Contents

Introduction

The problem

Conceptions of teaching excellence underlying teaching award schemes

General guidance

Rationale and criteria
Evidence
Panel
Awards
Award winners’ role

Guidance concerning each underlying conception of teaching excellence

1. No conception
2. Exhibiting certain teaching behaviours in a skilful way
3. Implementing a student focus effectively
4. Engaging in the ‘scholarship of teaching’
5. Exploiting benefits from disciplinary research
6. Developing students
7. Creating effective learning environments
8. Good citizenship
9. Innovating in teaching
10. Developing the teaching of others
11. Leadership of teaching
12. Corporate definitions of excellence
13. Collegial definitions of excellence

Conceptions of teaching excellence underlying selected award schemes

Alternative foci of schemes

Conclusions

References

Annexes

1. Rewarding those who create effective learning environments: University of Oslo
2. Rewarding those who undertake scholarship of teaching: University of Lund

This guide is based on a research report (Gibbs, 2008) for a Higher Education Academy-funded research project entitled: Conceptions of teaching excellence underlying teaching award schemes.
Introduction

Awards for teaching excellence are today made in most UK HE institutions (Gibbs et al., 2000), where 15 years ago hardly any such schemes operated. Accounts of how a variety of such schemes work, at an operational level, are already available (Ramsden et al., 1995; Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2002) and guidance is also available to applicants and award panel members who are operating within particular schemes (e.g. Diamond, 1994, 1995). This guide is not intended to add to those accounts. Rather its purpose is to help those who design and implement teaching award schemes to think through how to make their scheme coherent, and in particular to align:

• the purpose of the scheme;
• the criteria stated as defining teaching excellence;
• the forms of evidence required or permitted to be submitted by applicants;
• the way judgements are actually made;
• the role (if any) that teaching award winners perform.

To assist in this alignment the guide reports the findings of a study of teaching award schemes (Gibbs, 2008) in order to identify their, often implicit, conceptions of excellence in teaching. It is argued that unless a scheme is clear about what it thinks excellence in teaching consists of (and why this is a more appropriate conception than other alternatives), alignment is not likely. Most schemes were found to have multiple, and confused, purposes and misaligned criteria.

To illustrate teaching award schemes with distinctive and clear purposes, and aligned processes, this guide includes two case studies as annexes. The first, from the University of Oslo, involves a single and substantial award each year that values learning environments that support student learning well, and the individuals who created those environments. The second, from the University of Lund, values intellectual rigour in the development of teaching. Lund have established an ‘academy’ that brings together those who reach high standards of scholarship of teaching, and provides permanent increases in status and salary for the individuals in this academy. The third example comes from a university that has dramatically improved its national standing in teaching through emphasising the leadership of teaching, and recognises one outstanding leader each year in a high prestige event, alongside honorary doctorates.

Each involves a significant cost and a significant effort in applying and in judging applicants, and is a serious effort to increase the esteem in which teaching is held and to recognise those who contribute significantly to the teaching enterprise. Neither of these schemes is for those who are, individually, excellent at teaching, however that may be defined.
The problem

There has been widespread criticism of the way in which teaching awards are allocated in the UK (Macdonald, 1998; Skelton, 2004). In the US, Chism (2006) has surveyed a large number of award schemes and criticised most schemes for specifying the form of applications in such a way that they cannot provide adequate evidence of excellence or provide a sound basis for decision-making. A recent (unpublished) review of teaching awards in the Ivy League universities found an even worse picture than in Chism’s study with regard to the adequacy of evidence required to be submitted in teaching awards applications. In Australia, Dinham and Scott (2002) reviewed national teaching award decisions and concluded:

“There are difficulties associated with creating authentic, credible processes to ensure that the ‘right’ teachers receive the recognition they deserve …” (p25)

Similar doubts about teaching awards have emerged within individual disciplines (McLean, 2001).

In the Gibbs’ (2008) study, schemes were found to differ widely in their focus, their espoused purpose, their criteria, the forms of evidence that applicants were expected to submit, the nature of publicity about award winners and the role that award winners subsequently played. These differences often appeared to derive from weak design rather than distinctive values.

Their foci of attention were found to be so different that they would require very different kinds of evidence in order to be able to make a case for excellence, and it is hard to see how an application judged to be excellent in an institution with one focus could also be considered excellent in another institution with a different focus. For example, in one case the chair of the award panel said he would rule out an application that did not make frequent reference to the formal pedagogical literature, while in other schemes this would not be required, mentioned or valued.

A number of schemes have rationales and statements of purpose, which could have helped to explain their focus and the criteria that followed. A small number involve associated documentation containing extended articles explaining the rationale and even copies of published articles with sophisticated arguments and extensive references to literature, both about the nature of excellence in teaching and about how improvements in teaching can be brought about. Most, however, have no stated rationale or purpose, and this is reflected in the confused criteria.

There is sometimes a marked disjuncture between stated rationales (where these were articulated) and the criteria. For example, one institutional scheme has a clear set of four purposes, but also had a set of criteria, half of which appear to be unconnected with the stated purposes, and with no criterion associated with one of the purposes. There are sometimes confusing ‘supplementary’ criteria. For example, in one institution’s scheme there is a list of four criteria, which are relatively coherent, but these are supplemented by a further ten ‘characteristics indicative of excellence’, which overlap hardly at all with either the stated rationale of the scheme or its four criteria.

There is also often a confusing superimposition of the criteria for the UK’s national teaching award scheme, the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS). After stating the institution’s own criteria the national criteria are also then stated,
sometimes verbatim, even though the national criteria are sometimes quite different with quite a difference emphasis; for example, on the role of the award winner being able to influence others rather than simply being an excellent teacher. Many institutions use their internal teaching award as a means to identify and select their nominee to the NTFS, but this often cuts across local intentions and values and muddies the focus of the scheme.

There is often a lack of connection between the criteria and the role the teaching award recipients would subsequently play. In one case, the record of the individual in influencing others and bringing about innovation is included in criteria, but then teaching award holders appear to have no future role in supporting the development of teaching. In another contrasting case, the award holders are given a title and additional salary and become a member of an institution-wide team of ‘change agents’ with an explicit and planned approach to bringing about widespread change in teaching and learning across the university. However, the criteria for this award do not include any emphasis on innovation, influencing others, leadership of teaching, collaborating with others or even pursuing corporate educational goals, but instead only emphasise characteristics of the individual teacher and their teaching.

A small number of institutions attempt to get over some of the problems of comparing applicants who may have submitted quite different kinds of evidence in their case, relating to quite different conceptions of teaching underlying the very broadly drafted criteria, by having parallel awards with different criteria for different forms of excellence. Separate awards might each focus on only, for example, innovation, on use of information technology, on ‘research-based teaching’ or on pastoral care, without including any other criteria or implicit conceptions of excellence.

While some of the statements of purpose, lists of criteria and forms of evidence give the impression of a serious attempt to elicit a full and well-rounded application or ‘teaching portfolio’, this is in some cases then undermined by requirements for the form of the application, which could involve a maximum of as few as 800 words. In some cases this very modest limit might have been justified by the very small size of the award (as little as £500 even for an institution-wide award), but it does raise questions about how a convincing application, backed up by evidence that related to the criteria, could possibly be made in such a short space. In other cases the award is substantial (up to £25,000 or involving a promotion and permanent and significant increase in salary), and the scale of the expected application is correspondingly substantial, offering plenty of scope to take the criteria seriously.

There are sometimes ‘qualifying’ criteria such as the proportion of a full-time teaching load the individual currently has, or a requirement for quantitative evidence about teachers’ ‘track record’ in a form clearly intended to indicate whether the person had enough teaching experience to be taken seriously. Here there is an implicit assumption that excellence comes only with experience. In contrast, in one scheme a postgraduate demonstrator won the departmental teaching award after making an extraordinarily good job of undertaking fieldwork demonstrating for the very first time. Sometimes some categories of staff and even some categories of teachers, such as demonstrators, are explicitly excluded.

If such schemes are to develop credibility and validity then there will need to be more explicit articulation of valid models of teaching excellence on which they are based, closer alignment of such models with criteria and the forms of evidence that are required to be presented to be judged, and closer alignment of the way judgements are actually made with criteria. Schemes have to be clear what it is that they wish to recognise and reward. The following section is intended to help those who design
teaching award schemes to be clearer about what kind of excellence they wish to reward.

Conceptions of excellent teaching underlying teaching award schemes

The focus of this section of the guide is not teachers’ conceptions of teaching (e.g. Thompson, 1992) or even conceptions of teaching excellence held by award-winning teachers (e.g. Dunkin and Precians, 1992). It is about the conceptions of teaching excellence underpinning teaching award schemes, and the implications of these conceptions for the forms of evidence that are expected to be submitted for judgement.

The conceptions of excellence summarised below were derived from four sources. A previous study by the author had identified the varied practical mechanisms through which teaching is recognised and rewarded in English HE institutions (Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2002). Over 100 teaching award scheme applications, submitted in 2006, were examined to identify the forms of evidence presented in these applications, and the implicit assumptions that might have underlain the choice of this evidence. Documentation associated with over 30 different institutional teaching award schemes operational in the period 2006 to 2007 was examined to identify their rationales, their criteria and the forms of evidence that were encouraged or required to be submitted, and their implicit assumptions concerning the nature of teaching excellence. Finally, literature of two main kinds was reviewed: literature concerning characteristics of teaching award schemes and award-winning teachers, and literature concerning the nature of teaching excellence itself.

Twelve main categories of conceptions of teaching excellence were identified, several of which embodied multiple sub-categories, producing a total of 24 conceptions. Each is described and commented upon below, accompanied by a note concerning the kinds of evidence in teaching award applications that might embody these conceptions of teaching excellence and advice about the design of teaching award schemes that adopt each of these conceptions of teaching excellence.

| Table 1: Conceptions of teaching excellence underlying teaching award schemes |
|-------------------------------------------------
| 1. No conception |
| 2. Exhibiting certain teaching behaviours in a skilful way |
| 3. Implementing a student focus effectively |
| 4. Engaging in the ‘scholarship of teaching’ |
| 4a Undertaking reflection |
| 4b Having a personal philosophy of teaching |
| 4c Making use of pedagogic literature |
| 4d Undertaking pedagogic research |
| 5. Exploiting benefits from disciplinary research |
| 5a Excellent teaching flows directly from excellent research |
| 5b Undertaking ‘research-based’ teaching |
| 5c Undertaking the ‘scholarship of integration’ |
| 5d Displaying ‘pedagogic subject knowledge’ |
| 6. Developing students |
| 6a Nurturing the development of individuals |
| 6b Inducting students into the (disciplinary or professional) community |
General guidance

Rationale and criteria

• Develop a clear and unambiguous rationale before designing detailed features of the operation of the scheme – ask what the scheme is for and what consequences it is designed to have. Use the Guidance concerning each underlying conception of teaching excellence (p9), and the alternative ways these conceptions are combined (Alternative foci of schemes, p26) to support discussion of the purpose of the scheme.

• If there are several legitimately competing notions about what kinds of teaching, or efforts associate with teaching, should be recognised, then establish separate awards with different titles, each with their own logically coherent processes, rather than have competing and confusing rationales, forms of evidence and criteria, within a single scheme.

• Explain to potential applicants in documentation why the selected focus of attention of the awards scheme is appropriate for the context, and make logical links to the associated relevant forms of evidence that applicants should submit and the criteria that have been drafted. Annexe 2 provides an example of such explanation.

• Explain why other forms of evidence are not relevant. For example, if the university wants to recognise and reward the effort of course teams to develop new curricula and encourage programme-wide development of teaching, then the applicants’ own individual classroom teaching should not be a focus of attention and applicants should not be asked to submit evidence about their own teaching (unless it is considered that there should be a qualifying threshold of teaching quality for the sake of the credibility of the award).

• Name the scheme in a way designed to increase understanding of its focus and purpose. For example, if the purpose concerns fostering innovation in teaching, then name the scheme a ‘teaching innovations fund’, and do not confuse the issue by talking about awards for excellent teaching.

Evidence

• If data are ‘triangulated’ from several sources around the same issue or theme, adding up to a convincing overall case from several perspectives, this can provide a safer and more convincing indication than evidence from a single source. Require applicants to provide such triangulation.
• Do not give undue weight to assertions – by the applicant or in testimonials – without some corroborating evidence, and be wary of testimonials from sources that do not share the scheme’s perspective. For example, a national association of teachers of the discipline may value, and be in a position to provide a testimonial about, the individual’s national reputation as a disseminator of innovations in teaching in the discipline, but may not be in a position to offer views about their classroom teaching.

• Provide exemplars of well-documented cases, congruent with the scheme’s rationale, for potential applicants to see, and offer confidential guidance to help applicants to decide if they have a credible case and to select and organise evidence.

Panel

• Create a panel that has relevant expertise in judging teaching, and not just seniority. Senior academics may know little about what makes teaching excellent or about how to judge evidence, and may as a consequence fall back on beliefs that are, at best, unaligned with the intentions of the award scheme, and, at worst, plain nonsense. If student feedback and student learning is a key component of the scheme, then involve students (but brief them about their proper role – they are there for their perspective rather than their expertise). In several well-respected schemes the chair of the panel is a senior academic, but most responsibility for recommending who should receive awards has been devolved to a sub-group of experts on teaching, with the role of the whole panel and its chair being oversight of the operation of the scheme rather than detailed reviewing of cases.

• Brief the members of the panel about the purpose and rationale of the scheme and why the forms of evidence it requests and the criteria it applies are as they are. If possible have a discussion of some varied applications from a past year or a past scheme in order to illustrate what the scheme is and is not intended to judge and value, what the criteria mean, what might constitute valid evidence, and what kind of standard is expected.

• Establish an agreed position about what to do if no or few applications meet the defined criteria, in order to protect standards and the credibility of the scheme.

• Review the operation of the scheme with regard to whether applications have been well focused on the criteria, whether the panel have found it easy to make judgements given the evidence submitted, whether there has been wide disagreement between panel members and whether those in receipt of the awards are good illustrations of what the scheme was designed to recognise and reward.

• Collect and publicise data, over time, about where winning teachers come from. A sense of élan can be fostered in departments whose teaching staff can be seen regularly to win teaching awards, and departments that do not often submit applications and rarely win awards may feel it appropriate to take the whole process more seriously if they are seen publicly not to be the home of excellent teaching.

• Unless there is evidence of flaws in the scheme, maintain a stable scheme for a number of years. The impact of such schemes on values and personal priorities
across a whole university may take a decade to become apparent, and chopping and changing may undermine or defer such an impact.

Awards

• Make the awards sufficiently large that applicants will take the trouble to put a proper case together and that panels will as a consequence have enough to go on to make sound judgements.

• Publicise not just who the award winners were, but what they were rewarded for, so as to illustrate what the scheme is about with concrete examples. This can show just how wonderful teaching can be and raise expectations and also orient potential applicants appropriately in future years. The credibility of schemes can be damaged if casual observers who have not seen applications do not understand why individuals have won an award.

• The nature of events and publicity associated with awards should reflect the purpose of the scheme. If the purpose is to recognise and celebrate those who commit themselves to excellent teaching, this might best be done among colleagues in the department, and among the students whose views have been listened to, rather than in the anonymity of a central and university-wide ceremony. If the purpose is dissemination and fostering of innovation, this might best be done at a university-wide teaching conference or through a programme of seminars about teaching innovation led by award winners. If the scheme is intended to raise the status of teaching, then make the event a high status event, such as alongside the award of honorary doctorates.

Award winners’ role

• If award winners are to have a role in dissemination, innovation, pedagogic research or support of the development of other teachers, then their suitability for this role should be part of the rationale for the award, and evidence presented for the award should indicate clearly their suitability for these roles. Do not expect good classroom teachers to necessarily be good disseminators or to be interested in having a teaching development project of their own or be interested in developing other teachers, or be good pedagogic researchers or good writers about teaching. Some excellent teachers would consider being allocated any of these roles a punishment rather than a reward.

Guidance concerning each underlying conception of teaching excellence

1. No conception. Excellence is not defined by the scheme and is simply asserted by applicants.

Here there is no, even implicit, conception of excellence in teaching. What ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ teaching consists of is considered either self-explanatory, beyond explication or irrelevant. Cases are based on assertion (“I have always been a good teacher”), testimonials (“I have the greatest respect for X as a teacher”) or opinions asserted to be held in the local community (e.g. “Everybody knows X to be an outstanding teacher”). Teaching excellence may be characterised as being rare (“an unusually good teacher”) or significantly better than others (“stands out even among
Designing teaching award schemes

her excellent fellow teachers”), without defining the characteristics that make it recognisable or distinctively good.

What you might see in a teaching awards case is unsubstantiated assertions of a very general nature.

Some schemes bend over backwards to avoid giving an impression that they embody any conception of teaching in particular, as in the following text accompanying a scheme:

“The list of characteristics set out below may be considered to be indicative of excellence but is not intended as a comprehensive or limiting checklist …. Other characteristics which describe the nominee’s excellence in teaching and the support of learning can be cited by the … nominee as appropriate.”

With no definition of excellence applicants will have no guidance concerning whether they might have a credible basis for making an application or what kind of evidence to put together, applications will inevitably be very varied in form and contain very different kinds of claims of excellence, and those judging applications will be confronted with this variety without any means to choose between cases based on entirely different kinds of evidence. Without any guidance the quality and extent of evidence teachers present is also more likely to be more limited and less convincing.

It is strongly recommended that whatever conception of excellence the teaching award scheme is underpinned by, it is explicit and unambiguous, and not left undefined or defined by whoever applies.

2. **Exhibiting certain teaching behaviours in a skilful way.** Excellent teaching is characterised by certain observable teacher behaviours, primarily in the classroom, carried out with skill.

Here excellent teaching is what skilled teachers exhibit: it is a ‘teacher-focused’ conception (Trigwell et al., 1994). Skills may be learnt through practice and feedback, especially student feedback. Most research on what aspects of teaching students can reasonably be expected to be able to judge has focused on classroom practice and observable teaching behaviour, and so teaching excellence has come to be characterised by what can be seen in class. This is often an ‘atheoretical’ conception in that it is based on psychometrics (to identify which teacher characteristics students can reliably judge) and empirical studies (to identify which of these characteristics correlate with any measurable outcomes), rather than on any theoretical or pedagogical model of teaching, learning or education.

Some teacher-focused conceptions of excellent teaching may concentrate on just one or two sub-sets of the characteristics of teaching that students, or colleagues, can observe and judge. For example, they may focus almost exclusively on the role of inspiration, derived from the teachers’ enthusiasm, passion for the subject and personality characteristics that might be considered to motivate the student. Or excellence may be considered to derive largely from the teacher’s ability to interact well with students and involve them in lively discussion. Both of these characteristics are well represented in sound student feedback questionnaires that have been shown to be highly reliable (Marsh, 1982), even in very short forms (Coffey and Gibbs, 2001).

Student ratings on such questionnaires have been found to correlate with measures of outcome, which validate them as important characteristics to pay attention to.
Describing teaching award schemes

(Marsh, 1987). The proportion of variance in outcomes explained by such single characteristics in any teaching situation can be reasonably high. For example, questionnaire scale scores for ‘clarity and understandableness’ correlate $r=+0.56$ with test scores and can account for 36% of the variance in test scores (Feldman, 1997). Student feedback scores have also been found to correlate with the likelihood of student registration on follow-on courses in the same subject area ($r=+0.48$; Murray, 1997). In the US, a great deal of confidence has been expressed with regard to the value of such evidence about the nature of teaching excellence. For example, a chapter by Bill McKeachie, one time President of the American Psychological Association, is entitled ‘Good teaching makes a difference and we know what it is’ (McKeachie, 1997). Hativa et al., (2001), having reviewed the extensive evidence, confidently stated:

“In sum, exemplary university teachers are well prepared and organised, present material clearly, stimulate students’ interest engagement and motivation in studying the material through their enthusiasm/expressiveness, have positive rapport with students, show high expectations of them, encourage them, and generally maintain a positive classroom environment.”

Based on such a confident consensus, an influential paper listing the characteristics of exemplary teaching award programmes stated that all programme should be “grounded in research-based teaching competencies” (Svinicki and Menges, 1996, p113).

There are a number of reasons to be more circumspect than this. First, as Scriven (1989) has pointed out, the fact that on average a questionnaire scale score correlates with a measure of outcome does not mean that all excellent teachers display the same characteristics or that a teacher who does not display these characteristics cannot be excellent. Teachers can and do achieve excellence in different ways. Hativa et al. (2001) found that exemplary teachers tend to display some, but not all, of the behaviours found in research-based student feedback questionnaires.

Second, the measures of learning outcomes that lend these questionnaires some validity tend to involve tests of factual recall. If students are trying simply to recall information, they may rate highly those teachers who teach in such a way that this is both easy and rewarded, rather than rate highly teachers who attempt to make them think and who test and reward understanding (Entwistle and Tait, 1990, p191).

Third, a number of other variables consistently affect student ratings of teachers, such as class size and whether courses are compulsory. Student feedback data at one leading research university in the US had been used for many years, on their own, to determine teaching awards. The data were reanalysed taking such variables into account, and it was found that most awards had been given to the wrong people: those apparently doing a wonderful job but in an easy context, rather than those doing a very good job but in a very difficult context.

Fourth, unlike the questionnaires used in the studies reported above, most student feedback questionnaires used in the UK have not been properly developed and are not supported by any evidence of their reliability let alone their validity. Ratings for an individual teacher may as a consequence differ widely between students, between courses and between student cohorts on the same course in different years. This gives applicants for awards plenty of opportunity to cherry-pick their best ratings, and fail to report their worst, and would give a less than full indication of their level of
Designing teaching award schemes

excellence. Even quite large differences in average scores between teachers might mean little or nothing. This unfortunately does not stop ratings from such questionnaires forming a major component of many applications for awards, or such evidence being given weight by teaching award judges. In some cases examined in Gibbs' study (2008), questionnaire feedback data provided the only evidence submitted in successful applications for teaching awards.

Fifth, students are usually generous in their ratings. For example, it is common for three-quarters of all teachers to be rated as 'above average'. What may appear to be high ratings might well not be higher than ratings for other teachers. To interpret ratings of an individual teacher, it is essential to have overall averages for that teacher, averages for other teachers in the same subject area and a measure of the spread of these averages.

Sixth, most student feedback questionnaires embody a series of assumptions about the somewhat conventional classroom forms of teaching taking place (Kolitch and Dean, 1999) that may not apply to other forms of teaching (e.g. an Oxford tutorial, PhD supervision or distance teaching at the Open University). The definition of excellence based on research using such questionnaires may then not take into account pedagogic processes that are more important in different contexts – for example, helping students to learn to use the discourse of the disciplinary community (Northedge, 2003) or supervising the development of a doctoral student's academic identity or their research skills. Some student feedback questionnaires used in the UK focus exclusively on a limited range of didactic classroom-based forms of teaching and ignore all other aspects of teaching or courses, and student feedback evidence presented by teaching award applicants can be very narrowly focused.

Seventh, ratings of what goes on inside the classroom may be a poor predictor of things going on outside the classroom. The open-ended comment below was found on a student feedback questionnaire accompanying a (successful) teaching award case:

"Brilliant lectures – the best at my time at university – but the problem sheets were impossible and you couldn’t even get started so no-one did any work from one week to the next and I learnt almost nothing."

On the questionnaire on which this statement was found there were no questions with rating scales, and no open-ended prompts, that were designed to elicit students' experience of studying. If there had not been an 'any other comments' section then this student's experience would never have come to light. The correlation between teacher behaviour, as measured by feedback questionnaires, and the amount of student study effort can be as high as r=+0.38 (Murray, 1997), but this still leaves 86% of the variance in student effort unexplained. To put it another way, how hard a student works is very largely due to things not measured by even the best feedback questionnaires that focus on teachers' performance. Meta-analyses of the many studies of interventions designed to improve student engagement consistently identify variables, such as the degree of collaboration between students, that are rarely tapped by student feedback questionnaires that focus on teacher performance (Carini et al., 2006).

What you might see in a teaching award case is, primarily, student feedback data in individual teachers' performance. High ratings may be assumed to demonstrate excellence rather than needing to be explained. There may be descriptions of the teachers' techniques, especially classroom methods, on the assumption that the described methods are inherently superior. Testimonials may take the form "I have
seen X teach and she displays Y”. There may or may not be average ratings for a comparable group of teachers in the same subject area, for the same group of students, which might make the applicant’s ratings interpretable.

If a teaching award scheme is to focus on classroom teaching performance and the primary source of evidence for this is to be student feedback, the following guidelines may help to increase the quality of judgements about cases and to limit problems.

• Expect whatever questionnaires that are used to be valid, such as the SEEQ (Marsh, 1982) in that they measure aspects of teaching that are known to be effective in supporting student learning performance:
  o good preparation and organisation;
  o clear presentation of material;
  o stimulation of students’ interest, engagement and motivation through enthusiasm;
  o having a positive rapport with students;
  o showing high expectations of students;
  o encouraging students;
  o maintaining a positive classroom environment.
  (Based on Hativa et al., 2001, p701.)

• Require ratings to be averaged, ideally using scale scores rather than scores for individual questionnaire items. Do not accept raw, unprocessed data.

• Require evidence from a number of courses and student cohorts and over time, rather than allowing applicants to cherry-pick their highest ratings and hide their lowest ratings.

• Require feedback ratings from other teachers in the same department or subject area so that it is possible to tell how comparatively good the applicants’ ratings are.

• Require some corroboration of student ratings from observation by the applicants’ colleagues and from open-ended comments by students.

3. Implementing a student focus effectively. Excellent teaching is characterised by the quality of its attention to student learning and by its success with regard to the quality of student learning.

A distinction has been described in the educational literature, based on interviews with teachers, between a ‘teacher-focused/transmission’ conception of teaching and a ‘student-focused/conceptual development’ conception of teaching (Trigwell et al., 1994). Murray and Macdonald (1997) summarise a number of similar distinctions made in a wide range of literature, and in the US this distinction has been characterised as a ‘paradigm shift’ from a focus of attention on teaching to a focus on learning (Barr and Tagg, 1995). The distinction is not about teaching methods but about, whatever the teacher is doing, whether the teacher is paying attention to their own teaching or the content they are ‘conveying’ or to the students’ learning, both its process and its outcomes. There is evidence that teachers who have a teacher focus are more likely to have students who take a surface approach to their studies and who then only attempt to reproduce subject matter rather than attempt to understand it in a personally meaningful way. A surface approach is very likely to lead to worse quality and shorter-lasting learning outcomes (see Richardson, 2005, for a summary). So this conceptual difference is not value free – a student focus is demonstrably more effective in most contexts at achieving higher level educational goals.

Elements of this distinction are built into national professional standards for teaching in the UK by the Higher Education Academy. Extended programmes for new higher
education teachers have been demonstrated to be capable of changing teachers so that their teacher focus is reduced and their student focus increased (and also to improve their student feedback ratings at the same time) in contrast to a control group where there was no programme (Gibbs and Coffey, 2002, 2004). This transformation is not necessarily easy or quick (Postareff et al., 2004).

Models of what changes as HE teachers become more sophisticated as teachers, based on cross-sectional studies (e.g. Kugel, 1993) or longitudinal studies (Nyquist et al., 1999), highlight a similar distinction. Teachers’ focus of attention appears to change in a relatively predictable way as they become more experienced and sophisticated, from focusing on themselves and how they are perceived (and whether students like them and colleagues respect them) to the subject matter (and whether they are ‘on top of it’ and can pass themselves off as an expert), to their teaching and to teaching methods (and whether they get good student feedback on their methods), and finally to a focus on students, the way students go about learning as a consequence of the teaching, and what it is that students have actually learnt. It is this last phase of development that corresponds to a student-focused conception of teaching. From this developmental perspective Conception 2, above, reveals an earlier, less sophisticated, conception of teaching excellence.

A student focus is less common than a teacher focus (Trigwell and Prosser, 1996). However, it is not so rare that it could be considered, on its own, a mark of excellence. Ho et al. (2001) have demonstrated that new teachers can shift towards a student-focused conception of teaching after a short initial training programme, which raises the question of whether evidence of such a conception can really be an indicator of excellence. It is also possible to implement a student-focused approach either well or badly (Trigwell, 2001). Evidence of a strong teacher focus might, however, be considered as invalidating or disqualifying a teaching award case. For example, a case based largely on an explanation of the subject matter taught or on evidence about details of teaching methods or feedback on aspects of teaching methods, without reference to its consequences for student learning, might be considered immature and unsophisticated. It might be considered inappropriate to give a teaching award to someone who is demonstrably at an early stage in their own development as a teacher, regardless of their student feedback ratings, if these ratings are based on questionnaires underpinned by Conception 2.

There is unresolved controversy about whether identifying a teacher’s conception of teaching predicts how they will actually go about their teaching, and by implication whether a teacher’s description of a student-focused approach in a submission for a teaching award can be trusted and considered anything other than astute drafting. Trigwell and Prosser (1996) have reported reasonably high levels of congruence between what they term teachers’ ‘intention’ and their ‘strategy’, but the measures used for neither involve evidence of how the teachers actually taught. Murray and McDonald (1997) have reported inconsistencies between teachers’ espoused conceptions of teaching and the teaching methods they reported using, but even this study did not involve observing their teaching. Trigwell would argue that you cannot deduce a teacher’s approach from their methods, but only from their focus of attention in using their methods.

What you might see in a teaching award case is evidence and discussion about how students go about learning and what aspects of teaching or assessment might have contributed to this (e.g. evidence that student study hours and engagement have increased following the introduction of some collaborative assignments). There may be evidence about the quantity and quality of student performance and learning outcomes and how this relates to the form of teaching (e.g. an external examiner
commenting on the students’ ability to tackle open-ended problems, linked back to
the teacher’s use of lectures to demonstrate ways to tackle open-ended problems
‘live’).

If the focus is on supporting student learning, then do not confuse the issue by asking
for evidence about the teacher’s performance, but focus clearly on aspects of student
learning: its process and outcomes. Evidence such as the number of hours students
study out of class, the extent of borrowing of books from the library, student marks,
external examiners’ comments on students’ project reports, evidence about student
progression to subsequent courses in the same subject area, and so on, are more
relevant than any evidence about the teacher or how the teacher is perceived.

Existing student feedback questionnaires may not focus on student learning issues to
any great extent, and may need to be redesigned if they are to provide useful
evidence. It may be more appropriate to use well-developed questionnaires that
focus on aspects of student learning such as:

- the approaches to studying inventory (ASI; Duff, 1997);
- the assessment experience questionnaire (AEQ; Dunbar-Goddet and Gibbs,
in press);
- the course experience questionnaire (CEQ; Ramsden, 1991);
- the motivated strategies for learning questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, 1991);
- the reflection on learning inventory (Meyer, 2004).

It may not be considered to matter exactly what the teacher has done and whether
this can be documented, as long as the consequences for student learning are
clearly outstanding. Or it may be considered that the process of getting better at
teaching, so that student learning is supported better, is also important, so that
teachers should give accounts of innovation and even display scholarship of teaching
(see below). However, innovation and scholarship of teaching can be focused on
teacher performance as well as on student learning, and it is easy to get side-tracked
in emphasising the process through which excellence was achieved, or to end up
with exemplary accounts of efforts to improve student learning without any
convincing evidence that these efforts have actually succeeded.

4. Engaging in the ‘scholarship of teaching’. Excellent teaching is characterised
by rigorous thinking about teaching.

This conception focuses not on the teaching itself but on how teachers think about
and develop explanations about their teaching, on the assumption that better
explanations are associated with better teaching. The ‘scholarship of teaching’
(Boyer, 1990) may take several forms of increasing formality and sophistication
(Trigwell et al., 2000) and is seldom defined in teaching awards documentation. For
the current purpose of distinguishing different foci of teaching award schemes, four
levels of sophistication of ‘scholarship of teaching’ are identified.

4a Undertaking reflection. This is often on individual aspects of teaching such as
which forms of questioning in class elicit answers or what type of handouts work
best.

This may be associated with small-scale informal ‘action research’ and ‘trying things
out’ in a thoughtful way: what Rowland (1993) terms ‘the enquiring tutor’. Evidence in
award applications from a reflective teacher would not be presented as if it were self-
explanatory, but is explained in a personal way, e.g. “How I interpret the student
feedback is …” or “I believe this happened because ….” The importance of reflection
in professional learning and development pervades much influential literature (Schön,
1983) and also literature about the development of higher education teaching (Cowan, 1998). This conception of teaching excellence assumes that reflection is such an essential component of improvement that excellence could not exist without it, so that evidence of reflection might be considered a prerequisite of excellence, or even that reflection is itself an indicator of excellence. McLean and Blackwell (1997) state unequivocally: “excellence in teaching resides in a reflective, self-critical, theoretically informed approach”. However, Hativa et al. (2001) reported that a range of studies have found:

“... inconsistent relationships between a teachers' thinking and knowledge and their observed practice. This inconsistency suggests that teachers' thinking and knowledge are not related in a simple causal way to their instructional practices but rather that the relationship is complex, with many factors influencing teacher work, such as the social contexts in which teaching takes place, including the values, beliefs and expectations of peers, academic administrators and students (Thompson, 1992).”

Just because a teacher can be impressively reflective does not mean that they teach in an excellent way or even that they might be able to, given an amenable context. While reflection may indeed be important or even essential to the process of improvement towards excellent teaching, it may be stretching the point to assert that reflection is evidence in itself of excellent teaching, without strong corroborating evidence.

4b Having a personal philosophy of teaching. Here the emphasis is on reflection that has, over time, led to the development of a personal philosophy of teaching of the kinds that are evident in accounts by national prize-winning teachers in Australia (Ballantyne et al., 1997). Much use of ‘teaching portfolios’ as sources of evidence of excellence in teaching for tenure or promotion decisions, as well as teaching award decisions, particularly in the US, embodies the articulation of a ‘teaching philosophy’ that integrates the teacher’s account of teaching, and evidence about teaching, into a coherent and convincing story (Seldin, 1998). Such philosophies go beyond description of practice or even the justification of the use of specific methods in specific circumstances, and may provide an overarching way of seeing teaching that guides all teaching decisions. Advanced programmes for higher education teachers may be designed specifically to develop ‘teacher thinking’ on the assumption that excellent teachers can think about teaching in more sophisticated ways and make better grounded judgements about what to do. Here what is considered important may be not so much that the teacher used a particular method or used it with skill, but that they had a sound reason for using the method. Dunkin and Precians (1992) found that higher education teachers who had won national prizes for teaching differed substantially from novice teachers in the level of sophistication of their thinking about teaching (their “conceptual repertoire”, p483). As the evidence used to judge these prizes consisted of a dossier in which teachers demonstrated their thinking about teaching, this might be considered an inevitable finding. To some extent what award-winning teachers display is whatever judges of awards were looking for and asked for in applications.

Possessing such a philosophy of teaching may be considered evidence in itself of teaching excellence, regardless of the adequacy of the philosophy or the degree of its support from formal theory or empirical evidence. Applicants’ ignorance of such theory or evidence may not be considered to matter. In one instance, for example, published advice on lecturing given by a winner of a national teaching award (Murphy, 1998), and based on the teacher’s own award-winning teaching, is flatly contradicted by large volumes of empirical evidence (Gibbs, 1999). While teaching
award judges may be able to recognise if a teacher has a personal philosophy of teaching, they may not be in a position to judge whether it is nonsense or not.

It is also difficult to distinguish, in teaching award applications, between teachers' 'theories in use' and their 'theories of action' (Schön, 1983). To put it bluntly, it is not easy to tell if what is written in a teaching award application represents the quality of thinking that actually informed the reported teaching, or post-hoc rationalisation some time later that has little to do with why the teacher actually behaved in the way that they did. The problem is compounded if the university provides training programmes for teachers that are deliberately designed to enhance 'teacher thinking', as this may only result in more impressive post-hoc rationalisation for the kind of teaching they have always done. Programmes that are designed to meet Higher Education Academy teacher accreditation standards may put a great deal of emphasis on teachers producing more sophisticated documentation, in a teaching portfolio, of their existing teaching, however good or bad that teaching is.

The issue here for those on teaching award panels is whether impressive-looking personal theories of teaching can be backed up by equally impressive evidence that they work in practice.

4c Making use of pedagogic literature. Excellence is here seen to be associated with use of conceptual literature (for example, the Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education, Chickering and Gamson, 1987) or empirical literature (for example, a meta-analysis of evaluations of the use of problem-based learning, Dochy et al., 2003) to help guide choice of teaching methods or approaches. A personal approach to teaching is seen as requiring some substantiation, building on the body of existing literature. This conception of excellent teaching emphasises the importance of a phenomenon that underpins all disciplinary scholarship and research: 'standing on the shoulders of those that went before' and not ignoring what is already known. In contrast to Conceptions 4a and 4b, the excellent teaching does not derive solely from reflection or the development of a personal philosophy of teaching based on that reflection, but from using published ideas and findings from others who have trodden similar paths already and asked and answered similar questions before. In practice this is an unusual phenomenon, though it is used as a criterion at Oxford Brookes University and at the University of Lund (see Annexe 2). The necessity of possessing such formal knowledge about teaching for excellent teaching to take place is undermined by books by Sheffield (1974) and Ballantyne et al. (1997) in which award-winning university teachers explain how they teach and why. In many hundreds of pages of accounts by these teachers there are no references whatsoever to pedagogic literature.

4d Undertaking pedagogic research. Here teachers' reflection and action research are expected to be formalised and meet standards associated with disciplinary scholarship. This might involve small-scale studies of one's own teaching, in the context of theory or bodies of empirical evidence, and using methodologies for collecting evidence that have been drawn from that literature. The purpose may be to evaluate personal teaching decisions in rigorous ways, or to defend an innovation from more conventional colleagues by having better evidence and explanations than they do, rather than to contribute to the literature. It could also involve more formal pedagogic research undertaken and written up in such a way that it could be presented in a local or national disciplinary seminar on teaching, published in a disciplinary journal on teaching or even submitted to a refereed educational research journal. Here the emphasis is on achieving acceptable levels of scholarly rigour, open to peer review, as in one’s substantive discipline, and using equivalent scholarly standards of argument and evidence. In some universities, the
Designing teaching award schemes

corporate ‘learning and teaching strategy’ emphasises the importance of evidence-based approaches to teaching and may even allocate funding in relation to pedagogic research performance indicators, as at the University of Sydney. Some schemes state explicitly that one purpose of awards is to support the production of more publications about teaching, and in the UK this can, in some kinds of universities, be a strategy to improve overall research productivity and the research income that follows such productivity, whether or not it improves teaching. In one case studied here, the award involved election to a ‘pedagogical academy’ with high standards for the scholarship of teaching, with echoes of the way eminent researchers may be elected by their peers to a national research academy such as the Royal Society in the UK.

Halse et al. (2007) found that very few Australian national teaching award winners undertook pedagogic research. There is no evidence that pedagogic researchers make excellent teachers and from my own observations pedagogic researchers are as likely to be bad as good as teachers, just as disciplinary researchers are just as likely to be bad as good at teaching (see Conception 5a).

What you might see in a teaching award case in which scholarship of teaching is a criterion is thoughtful text describing and explaining the applicant’s teaching, and interpreting various kinds of formal or informal evidence in a relatively coherent way. The discourse might range from that of informal musings to that of formal educational research with reference to theory and empirical evidence in the literature and data collected by using research tools in a rigorous way. There may be references to seminars given by the applicant about aspects of teaching, to published pedagogic research authored by the applicant or to pedagogic research grants held by the applicant. Peer review of pedagogic research by the applicant may provide a perfectly adequate indication of the standard of the pedagogic research, but provide no indication of the quality of the applicant’s teaching.

5. Exploiting benefits from disciplinary research. Excellent teaching is characterised by the benefits derived from the teacher’s disciplinary research.

5a Excellent teaching flows directly from excellent research. Here it is assumed that excellent researchers make excellent teachers, and so establishing that a teacher is, first, an excellent researcher, provides evidence of their excellence as a teacher. Halse et al. (2007) found that Australian national award-winning teachers were mainly very research-active with citation levels above the national average for academics. In a more refined form of this position, it may be assumed that deep understanding of the discipline’s key concepts and approaches, deriving from being actively involved in disciplinary research, translates into clear and profound explanations for students and insightful critiques of limitations in students’ understanding. The focus here would be on the subject matter itself.

However, the assumption that teaching excellence derives from, or is automatically associated with, excellent research, has been consistently contradicted by a large body of empirical studies (Hattie and Marsh, 1996). The quality of teaching (as judged largely from a perspective characterised by Conception 2 above) has been found to be evenly distributed among teachers of low and high research productivity or excellence.

Interestingly, although a number of the universities examined in the Gibbs (2008) study were research universities that make public statements about the excellence of their teaching being based on the excellence of their research, only one university reflected this belief in its teaching awards scheme. In fact even where there was an
Desig
19
ning teaching award schemes

institutional strategy to link research to teaching, and in one case even where there
was an internationally respected institution-wide initiative to link research to teaching,
this was not reflected in the teaching award criteria.

5b Undertaking ‘research-based’ teaching. This lack of empirical relationship
between research excellence and teaching excellence, at the level of the individual
teacher, is now sufficiently widely known that a rather different assumption tends to
be made: that teaching that is ‘research informed’ or ‘research-based’ is inherently
better. This might mean teaching that involves students in undertaking research, or at
least undertaking ‘enquiry-based’ learning or teaching that involves the development
of students’ research skills. This conception of excellent teaching underlies most of
the examples in guides to strengthening research-teaching links (Jenkins and

5c Undertaking the ‘scholarship of integration’ (Boyer, 1990). This might involve
something as simple as reviewing a field of knowledge in order to write an overview
lecture for students or design a ‘survey’ course, but might also involve writing
textbooks that help students to gain an overview or introduction and to situate
knowledge in a context, or even writing review articles for journals that provide similar
overviews that are useful to students. Writing distance learning materials and
computer-based learning materials clearly involves scholarship of integration. A
department-based teaching award scheme at the University of Helsinki sometimes
gives the award to the author of a newly published textbook.

5d Displaying ‘pedagogic subject knowledge’ (Shulman, 1994). While this is
based on a deep understanding of the subject that derives from scholarship, it is also
based in ‘craft’ knowledge derived from experience of explaining the subject to
students. It may be evident in a repertoire of vivid cases, telling examples or effective
demonstrations, that personal experience has shown to be helpful to students’
understanding, and also in knowledge of the ways in which students may
misunderstand certain ideas and how to spot and remedy such misunderstandings
through advice and feedback. A prize-winning teacher at Stanford University has won
an award largely on the basis of his weekly briefings to his teaching assistants,
explaining to them what students would have difficulty understanding that week, and
demonstrating how to explain these concepts clearly.

What you might see in a teaching award case that is underpinned by the research-
teaching nexus is an account of the way the applicant’s research informs their
teaching, citing of curricula, books or other learning resources authored by the
applicant that demonstrate scholarship of integration, or examples of special forms of
explanation or demonstration, justified in relation to the difficulties students can have
in relation to the specific topic.

The four categories of research-teaching nexus outlined above make such different
assumptions about what matters, and what teaching excellence is based on, that it
would be sensible to clarify what kind of link between research and teaching is
valued, particularly in order to deflect applicants from simply listing their research
achievements on the assumption that the teaching award panel will be automatically
impressed.

A challenge facing award panels is how to judge whether claims about the benefits to
students of the applicant’s research strength, whatever form these claims take, are
justified. Here one might hope to see triangulated data from student performance,
from student feedback or from external examiners’ comments about the qualities of
student learning outcomes.
6. Developing students. Excellent teaching involves a focus on the personal and intellectual development of the individual student and of their identity.

6a Nurturing the development of individuals. This conception of excellence might be placed in contrast to some other conceptions that focus on the subject matter or on teaching. Excellent teachers may be seen to provide personal support of various kinds to individual students or to develop generic intellectual characteristics (such as those described by Perry, 1970) of all students, and also develop their values and citizenship. The focus may be on the liberating or civilising nature of education, or on the utilitarian development of students’ ‘transferable skills’ and employability, rather than on their disciplinary knowledge.

What you might see in a teaching award case is evidence of performing a pastoral role with special care, with testimonials from individual students who had been helped, efforts to widen participation and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special needs, or provision of additional support for exceptional students. It could include use of ‘personal development planning’ with students, oriented to their future employability. Where the focus is on effective learning environments (see Conception 7) it could include curriculum development that emphasised progression over time in the development of students across courses. Testimonials from individual students who, for example, claim that they might have dropped out or failed if it were not for the personal help from the applicant, can impress teaching award panels despite there being no evidence about how common such help might have been.

6b Inducting students into the (disciplinary or professional) community.
Excellent teaching is here seen to change the identity of the student. Excellence in teaching may be seen to involve modelling the discourse of the discipline through teachers’ talk and through feedback on students’ talk and writing, and gradually drawing the students into the disciplinary community of practice so that they resemble members of the community and can also use the discourse of the community (e.g. Northedge, 2003). This can also include involving students in activities the community engages in, such as research seminars and peer review. To be able to do this a teacher has to be an active member of that community him- or herself and so this relates to notions of teaching that embody the ‘scholarship of teaching’. A version of this conception of teaching excellence relates to the notion of ‘stewardship of the discipline’: that the committed teacher is concerned with producing the next generation of mathematicians (or whatever) and that the way to do this is to embody ‘being a mathematician’ rather than simply ‘teaching mathematics’. Successful teaching would be that which produces new members of the community.

What you might see in a teaching award case is evidence of involving students in the community in various ways, the success of which would be demonstrated in the rate of student progression to study for a PhD or to an academic career. Inducting students into a profession might be evident in accounts of providing work experience, simulation of professional situations and dilemmas, bringing professionals into the classroom (or studio), discussion of professional practices, values and ethics, or the use of assignments that are professional tasks rather than essays. The success of this would be demonstrated in the rate of student transfer into, and progress within, the profession. Any evidence of success in graduates’ professional progress would be very difficult to attribute to an individual teacher, and this is a criterion that might best be used when considering awards for learning environments (see Conception 7 below).
7. **Creating effective learning environments.** Excellent teaching is characterised by a focus on students’ overall experience of their course or entire programme, rather than on one isolated component of that environment such as a classroom or a teacher.

7a **Creating effective courses or programmes.** Here it is assumed that courses and programmes operate as complex systems in which classroom teaching is only one component and that what should be recognised and rewarded is the design and implementation of programmes that work effectively, almost regardless of the excellence of classroom teaching. There may be a focus on the way assessment supports student learning, on student access to learning resources, on mechanisms to monitor student progress and so on, all as part of an effective package of provision rather than as excellent in themselves. Annexe 1 provides details of a teaching award from the University of Oslo that clearly focuses on learning environments.

What you might see in a teaching award case is evidence of programme review and development, possibly over an extended period. Success might be evident in students’ overall degree performance, Course Experience Questionnaire (Ramsden, 1991) data (rather than student feedback on teachers or teaching), National Student Survey data or other ‘exit poll’ feedback data, rates of employability or progression to higher levels of study, or evidence from an external examiner or external reviewer about the entire programme. Such a focus might require the application to come from a course team rather than from an individual (see Conception 7b). Indeed from the perspective of this conception of excellent teaching, it might be considered difficult to judge the value of an individual teacher’s teaching practice, or even evidence of their effectiveness in an individual course unit, without understanding whether this contributed to, or cut across, the overall operation of the learning environment of which the teaching or unit was a part.

7b **Collaborating in teaching teams.** Excellence in teaching is characterised by collaboration between teachers to a common purpose (rather than individualism and competition to be the ‘best’ teacher). Leadership of course teams and outstanding contribution to such teaching teams is valued more than individualism, and if the focus is on effective learning environments then this nearly always involves a number of teachers, whether they behave as a team or not.

What you might see in a teaching award case is an application from a team who have collaborated on developing a course or new initiative. Teams in receipt of awards might include people other than teachers who have contributed to the overall impact on students, such as librarians, lab technicians, student counsellors and course administrators. The case might include an account of the way the team operate and examples of effective collaboration that can be shown to have had an impact on student learning.

8. **Good citizenship.** Excellence in teaching is characterised by a track record of carrying out a range of ‘teaching support’ tasks, without which the whole teaching enterprise cannot function.

Here what is valued is the time and effort that helps to create the educational context within which effective education is possible. This might involve: effort to improve the quality of student intake through imaginative chairing of the Admissions Committee for many years; effective organisation of doctoral education through being a very active Director of Graduate Studies; successfully raising funds that enabled a new teaching facility to be built that allowed different teaching methods to be used; or
introducing a new and more rigorous approach to marking student work through three successive terms of office as Examinations Secretary. Excellent teachers may be seen as contributing in many ways to the overall student experience, outside of the classroom and often out of sight of students and of students’ ability to ‘rate’ these contributions. This is sometimes described as ‘service’ and may act as the glue that holds university departments together, though it may be perceived as trivial, and ignored in promotion or pay decisions. Some individuals may perform more than their fair share of such roles, and to a very high standard, over a long period of time, and are motivated by a sense of duty to the department and to the students.

What you might see in a teaching award application is a list of academic administration roles undertaken over the years, with descriptive accounts of what was achieved, with evidence of the improvements that may have taken place in students’ overall education. For example, students’ prior educational qualifications may have improved, cases of disagreement in marking may have become more rare, and there may be a larger number of doctoral students than in the past. However, there may be no evidence of improved student learning, performance, quality of educational experience or learning outcomes. There may in some cases be no evidence at all about the applicant’s own teaching.

9. Innovating in teaching. Excellence is indicated by change and the adoption of new methods.

Here the underlying assumption is that good teaching is achieved by a constant process of improvement, and so evidence of innovation is of itself evidence of good teaching. This may overlap with Conception 4 (in which teaching excellence is seen to involve reflection or more developed forms of scholarship of teaching) where the innovation is reflected upon, evaluated or documented in a scholarly way. Involvement in ‘action research’ may be considered inherently valuable (Schratz, 1993). The change might be quite modest and local, even within a single class or a single topic within one course, or may involve radical changes to entire curricula.

In contexts where a good deal of small-scale innovation is the norm rather than the exception, the stakes may be raised, and what counts as ‘excellent innovation’ is determined by the size of the innovation project or the size of the grant that was acquired to mount the innovation project. A substantial proportion of national teaching award winners in the UK (through the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme) have a track record of acquiring institutional or national teaching development grants of one kind or another, and evidence of such income earning may be considered as an indicator of teaching excellence, just as the size of research grant income is used as a proxy for research excellence. In the UK, as the size of grants available for teaching development has increased, it may be possible for applicants to list hundreds of thousands of pounds in grants. The national reputation that may follow from leadership of such large-scale innovation projects may also be considered an indicator of teaching excellence (see Conception 12).

However, many teaching innovation initiatives have been accompanied by no evidence that they had a beneficial impact, of the kind intended or otherwise. Innovation can also make things worse as well as better, and there are plenty of reports in the literature of failed innovation (for a spectacular example of innovation worsening student learning, see Jones and Hassell, 1996).

In contrast, at one of the institutional contexts examined in the current study, there was no positive value placed on innovation. Indeed during consultation on the way the scheme might operate, the term ‘innovation’ was deleted from the criteria at the
request of the Faculty of Humanities. This did not stop some innovative teachers being given awards, but implementing traditional methods well was valued as much, if not more, than innovation.

This conception may also relate to Conception 10, where the institution is attempting to bring about specific kinds of educational change and teachers are considered excellent if they contribute to these efforts by innovating in a particular specified direction.

What you might see in a teaching award case is examples of small-scale teaching innovations carried out by the applicant, or examples of funded larger-scale teaching development projects.

Issues for the teaching awards panel include:

- why innovation is valued;
- what would count as innovation. What is considered radical in one context might be considered old hat in another context (or by another panel member) and what may be perceived as innovative by the applicant may have been well documented in the literature 25 years ago;
- whether what is claimed to be innovation can be shown to have been worthwhile. This may require ‘before’ and ‘after’ measures of student performance, student feedback ratings, or data from the use of a questionnaire that measures an aspect of student learning (see Conception 3 above).

10. Developing the teaching of others. This conception is about dissemination or others ways of influencing the teaching of others and is not about teaching per se.

This might involve dissemination in the form of giving seminars or workshops to other teachers about some aspect of teaching practice, either within the university or perhaps within the discipline nationally. It could involve writing up case studies of one’s own teaching or more formal published accounts of teaching, for an institutional ‘teaching newsletter’ or a national disciplinary association’s website. This would be distinguished from ‘scholarship of teaching’ by its focus on descriptions of practice and the intention to change others’ practice, rather than on scholarship or use of the literature or robust evidence of effectiveness. It could involve local efforts to support new teaching colleagues through mentoring of some kind, or to support graduate teaching assistants.

There may be two assumptions underlying this conception. First, that to be able to perform such functions one must first be excellent at teaching oneself, or at least knowledgeable about teaching; that performing such functions is a priori evidence of excellence. The second is that this is a form of service that has direct impacts on the quality of teaching, and this is worthy of reward in itself. In neither case need there be any direct evidence that the individual is actually an excellent teacher.

There may or may not be evidence provided that such efforts to develop the teaching of others actually succeeds, in the sense that others are influenced in their teaching, let alone that this teaching then works more effectively as a consequence. Halse et al. (2007) found little evidence that Australian national teaching award winners actually disseminated anything, and Skelton (2004) has been sceptical of the impact of national teaching awards in the UK on any subsequent changes in others’ teaching.
What you might see in a teaching award case is accounts of efforts to develop the teaching of others, or the way teaching is conducted, locally or more widely. Just as the volume of teaching is sometimes used in award applications as a proxy for its quality or effectiveness, applicants claiming to be excellent on the basis of dissemination may cite the number of seminars or workshops they have run as a proxy for its value. Teaching award panel members should expect evidence that goes beyond mere volume; for example, citing feedback from workshop participants or evidence from follow-up questionnaires about its impact on participants' teaching.

11. Corporate definitions of excellence.

Here there may be a mission statement or corporate goal (for example, improving student employability or retention) and the intention is that teaching effort is reoriented towards achieving this goal. Teaching awards are perceived as part of the leverage to achieve such reorientation, as a tool of organisational change. What excellence means is defined by the corporate goal.

In some contexts a ‘learning and teaching strategy’ goes further than specifying the goal and specifies the means to achieve it; for example, through the use of e-learning. Teaching excellence is then defined with regard to use of the specified means; for example, the implementation of e-learning on a course by the applicant.

Occasionally there is a definition of teaching excellence embodied in an institutional learning and teaching strategy that is about teaching process rather than only about institutional goals, for example ‘student-focused learning’ or ‘guided independent learning’ (as at the University of Leuven), in which case other forms of teaching or learning, however effective, might not be considered excellent or worthy of reward.

This kind of ‘corporate alignment’, while it exists, is not common. Rather the goals of the institutional teaching and learning strategy or the mission statement tend to be studiously ignored in teaching award criteria, while quite different values come into play in defining teaching excellence. In particular institutional strategies that emphasised ‘student-centred’ educational methods nevertheless were often found to define excellent teaching in relation to Conception 2, and were teacher-focused, undermining their own intentions.

What you might see in a teaching award case is an account of teaching efforts that have been reoriented towards a corporate goal, perhaps with evidence that the goal has been achieved (for example, improved student employability or better retention).

12. Leadership of teaching. This conception concerns making an impact on the quality of teaching beyond what an individual teacher could normally achieve, often through acting as a head of department, or as a Director of Studies of a degree programme, and involving, for example, the creation of an environment in which it is more likely that excellent teaching will take place or managing a planned process of educational change.

Leadership of teaching is mentioned in a number of teaching award scheme criteria and is at the heart of several and so has been included here as a separate category. However, on closer examination it is clear that the language used in referring to ‘leadership’ can cover a multitude of rather different things. The term ‘leadership’ in the award schemes may refer to, variously: the development of an entire curriculum (Conceptions 7a and 7b); formal management responsibilities associated with good citizenship (Conception 8); large-scale innovation (Conception 9); developing other
Designing teaching award schemes

teachers (Conception 10); or any of these in any combination. In some cases the term ‘leadership’ was not accompanied by any elaboration as to what leadership of teaching is expected to consist of, or why it is valued. It is not a term that is widely understood and applicants would need to be steered unambiguously towards one of the above alternative conceptions of leadership if there were not to be problems for the teaching awards panel.

What you might see in a teaching award application is claims to have brought about improvements in colleagues’ teaching, in teaching methods across a number of courses, in courses, in curricula or in the teaching of one’s discipline, through the exercise of leadership. Some teaching award applications seem to assume that leadership of funded teaching development projects or initiatives should be valued and rewarded, even though they may not involve the applicants’ teaching at all.

13. Collegial definitions of excellence. Here what excellence in teaching consists of is defined and judged by peers (as it is in research).

If others say that someone is an excellent teacher that may be considered enough. One scheme required that the applicant was “well known to be a very good teacher”. Two distinct forms of such collegial definitions are evident in award schemes. First, the peers may be colleagues within the applicant’s department who know the teacher well, may have observed the applicant, and understand what is valued in the teaching context. Second, the peers may be members of a national professional or subject association who have their own criteria and standards or even their own formal award scheme. These criteria and standards may have nothing to do with the institution’s own criteria, but the status of external peer review is such that they may trump local judgements, just as happens with judgements of research standing. This collegial conception of teaching may overlap with Conception 1 in that what others may believe to be excellent may not be defined.

Where teaching award cases are made by nomination, rather than by applications by teachers on their own behalf, it is not always clear the extent to which Conception 13a comes in to play, or whether peer approbation is always strictly constrained by the stated criteria.

What you might see in a teaching award case is testimonials from peers that demonstrate recognition. This might include external recognition (e.g. by the discipline nationally). In some teaching award schemes such peer recognition is considered a prerequisite, trumping all other criteria.

This conception may cause teaching award panels particular difficulty, because while peer esteem may provide much needed credibility to awards made on the basis of other criteria that have less currency among the academic community (such as reflection or innovation), it may be very unclear what that esteem is based on. Peers might have any of the above list of conceptions of excellence, either congruent or utterly incongruent with the scheme’s own conception of teaching excellence, or may simply think that the applicant is a generally good sort. Panels should expect peers to provide some kind of supporting evidence, or illustrations, to back up their peer review, so that at least where they are coming from is more apparent.

Conceptions of teaching excellence underlying selected award schemes
Few award schemes have a simple single conception of teaching underlying it – most involve combinations: 11 of the above 24 conceptions are embodied simultaneously in one scheme that has been examined. However, some combinations are much more likely than others (see below). Some schemes have such multifaceted criteria that they are likely to be categorised in many ways, without it being clear which are more important, and schemes may allow applications of almost any form containing evidence of almost any kind. In some cases, conceptions of excellence held by teaching award panel members may be both idiosyncratic and tacit and different from the stated criteria. For example, the importance of peer esteem (13) may not be made explicit in stated criteria. In one scheme studied, the chair of the award panel checked discretely with the home department of those whose applications for awards were favoured by the panel, to gauge how an award might be perceived by colleagues, before announcing it.

Some of these conceptions are illogical to put together; for example, a teacher focus (1) and either a student focus (2) or a focus on learning environments (7). Some of these conceptions can be considered as mutually supportive; for example, developing students (6) and being a good citizen (8). Some can be implemented in ways that embody others; for example, benefits deriving from the applicant's research (5) might be undertaken in a teacher-focused way (lecturing up-to-date subject matter) or a student-focused way (involving students in research-like learning processes). Some involve specific educational goals that are outside the curriculum, such as developing students (6). These goals could be pursued in ways embodied in other conceptions; for example, with a focus on the individual teacher (2) or on the learning environment (7). Some conceptions (such as 9, 10 and 11) may be involved independently from any of the other conceptions; for example, innovation may be considered essential or irrelevant, whether or not teaching is teacher-focused, student-focused or research-based.

A number of things are apparent from examining a wide range of teaching award schemes (see Gibbs, 2008, for details). No two teaching award schemes are the same, though several have similarities to each other. Some schemes overlap with others in very few respects. It is unclear (given the lack of documented rationale for most schemes) whether the designers of schemes were aware of the choices they were making and the implications of these choices, at the time the schemes were designed.

Alternative foci of schemes

There are some patterns and emphases visible in different teaching award schemes. Four main patterns are common:

- **a traditional emphasis on the teacher**: on student feedback ratings of the teacher, on the teacher’s research record and their subject knowledge, and on external recognition of the teacher, with little focus on students, on learning, on the learning environment or on the process of developing teaching;

- **a focus on the student, on student learning and on personal support for students and their development**: in or outside the classroom, rather than on formal teaching;

- **a macro focus on the wider learning environment**: on the development of the curriculum or programme, and on the learning milieu, rather than a micro focus on teaching in classrooms or even on individual course units;
Designing teaching award schemes

- **a focus on efforts to develop teaching**, especially through innovation, through influencing others, through leadership of teaching, or through the ‘scholarship of teaching’ in its various forms.

### Conclusions

In the apparent absence of a clear sense of commitment to any particular conception of teaching excellence or a clear statement of what is valued or why, or what the real purpose of the scheme is, or where the award scheme sits alongside other efforts to develop teaching or institutional strategies or missions, schemes often seem to include every criterion they can think of, and then include criteria gleaned from elsewhere, such as from the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme, for good measure. It might be argued by an institution that having a wide range of criteria and rather open interpretation of what these criteria mean, allows different kinds of excellence to be recognised. Indeed it may. However, this does not help potential applicants to understand whether it might be worth applying for an award, or what kind of evidence might be worth including in an application. Neither does it help members of teaching award panels to compare the inevitably very varied kinds of application that would be elicited by such an open process, containing very different kinds of evidence, or help them to make rational decisions about who is deserving of an award and who is not. In most current schemes decisions must inevitably be somewhat arbitrary, buffeted by the implicit conceptions of teaching excellence and personal beliefs of individual panel members, in the absence of coherent guidance from the scheme itself.

Neither does such flexibility help much in orienting teaching behaviour in any particular direction. Leverage of teaching is a vector – it has a direction as well as extent of influence – and most schemes appear incapable of exercising leverage because they have no clear direction. If in a post-1992 university, traditional classroom-centred and didactic teaching methods are seen to be coping poorly with heterogeneous and poorly prepared students, and are commonly associated with worryingly high drop-out rates, then it seems perverse to reward someone who uses traditional teaching methods designed to support homogeneous groups, however good they are in relation to the criteria normally used to assess such methods. In such a context it would make more sense to redefine excellence as ‘whatever improves student retention’, and recognise and reward whoever manages to improve retention. Many such educational goals require intervention at the level of the overall design and implementation of programmes and by all the teachers who contribute to them, rather than focusing on isolated individuals ploughing their own furrow, however imaginatively, in however scholarly a way, and even however highly they are rated by their students or applauded by their peers.

To illustrate what might be possible, one institution was consulted at a point when their teaching award scheme had recently been suspended due to its low credibility. As an institution it had received poor ratings in the nationally administered student survey (the NSS). It would have been realistic for individual teachers to feel that they did not have much chance of improving these institutional ratings, on their own, however good they were. The institution was considering replacing the previous individual teaching awards with a single large award for the subject area that had made most progress in improving its NSS ratings, and that could also give a convincing account of how they had achieved this. Such an award would have been underpinned by Conceptions 4c, 7a and 10, none of which had underpinned its previous, and abandoned, award scheme. It could have become easier for applicants...
to focus their applications, easier to judge the best application, clearer why the winners received their award, and the scale of impact on teacher behaviour and student learning might have been much greater.

The point here is that being clearer about what is valued and why, and by implication what underlying conception of teaching excellence is being emphasised, it is possible to design a teaching award scheme that has a chance of achieving its goals. This guide is offered as a contribution to greater clarity of thinking about the purpose of teaching awards and to their more rational and coherent design and operation.
References


Chickering, A.W. & Gamson, Z.F. (1987) *Seven Principles to Good Practice in Undergraduate Education.* Racine, Wi.: The Johnson Foundation Inc.


Designing teaching award schemes

learning through course design. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.


**Acknowledgement**

Early stages of the work on this project were supported by Caitlin Evans.

**Professor Graham Gibbs** is a Visiting Senior Researcher at the University of Oxford and was previously Director of the Oxford Learning Institute. He has been writing about rewards for teaching since the early 1980s.
Annexe 1
Rewarding those who create effective learning environments: University of Oslo

Background

The University of Oslo is a large, ancient, traditional research-intensive university: the largest and strongest in Norway. It makes three annual awards: one for research, one for dissemination and one for ‘excellent learning environments’. The awards were established in order to “encourage efforts and serve as an inspiration to award winners’ departments”. It is an important feature of the learning environment award that it is alongside, and equivalent to, the award for research excellence. There is no award for individual teachers and the emphasis is strongly on collaboration between teachers, and collaborations between teachers and students, within programmes. It is easier for small Bachelors programmes and Masters programmes to achieve this than large enrolment Bachelors programmes, but nevertheless very large programmes, including the entire medical programme, have in the past won the prize. There is a single Norwegian national prize for an outstanding learning environment, with similar criteria, and Oslo have won this prize twice.

The quality of applications is gradually increasing: one year there was no award made due to the modest standard of applications, but by 2008 there was strong competition. The Institute for Educational Research was consulted about the design of the scheme and it now has the role of reviewing applications and making recommendations to the committee that runs the award. There is a public annual event at which the three awards are made and much publicity about what the awards were made for. It is considered unlikely that academics or departments set out with the intention to achieve the award (any more than researchers undertake research in order to win awards) even though its value has increased five-fold since its inception. The award is nevertheless seen to provide very welcome recognition for outstanding collaborative efforts to develop teaching and gives publicity to successful efforts to develop learning environments and to the strategies and tactics they adopt.

Mechanisms

Each prize consists of NOK 250,000 (about £25,000) and an engraved plaque. The award is announced at the end of each year. Candidates can be nominated by any staff members at the University, by any committee, by student associations, the Student Parliament, by faculties, institutes, departments and other agencies and groups. Nominations must be submitted to the awards committee through departments – so these are in a sense departmental awards, and departments make efforts to present strong applications in a competitive environment. Faculties, institutes, centres and museums may submit one or more nominations to one or more of the awards. Nominations must be justified and substantiated and presented according to the guidelines set out for the respective awards. The Rector appoints a committee to evaluate candidates. The same committee sits for a period of three years. The member appointed by the Student Parliament is replaced every year. The Pro-Rector chairs the committee. All members have equal votes. The committee may seek advice from consultants outside the committee. The committee may nominate own candidates of their own choice not nominated by anyone else in the ordinary nomination process. When the committee is unable to agree on a single candidate, the decision is based on simple majority vote. The prizes are awarded by the University Board, based solely on the recommendations of the committee. The decision made by the Board is made public from the day prize-winners are informed.
No prize-winner can receive the award a second time during the following five years. The prize is not subject to tax or other deductions.

Criteria for the award for excellent learning environments

Three main criteria have been defined. It is not necessary to meet all the criteria but special strengths in one area are not sufficient without some evidence of strengths in the other areas.

Academic and pedagogical conditions

- Clarity: Goals, study plans and teaching plans are not only clearly expressed, they are realistic and used actively in the teaching-learning programme.
- Commitment: Teachers commit themselves to their students. Teachers are accessible to students and there are activities that involve mutual commitment.
- Engagement of students: Teaching and learning is based on the principle that the student should, to a large degree, take on responsibility for their own studies and take an active role in the teaching-learning process.
- Student focus: Students, both as individuals and as a group, are considered significant co-operating partners in teaching and learning.
- Research base: Teaching decisions are based on the scholarship of teaching. Students are exposed to – and may contribute to – research activities and research communities.
- Learning outcomes: There are high standards of student achievement and performance, whether documented by portfolios, examinations or reports from examiners.

Social conditions

- Well-being: The learning environment is experienced as supportive and inclusive, as an exciting encounter with dedicated scholars.
- Co-operation: The environment is characterised by collaboration, community and solidarity.
- Physical environment: The best possible use is made out of the physical conditions through creativity and good management.
- Identity: The environment is characterised by belonging and identity affiliated to a nucleus, for the teachers and also for the students.

Change

- Ability and determination to develop: Substantial emphasis is placed on progressive improvement by measures in the following areas:
  - Development: The environment exhibits little signs of stagnation and increasing rigidity but rather active efforts to develop a collective build-up of competence – academically, pedagogically and socially.
  - Evaluation: There is systematic evaluation of study programmes, involving students and research activities. Both the evaluations and the results are discussed with the students, and results are used actively for development purposes.
  - Development of teachers: The competence of teachers is developed not only in research and academic activities, but also by having the staff gaining, maintaining and developing teaching qualifications.
Characteristics of applications
Strong applications in 2008 included documentation concerning the following kinds of efforts and evidence of success:

- Close contact between teachers and students, including regular public events involving both staff and students; teachers discussing student feedback with each other; alignment of the overall study programme across courses; the best rates of retention and progression, and the best student feedback of all programmes in a faculty with an otherwise weaker profile.
- One week induction for students, 80% of whom are from overseas; many social activities, including inviting students to teachers’ homes; interdisciplinary courses and projects; teaching including student presentations, problem-based learning and generally interactive and student-centred methods; strong emphasis on developing students’ applied research skills, such as reviewing literature; 96% of entering students complete the programme, of whom 80% produce published peer-reviewed journal articles based on their final project; over 20 student applications per place on the programme.
- Active involvement of students in staff research and development work; considerable student choice and specialisation of study; collaboration between teachers and students from other universities who run the same kind of programme.

While student feedback in these applications might be very good, there is generally little focus in the applications on students’ views of individual teachers or on the excellence of individual teachers at all, but rather on students’ overall experience of the programme and their progression and performance in the programme as a whole, and on the recent history of collaborative efforts to make the programme successful for all students. There is also a strong emphasis on convincing evaluation and research evidence, performance indicators and independent external review, and little weight given to unsubstantiated assertion or peer esteem.

Acknowledgements to Professor Helge Strømsø and Professor Per Lauvås for their assistance in drafting this case.
Annexe 2
Rewarding those who undertake scholarship of teaching: University of Lund

The University of Lund is the largest university in Sweden, with 41,000 undergraduates, and is also one of the oldest, founded in 1666. It has a federal structure with eight independent faculties. Both quality assurance and quality enhancement are devolved to faculties and the teaching award described here operates in the large Faculty of Engineering, which has 7,000 students and 1,400 employees. There is a long history of undertaking pedagogical research at Lund and established institutional policy that requires extensive initial and continuing pedagogical training. The development of teaching at the Faculty of Engineering has adopted a social and cultural approach, focusing on building communities of practice within departments where teachers talk freely about their teaching in an informed way (Roxå et al., 2007; Olsson and Roxå, 2008). The rationale and criteria for the award are underpinned by extensive references to the literature, and are explained to applicants and reviewers alike.

Lund’s teaching award involves election to a pedagogical academy, a change in academic title, a permanent increase in salary, and a permanent increase in funding for teaching allocated to the department those elected have come from. The standards set for such election are high, and could not be achieved without their long history of support for pedagogic research, their formal pedagogic requirements for all academic staff, and the level of support provided to academics to develop their teaching in a scholarly way. Standards have increased over time as those involved in judging cases have become more sophisticated and as the quality of applications has increased.

Since its inception in 2001, 63 academics have been elected to the Pedagogical Academy, including 18 professors. Membership of the Academy has started influencing promotion decisions (for professorships), departments within the Faculty have started competing to have the most members of the Academy, and membership of the Academy is influencing decisions about selection of academics for key roles in the Faculty.

Members of the Academy contribute to further pedagogical development within the Faculty of Engineering; for example, mentoring younger teachers, contributing to pedagogic training and advising those seeking election to the Academy.

Lund’s notes for potential applicants are appended below.

References


LTH’s Pedagogical Academy

University teachers (excluding postgraduate students) at the Faculty of Engineering (LTH) are invited to have their teaching qualifications assessed with the aim of being accepted into LTH’s Pedagogical Academy. Those accepted into the Academy will be awarded the distinction of **Excellent Teaching Practitioner** (ETP), and an immediate rise in salary. Moreover, the department to which they belong will receive an increase in their undergraduate teaching grant. The payments are of the same magnitude as those made upon the promotion of a lecturer to senior researcher (**docent**). The economic model for the Pedagogical Academy is described in detail in Enclosure 3. Applicants wishing be admitted to the Academy must show how they have, over a period of time, consciously and systematically, endeavoured to develop means of enhancing students’ learning in their discipline, and how they have made their own experience in teaching available to others in the academic community. Applicants must also be able to analyse and reflect on their teaching practices with the aid of pedagogic literature and other sources of information, and show how they have used these to develop their thoughts concerning teaching and the learning process.

**Aims**

The main aim of the Academy is to afford a higher status to pedagogical development at LTH. Teachers and students, present and prospective, should be given a clear message that LTH is an institute of higher education that focuses on students’ learning and systematically strives to improve the quality of its teaching. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- Good, ambitious, quality-conscious teachers will be recognised as having achieved a high level of pedagogical competence and will be rewarded by an increase in salary.
- It is to be made known both within and outside the institute that LTH is investing in enhancing the quality of teaching and the learning process.
- The departments from which teachers have been admitted to the Academy will be deemed to have a better ability to provide good teaching from a learning perspective. Moreover, departments that actively support their teachers in the development of their teaching skills will doubtless find it easier to recruit and retain good teachers, and thus good students.
- For this reason, such departments will receive an additional financial contribution for every employee who achieves this level of pedagogical competence.
- The Pedagogical Academy will promote positive development, and it will be made clear that it pays to invest in developing sound knowledge in teaching methods, especially in the lecturer’s own subject, and in ensuring well-prepared and well-executed teaching based on the perspective of the students’ learning.
- Teachers will document, analyse and in other ways critically evaluate their teaching methods and the learning ability of their students, so that the result of this process can serve as the basis for further development.
- It is assumed that the teachers accepted by the Academy will continue to contribute to pedagogical development at LTH. This may be realised through active participation in LTH’s pedagogical debate and development, and by acting as mentors for younger teachers. This will take place in line with national and international development regarding the perception of teachers in higher education (Boyer, 1990; Healey, 2000; Knight, 2002, Kreber, 2000, 2002; Trigwell *et al.*, 2000; Abrahamsson, 2001; Fransson and Wahlén, 2001).
The evaluation process

The evaluation process is divided into various parts, which are described in detail in Enclosure 2. The most important component is the applicant’s teaching portfolio, which forms the framework for the description and analysis of the applicant’s teaching practices. This portfolio is to be formulated according to the criteria described below. Furthermore, all examples of teaching practices are to be supported by testimonials, references or other documentation. The same applies to other claims made in the portfolio. Apart from the portfolio, the application is to include a recommendation from the applicant’s head of department and a CV with a section dedicated to the description of pedagogical activities.

The teaching portfolio

This portfolio consists of a personal document and examples of the applicant’s teaching. In the personal document the applicant presents his or her reflections on teaching and learning. The document is to be based on the applicant’s own experience and knowledge of teaching and learning. It should provide insight into how the applicant sees the relation between learning and teaching in the context of the teaching he or she carries out, and should reflect the applicant’s personal teaching philosophy. The portfolio shall also include descriptions of the applicant’s teaching accomplishments. Examples should be given from practical teaching experience related to the applicant’s teaching philosophy. The examples should be described so that it is possible to determine what, how and why certain things were done or took place. The applicant should choose relevant examples from practical teaching experience in order to illustrate the issues he or she deems to be important according to his or her own teaching philosophy. The presentation and assessment of pedagogical qualifications using a teaching portfolio is today an established method, which has been reviewed in scientific publications (Seldin, 1997; Apelgren and Giertz, 2001; Giertz, 2003; Magin, 1998). Teachers at LTH will be offered instruction in composing a teaching portfolio. These courses will be given regularly. The course will follow the guidelines for teaching portfolios described in this document, but is in no way connected to the process of acceptance to the Academy.

Criteria for assessment

In their teaching portfolio, applicants shall describe, analyse, discuss and present information relevant to the following.

1. Focus on the students’ learning process
   - the applicant’s teaching practices based on the learning perspective;
   - the applicant’s teaching and learning philosophy and teaching activities as an integrated whole;
   - the applicant’s practical teaching in relation to the students.

2. Clear development over time
   - the applicant’s efforts in his or her teaching, to consciously and systematically develop students’ learning, and their ability to learn how to learn;
   - the applicant’s ideas and plans for continued development as a teacher.
3. A scholarly approach

- the applicant’s reflections on his or her teaching activities using higher educational theory and knowledge of didactics relevant to his or her discipline;
- the applicant’s search for and creation of knowledge concerning the students’ learning process in his or her own teaching;
- the applicant’s collaboration with others, the sharing of knowledge and experience in teaching and student learning through discussions, participation in conferences, publications, etc.

These criteria are discussed in more detail in Enclosure 1.

The basis for assessment

The teaching portfolio will be assessed from two perspectives: the degree to which a holistic view has been adopted, and the degree to which a scholarly approach has been applied.

A holistic view means that the applicant can demonstrate a comprehensive view in his or her teaching portfolio. It is to be made clear which aspects of their practical teaching experience the applicant considers to be most important; why the applicant considers them to be important; how they are related to each other; and how they are related to the whole.

If the portfolio describes an atomistic approach where the focus is on separate aspects of the applicant’s teaching activities, and where they are described without being related to each other or to the whole, the applicant cannot be considered for acceptance into LTH’s Pedagogical Academy.

Highly reflective means that the applicant can show in his or her portfolio that their teaching practices are based on the results of a scholarly approach, and it is clear which theories and methods have been adopted; why these have been used; the conclusions the applicant has arrived at; how these conclusions have affected the applicant’s personal teaching philosophy and how they have affected teaching in practice; as well as the ways in which these result results and insights have been communicated to the teaching community (in the first place, in engineering subjects).

If the portfolio fails to demonstrate the use of reflection or if it shows that the applicant does not analyse or question his or her outlook on learning, teaching, knowledge of the subject, the traditions of the subject or the context of the teaching, the applicant cannot be considered for acceptance into LTH’s Pedagogical Academy.

Acceptance

Those applicants whose qualifications are deemed sufficiently good are awarded the distinction Excellent Teaching Practitioner. This is formalised in a certificate signed by the Dean of LTH. The teacher will also receive an increase in salary, and his or her department will receive additional undergraduate teaching funds. Once awarded the distinction of ETP, a teacher cannot lose it, but is expected to continue to strive towards improved teaching practices at LTH. This places demands on those who have achieved this distinction. Apart from continuing to work on their own development, they should also act as advisers for other teachers contemplating application to the Academy, and as pedagogical partners in dialogues with others within their department. They should also contribute in other ways to vitalising the pedagogical debate, and have the responsibility of spreading information on LTH’s Pedagogical Academy. Furthermore, a lecturer who has been awarded the distinction of ETP may be called upon in the future to assess other applications.
Rejection

The main aim of the Pedagogical Academy is to promote the development of teaching and learning at LTH. Those whose qualifications are not yet considered sufficient are encouraged to continue their efforts in teaching, with the focus on student learning, and to develop their teaching portfolio, with the aim of submitting a new application at a later date.

Enclosures and references (not included in this Annexe)

1: Discussion of the criteria and assessment
2: The assessment process
3: The economic model for LTH’s Pedagogical Academy

References