment process;
• nominees should not feel limited by the illustrative examples; these are designed to provide indicative types of evidence for each criterion;
• the scheme recognises inclusive teaching and learning, and thus individuals should demonstrate that they applying the principles of equality and diversity to their practice.
Please note that: (2)

• the HEA and the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Panel recognise that excellence in teaching and learning support will be situated within specific academic, professional and institutional contexts. Hence the nature of the institutional context and each individual nominee’s opportunity to contribute will be taken into account and therefore should be made explicit in the submission;

• the scheme recognises impact and engagement beyond a nominee’s immediate academic or professional role. A nominee may, for example, have made a significant contribution to learning and teaching in an area that falls outside his/her substantive role.
The nomination documents (Statement of Support, and Claim for National Teaching Fellowship) must adhere to all the following formatting requirements:

**Word limits:** All section headings, text within tables or diagrams, numerical characters and any references will count towards the word limit;

- Statement of Support: maximum **1000** words and submitted as a Word document (unsigned). The Statement can also be submitted in PDF form if including a hard copy signature;
- Claim for National Teaching Fellowship: **maximum 4500 words** and submitted as a Word document.
Final word count

• The entire document should be highlighted and the word count tool utilised, ensuring that the tick box ‘include textboxes, footnotes and endnotes’ is selected, to add up all relevant free text.

• **Diagrams are permitted.** If any text is included in diagrams, this should be added to the word count total and the total sum should be stated at the end of the document.

• Headers and footers, used for the nominee’s name, nominating institution and page numbers, are not counted.
The details

• Font: 12 point;
• Page orientation: A4 portrait only;
• Line spacing: 1.5 lines;
• Margins: 2cm minimum (not including footers);
• Headers: Should be used for the nominee’s name and nominating institution and footers for page numbers;
• References can be included in the body text or put as endnotes, and should be added to the final word count;
• Web links, pictures and logos: these will not be taken into consideration in the review process and therefore should be avoided.
More details and a warning!

- **File Saving Conventions:** The following naming convention should be used for all submitted files `Initial.Surname_Instituion_DocumentName` for example: `J.Bloggs_UniofPoppleton_Claim`.

- **The UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel** supports a **strict application** of the above formatting requirements to ensure fairness and consistency to all nominees.

- **The HEA and the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel** reserve the right to reject any nominations failing to adhere to these requirements. **It is therefore the responsibility** the nominating institution and the individual nominee to ensure that the nomination adheres to the requirements with regard to formatting, required signatures and word limits.
Additional information requests

• Equality and Diversity Form: The HEA is committed to promoting equality and diversity and collects data on nominees for statistical monitoring. The HEA report the equality and diversity data to the UK Teaching Excellence Advisory Panel.

• This form is online and available via the appropriate link. One form should be completed by the nominee, not by the institutional contact. Nevertheless the institutional contact should check that this has been submitted for each of the nominees being put forward.
Submission and receipt of nominations

- The nomination documents must be uploaded to the HEA VLE by the NTFS institutional contact (who will have been issued with a VLE username and password) by 15.00 on 30th April 2018.
- If the institution is submitting more than one nomination, the institutional contact can upload the multiple documents using the same username and password for each nomination so it is essential that the correct file naming convention is adopted.
- The NTFS institutional contact is acting on behalf of their institution and will be assumed by the HEA to be acting in accordance with the expectations of their senior management when submitting their institution’s nomination(s).
- Receipt of uploaded nomination will be acknowledged by an automated email to the institutional contact. The HEA will use the nomination checklist to ensure all documents have been received and will conduct a manual check of a sample of nominations to ensure that documents meet the formatting and word limit requirements. If the institutional nominee has not heard from the HEA within this timescale then we recommend contacting the HEA.
Outcomes and publicity

• All nominees will be informed of the outcome via email in the week commencing 23 July 2018. The Vice-Chancellor or equivalent will be informed by this date.

• The announcement of NTFS winners is strictly embargoed until the end of August 2018. A condition of the competition is that nominees do not share news of their success before this date in order to ensure maximum publicity. Contravention of this requirement could lead to the award being revoked.

• The names of the award winners will be officially announced at the end of August 2018 on the HEA’s website (https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/national-teaching-fellowship-scheme/NTF) and in a press release

ANTF advice: keep it under your hat!
Feedback

Following the publication of the outcome of the 2018 NTF Award, the HEA will issue individual written feedback to all nominees. Nominees are also invited to discuss their submission with a member of the Teaching Excellence Awards scheme.

The NTFS is a competition and thus the Panel’s decision is final. No appeals can be made against the decision. The HEA has a complaints procedure to address issues of fair treatment in the administration of nominations.
Awards ceremony and briefing event

The individual awards will be presented at a celebratory dinner, to which successful nominees, their personal guest, and the Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) will be invited. All new National Teaching Fellows will also be invited to a briefing and networking event on the day of the award ceremony. The briefing and the ceremony will be held in November 2018 (date to be confirmed).

ANTF advice: it’s a fabulous event: if you win don’t miss it at any cost and the briefing provides great networking opportunities
Going back in time, unsuccessful nominations (2013) often:

- were not explicit in terms of addressing the criteria;
- offered little in the way of evidence to underpin claims of excellence;
- lacked breadth or depth;
- failed to make clear how the nominee’s practice was excellent and/or transformative;
- focused on research rather than teaching and learning;
- included details of work or projects that were in the early stages of implementation with little detail of evaluation or impact;
- failed to give equal weighting to each of the three criteria or combined elements of different criteria into a single section.
What kinds of evidence are convincing? (ANTF advice)

- Anything that gives external validation to your claim, so that it is supported rather than being mere assertion;
- This is likely to involve raiding your ‘plaudits file’ for verbatim quotes demonstrating your excellence;
- These can be from module evaluations, feedback forums, student comments, letters and emails;
- Aim to collect a range of quotes from current and past students at different levels, past and current colleagues, managers, employers who take your students on placement, external examiners etc.
- You don’t need to provide full detail of each originator of quotes: ‘former 2\textsuperscript{nd}-year student’ ‘previous line-manager’, ‘employer of our graduates’ etc is sufficient detail.
Collecting and using evidence  
(ANTF advice)

• Quantitative data can be really useful: it’s helpful to include statements such as ‘Over the past five years my student evaluations have averaged 80+ who said I was good or excellent, and this is higher than average within my department’;

• You are not expected (or allowed) to provide supporting documentation but your own HEI is expected to assure the validity of your application;

• You should aim to match your evidence with the three criteria, so you can add quotes and data to each section.
You need to demonstrate scholarship and commitment to reflection (ANTF advice)

• Your application should we think include reference to a handful of texts (books, journal articles etc) from which your educational philosophy and teaching approaches have derived;
• The application, however, is all about you, so you need to use the first person singular and refer to your achievements rather than your teams’, (‘Shy bairns get nowt!’);
• It’s helpful to include examples of where you’ve changed your practices in the light of experience or where your scholarship has guided you to change.
ANTF advice for people thinking of applying in future years:

• If you are thinking of applying, it’s worth thinking about building your profile further over the next year or so;
• Particularly think about the kinds of evidence you could produce of your impact under each of the three criteria;
• Start collecting positive feedback from a range of stakeholders including students, peers, colleagues, line managers, external examiners and so on;
• Keep yourself up-to-date by regularly scrutinising the HEA website for information.
How can your institution help you? They could:

- If you haven’t already got one, help you find a mentor who is an NTF or very familiar with the scheme to guide your progress;
- Celebrate your merited achievements by recognising you by awarding you an internal teaching award;
- Encourage you to share your good practice internally through your university annual teaching and learning conference, CPD seminars, on your PGCHE course for new lecturers, Teachmeet events or similar;
- Offer support for you focus on evidence of your impact and enhancement.
(ANTF advice): what some people say:

- ‘Being a National Teaching Fellow has changed my life, my career, everything!’
- ‘I am certain my NTFS directly contributed to me getting my promotion and my professorship!’
- ‘I’ve just loved the travel, the networking and the opportunities being an NTFS has given me!’
- ‘[The celebratory dinner was] the best occasion (other than my wedding) in my life!’
- ‘It’s been fantastic to have my teaching recognised as much as my research!’
The NTF changed my life – enabling me to gain a Professorship (Sheffield Hallam) and focus on educational development. This enabled my move to lead the Educational Development Unit at Bradford where we managed to influence institutional policy and bring in over one million pounds worth of project funding (HEA, Jisc) to investigate sector issues such as e-portfolios, student transitions, computer-aided assessment and assessment feedback, as well as being involved in two collaborative CETLs. I was Project Director on the PASS project, investigating programme assessment, and materials from this project are used by a number of universities to inform current plans. This project is continuing to develop post-funding, and we will have chapters in two new publications issued in 2018 (co-author with Ruth Whitfield from Bradford). Along with other initiatives which my NTF stimulated, this has enabled me to extend my career into semi-retirement.
Debbie Holley - NTF 2014, Digital Innovation

My NTF was of huge personal and professional benefit. It took three institutions and five attempts to finally gain this so much desired and valued award, and meeting the other NTFs in Liverpool Cathedral, and sharing the time with senior staff from my institution and my family was an evening I will never forget, as we walked across the candle lit walkway, pianist playing, to enjoy our meal together. No, it is not about financial award, it is about building community, having an expert body to reach out to for inspiration when times get tough and you have a deadline. It is about being welcomed in most Universities across the UK, there is a kindred spirit who aims high and puts the students at the heart of learning.