

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



Wits Framework for Continuous
Professional Learning of Academics as
University Teachers

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1. Background

In 2018 the Minister of Higher Education and Training (DHET), released a document titled *A National Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers*. In the foreword she writes:

Effective undergraduate and postgraduate student learning requires a scholarly and professional approach to teaching. Academics are appointed primarily for their disciplinary expertise and research capacity and it is not reasonable to assume that they will automatically be well-equipped to carry out this task. It is therefore essential that, across the career continuum from emerging academics to established professionals, there are development opportunities for university teachers and teaching support professionals, including those in teaching leadership roles. Equally important is the need to recognise, affirm and reward good and experienced teachers, drawing on their capacities and accommodating their aspirations.

The purpose of the National Framework is:

to guide collective efforts throughout the higher education system to promote academics' abilities, and recognition, as teachers through improved coordination and integration, greater collaboration and consistent and equitable access to opportunities at different stages of their professional careers.

The National Framework lists seven imperatives for action, one of which is to “enable continuous professional development for university teachers”. In enacting this imperative, it is proposed in the document that “universities have a CPD Framework in place”. In response to the National Framework, and in common with a growing number of universities worldwide, the purpose of this Wits framework is to guide policies, practices and initiatives at Wits in order to provide a coherent approach to the continuous professional learning of academics in their role as university teachers, within a shared understanding of what Wits expects of university teachers and how they contribute to Wits' overall mission. In *Wits Vision 2022 Strategic Framework* it states:

As an institution built on principles of intellectual excellence, we are committed to providing high-quality, internationally competitive education founded on high academic standards, cutting edge research, public engagement, and productive partnerships with leading institutions throughout the world.

2. Introduction

When the first institutions that today we recognise as universities came into being in the late 11th and 12th centuries they were places in which a select few could gather under the tutelage of a small number of wise teachers to gain access to valuable information that was inaccessible to most people, and to hone their critical thinking skills. Teaching was the primary function of university staff for centuries. Over time, the role of university teacher was expanded to include exploration, investigation and creation of the knowledge that they were teaching. During the 20th century, research played an increasingly important part in defining the role of universities, and in discriminating among the growing number of universities according to the prestige that research productivity was deemed to bestow. By the end of the century, the pressure on academic staff at universities viewed as prestigious to produce research papers became

extreme, leading to the adage, “publish or perish”. And in this century, rankings of universities, weighted heavily towards research productivity, are driving many universities to tailor their objectives to criteria used by ranking agencies, potentially at the risk of compromising their core identity and *raison d’être*, and most certainly at the risk of compromising the care, thought, time and attention devoted to good teaching and student learning.

Yet this is happening at a time of massification of higher education, which inevitably means increased diversity in student characteristics, including how well students’ previous experiences at school and at home prepare them to engage in higher order thinking and independent study. Good teaching in a time of massification is essential to student success. In addition, universities have a moral responsibility to do everything in their power to ensure that the students they admit have the best possible chance of succeeding.

In recognition of this, the need for good university teaching is increasingly being highlighted world-wide. For example, in 2013 the European Union undertook a project on the modernisation of higher education, which yielded, among other things, a report on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning at European institutions¹. In the introduction the report states,

While widening and enhancing access to educational opportunity across the EU is essential, it is also crucial that European students have access to the best possible higher education learning environment. High quality teaching is the lynchpin of that. There are many inspirational exemplars of sustained and proven excellence in teaching. Regrettably they are not yet the norm and we find worrying systemic weaknesses in the sector that are maintaining experiential disparities that are just plain wasteful and should no longer be regarded as acceptable. The essential challenge for the higher education sector, generally speaking, is to comprehensively professionalise its teaching cohort as teachers.

As a means of promoting equity of outcomes, the document says:

[The full professionalization of higher education teachers is] an important vehicle for ironing out the vast disparities in educational outcomes which are not the best use of the resource that is the brain power of our people. It also makes the profession of higher education teacher an exciting one, more fulfilling, dynamically self-interrogating, and therefore self-updating and useful. It has the capacity to shift the learning environment into a very different and much more attractive kilter.

The report goes on to state clearly that good teaching is not at odds with good research. On the contrary,

There is no contradiction between the imperative of good teaching and the imperative of research which critiques, refines, discards and advances human knowledge and understanding. Good teaching, in many subject areas, is only good to the extent that it is informed by the latest research. A good teacher, like a good graduate, is also an active learner, questioner and critical thinker.

¹ High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (June 2013). Report to the European Commission on Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe’s higher education institutions.

...Teaching is a core mission and therefore a core responsibility. Quality teaching is a *sine qua non* of a quality learning culture.

This view is echoed by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, a highly ranked, research intensive university, when he writes²:

But while it may be our research breakthroughs and wider impact that garner headlines, we have never lost sight of the fact that teaching must always be at the very core of everything that we do – it is central to providing a world-class student learning experience and developing the skilled, innovative and motivated graduates that our society needs.

... A key element of our approach has been to ensure that teaching is recognised and rewarded by providing parity of esteem for teaching even in a research-intensive environment, modernising our promotions processes and recognising the many outstanding contributions of colleagues through our teaching excellence and student-led teaching awards.

Academic colleagues are also supported to develop their practice through the provision of enhanced continuing professional development at all stages of their careers, and our professional services provide improved administrative support to teaching staff.

University rankings criteria are also beginning to take cognisance of the importance of quality teaching. For example, in 2018 Times Higher Education introduced teaching rankings³.

3. Defining university teaching

For the most part, in the South African higher education system, an academic staff member is expected to be both a researcher and a university teacher. For the purposes of this document, “university teaching” is broadly defined as *any engagement between staff members and students that is intended to promote student learning*. This engagement can take many forms, such as:

- Tutoring individual students or groups of students,
- Delivering a prepared presentation to a group of students,
- Supervising laboratory work,
- Guiding field trips,
- Supervising clinical work,
- Mentoring and providing guidance to one or more students carrying out research,
- Guiding and critiquing the development of technological artefacts or creative works,
- Overseeing workplace-based work-integrated learning (WIL),
- Overseeing simulated WIL, such as micro-teaching or manipulation of real or virtual equipment found in the workplace,
- Using technology to interact with students in novel ways, in class or at a distance, in real time or asynchronously.

² <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/europe-teaching-rankings-2018-teaching-and-research-both-alike-dignity>

³https://www.timeshighereducation.com/rankings/united-states/2019#!/page/0/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats

It is clear from this definition and the examples above that university teaching encompasses interactions with both undergraduate and post-graduate students. Furthermore, it is important to note that while post-graduate students may be engaged in conducting research, the act of providing guidance, mentoring or supervision to a post-graduate student is not research *per se*. In terms of the definition above, it is teaching. As Wits moves to increase the number of post-graduate students it enrolls in the next few years, it will become increasingly important to enhance post-graduate teaching, including exploring and developing various models for providing high quality guidance and oversight of the design, implementation, management and reporting of research projects. In addition, specialist knowledge is needed of how to effectively promote learning among students who are more mature academically and in life experience than undergraduate students.

In order to engage with students in a manner that effectively promotes learning, there are associated teaching activities that academics in their role as university teachers need to perform. These include:

- Designing and continually renewing course and programme curricula, as well as initiating new academic offerings;
- Designing and implementing methods for assessing student learning that are appropriate for measuring the learning outcomes of courses and programmes and for the students enrolled in them;
- Engaging in continuous reflection on their practice and their students' learning;
- Participating in activities that foster continuous professional growth and learning;
- Informing themselves of key principles underpinning good teaching that promote effective student learning, as well as discipline-specific aspects of student learning and university teaching.

In the rest of this document, the term “teaching” will be used to encompass all of the activities related to facilitating and assessing student learning.

4. Enhancing teaching at a research-intensive university

In a research intensive university teaching and research are sometimes framed antagonistically – increased attention to the one may be perceived to necessitate decreased attention to the other. This antagonistic relationship can be manifested at a number of levels, from the individual academic, who may be told, “don’t put too much time into your teaching because it will adversely affect your research output”, to the institution itself, which may measure its status solely or largely on the basis of its research outputs, potentially at the expense of high quality teaching and the associated benefits in terms of the quality (as measured, for example, by graduate attributes) and number of its graduates.

Yet as long ago as 1990, Ernest Boyer, then President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching at Princeton University, wrote⁴

We believe the time has come to move beyond the tired old “teaching versus research” debate and give the familiar and honourable term “scholarship” a broader, more capacious meaning,

⁴ Boyer, E L (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Princeton University Press.

one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work. Surely, scholarship means engaging in original research. But the work of the scholar also means stepping back from one's investigation, looking for connections, building bridges between theory and practice, and communicating one's knowledge effectively to students. Specifically, we conclude that the work of the professoriate might be thought of as having four separate, yet overlapping, functions. These are: the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of teaching.

Boyer's notion of the "scholarship of teaching" has been expanded in the past three decades into the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). There is no single, universally accepted definition of SOTL, but Booth and Woollacott⁵ suggest that SOTL deals with six concerns:

A concern for the status of teaching in higher education, vis-à-vis research; a concern to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and of student learning; a growing concern in today's university for an increased focus on student learning; a concern that teachers engage in scholarly research related to their teaching; a concern to disseminate the knowledge gained through such research; and a concern to professionalise teaching in higher education. We conclude that this proliferation of SOTL purposes is a consequence of a growth in the recognition of the value and broad transformative potential of being more scholarly and professional with regard to teaching and learning in higher education.

Engaging in SOTL can thus be seen as encompassing a wide range of activities, from taking a scholarly approach to teaching that draws on relevant research and is enhanced through reflective practice to conducting research on teaching and student learning. Such research may be related to the learning and teaching of specific disciplines from a disciplinary perspective or may relate to broader aspects of teaching and student learning that are applicable to a wide range of contexts. Either way, such research is a contribution to new knowledge and therefore should be recognised and rewarded in the same way as any other research.

Not all academics will choose to carry out research related to teaching and student learning, but all academics are expected to undertake research. Although the link between discipline-focused research and teaching may seem less obvious at first glance than research on teaching and learning, the relationship between research and teaching can and should be synergistic, where teaching and research activities are mutually reinforcing. This can happen in a number of ways, such as incorporating research results into curriculum, inspiring and equipping students to undertake research at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and using issues and ideas that arise from teaching to influence research. In a 2017 report from the League of European Research Universities⁶ (LERU), two of the principles that LERU universities support are, "Work in partnership with students and other stakeholders, wherever possible, to implement research-rich curricula," and, "Inform teaching with the latest findings and practices of research and offer active research experience to all students from the undergraduate phase onwards". The LERU report also references the 2016 work of Tony Harland in which he makes:

...explicit reference to the Humboldtian ideal of the unity of teaching and research, develops a conceptual argument for 'teaching-led research' in which 'university lecturers construct

⁵ Booth, S and Woollacott, L (2015). Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. In S Booth and L Woollacott (Eds), *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. On its constitution and transformative potential*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 1-14.

⁶ <https://www.leru.org/files/Excellent-Education-in-Research-Rich-Universities-Full-paper.pdf>

courses that directly and positively influence their research, while at the same time, safeguard and enhance the student experience’.

In addition, there are specific benefits that students may derive from studying at a research-intensive university. A report from the Scottish Quality Assurance Agency⁷ suggests that in a research-intensive university, the development of “research-type graduate attributes” can be explicitly built into the student learning experience. The report states:

The importance of higher education students learning in a research environment is central to the values of most academics. This may not be enough to convince governments, students and taxpayers of the desirability of supporting research-linked curricula. However, the knowledge and skills, or graduate attributes, that university students can develop through learning in a research-based environment can be directly linked to the concerns of developing a “knowledge economy” and an informed, culturally enriched and engaged society.

Other benefits to students of studying in a research intensive university are stated in the LERU report as follows:

...being part of a research-rich culture benefits students by providing them with a range of approaches to knowledge and knowledge production. These relate to the learning that occurs when undertaking the specific academic, cultural and professional practices of particular disciplines and/or of thematic interdisciplinary investigations. Benefits for students also arise from the intellectual depth associated with engaging in any cutting-edge investigations, and from the range of skills associated with independent and collaborative enquiry.

5. The importance of Continuous Professional Learning (CPL)

University teaching is a professional activity. As with all professional activities, it requires initial training, mentoring and continuous, career-long learning and growth, based on regular updating of knowledge, reflection on practice, scholarly engagement with research and feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

There are two important reasons for academic staff to participate in Continuous Professional Learning (CPL). One reason is for their own professional growth. A consummate professional takes pride in their breadth of knowledge, depth of understanding, good judgement, high level of skill and impeccable execution of their work. To maintain this status requires ongoing learning about new developments in the field, practice, honing of new and existing skills, experience, and, critically, reflection on experience, which is a hallmark of a professional⁸. All of this is true of being a university teacher. There is a continually growing body of research conducted by, among others, cognitive scientists, discipline specialists, psychologists and higher education specialists on how people learn, both in general and in specific discipline areas, what affects learning, and how educational activities can be structured to facilitate learning. There is also a large body of practice-related information that provides guidance on, for example, how to design curricula, implement a variety of teaching approaches and meaningfully assess student learning. Familiarity with such information is important for

⁷ Jenkins, A (2009). *Research-Teaching Linkages: Enhancing Graduate Attributes. Overview: the aims, achievements and challenges from the Enhancement Theme*. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

⁸ Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action*. USA: Basic Books.

academics involved in the professional practice of university teaching. Furthermore, at a research intensive university, scholarly engagement with a body of evidence underlying effective educational practice is just as important as scholarly engagement with disciplinary knowledge.

The second important reason for academic staff to participate in CPL is that better teaching contributes to better student learning and therefore greater student success⁹. Since the 1990s there has been a massification of higher education globally, with a concomitant increase in the diversity of students, including the level of traditional measures of academic preparedness. This is also true in South Africa. In South Africa in the past 25 years the number of students enrolling in higher education institutions has more than doubled, while the number of permanent academic staff has only increased by about one third. South African higher education institutions, like higher education institutions all over the world, are being required to do more with less. We may lament this trend, but we cannot change it. What we can change is our effectiveness. It is to no one's advantage to spend time, energy and money on ineffective practices. Moreover, there is an increasing drive internationally to hold institutions accountable for the quality of teaching and student learning. For example, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, used as the basis for quality reviews of higher education institutions, has a document on teaching and learning¹⁰, which identifies as one of the guiding principles for evaluating institutions:

Effective learning and teaching occurs when staff display a sound understanding and up-to-date knowledge of their subject, pedagogies and/or professional practice and bring this to a variety of appropriately-designed learning and teaching activities.

In addition, in some countries, parts of the US, for example, funding is increasingly dependent on outputs – students who complete degrees – as much as, or even more than, inputs. (And this cannot be achieved by lowering standards or inflating marks, since student employment post-graduation is also tracked.)

6. Continuous Professional Learning over a career

The reasons for participating in CPL and the nature of CPL activities are different at different times in a university's (or country's) history and at different stages of an academic staff member's career. But it is important that participation in CPL span the whole career of an academic staff member, from post-graduate student to senior professor. In the EU document on improving teaching and learning¹¹, two of the guiding principles identified are:

That it is a key responsibility of academics staff to ensure that they are qualified to teach and able to teach well; and

⁹ Gyrko, J, MacCormack, P, Bless, MM, Jodl, J. (2016). Why Colleges and Universities Need to Invest in Quality Teaching More Than Ever. Faculty development, evidence-based teaching practices and student success. Association of College and University Educators and American Council on Education.

¹⁰ The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (November 2018). UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance. Learning and Teaching.

¹¹ High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (June 2013). Report to the European Commission on Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions.

That this responsibility extends over the entire career from start to finish so that they remain up-to-date and proficient in the very best pedagogical practices and all that excellence in teaching requires.

Several career stages and a motivation for participating in CPL related to university teaching at each one are given below.

Students who perform a teaching role need initial training in university teaching, and oversight and mentoring as they perform this role.

For many people, their first experience of university teaching occurs when they are post-graduate students. Most post-graduate students are involved in some form of teaching, such as tutoring, demonstrating in laboratories, marking assignments, serving as teaching assistants or providing guidance to more junior post-graduate students in their research. Indeed, given their financial constraints, universities would be unable to function as educational institutions if they did not have students helping with various academic tasks. In many institutions, such “student teachers” receive training from academic development staff. In some places, doctoral students undergo training in university teaching as part of their PhD programmes. In addition to training, student teachers should not be left unsupervised – they need guidance, monitoring and mentoring.

New academic staff need adequate induction into university teaching to equip them with the solid grounding needed to be effective teachers. To do anything less is unfair to staff and unethical towards students.

An academic staff member who is new to university teaching, either because they are just starting out on their career or because they have had other careers outside of academia, needs a solid grounding in university teaching. This cannot be achieved by means of a once-off or short-term activity, but typically requires a minimum of one year of structured learning activities and reflection on practice. In the Faculty of Science at Wits, for example, there is a three-year probation programme for new academics, which addresses both the teaching and research roles of becoming an academic. At some universities in South Africa new academic staff are required to take one or more credit-bearing modules in university teaching that can count towards a post-graduate diploma. In some countries academic staff are expected (the UK, for example) or required (the Netherlands, for example) to obtain a formal qualification in university teaching before their probation period ends and their permanent employment is approved.

Mid-career academic staff need to continuously update, expand and refine their knowledge and skills as university teachers.

Once academic staff members are established in their dual roles of university teacher and researcher, it is important for them to participate in ongoing learning in order to continually improve their knowledge, skills and practice. This may take many forms, including attending workshops on a specific topic, such as teaching large classes, taking a short course online or face-to-face on a topic of interest, such as alternative forms of assessment of learning, registering for a higher degree related to higher education or to disciplinary-based education,

participating in conferences and symposia and being actively involved in a community of practice.

Senior academic staff need to engage in continuous professional learning in order to keep up with changing times. They also have a valuable role to play as leaders, guides and advocates in the area of university teaching.

As with any profession, senior academic staff also need to be continually learning. The context of higher education is continuously changing, which demands constant rethinking and renewing of existing practices, as well as generating new ideas and approaches. For example, the composition and characteristics of our student body are very different from 20 or 30 years ago, the cost of higher education has skyrocketed, creating serious consequences for students who fail a year, and the sophistication and ubiquity of technology have opened up new possibilities for how, when and where teaching and learning take place. In addition, senior academic staff have an important role to play as role models and mentors to new academic staff and in influencing and participating in institutional leadership in enhancing university teaching.

Academic support and professional staff need to participate in continuous professional learning throughout their careers.

While university teaching is an explicit component of the work of an academic, there are many support and professional staff who contribute to the university's educational provision, and the resulting student learning experience and teaching effectiveness. For example, academic development practitioners help to facilitate academics' growth as university teachers and therefore require a high level of skill and continually updated knowledge. Technical staff may need to operate and maintain specialised equipment, and supervise and guide students in using it. Educational technology specialists work at the interface of technology, teaching and learning, and therefore must keep abreast of developments in all of these areas.

7. Promoting Continuous Professional Learning in university teaching at Wits

Ensuring good teaching, that is, teaching that is focused on student learning aimed at deep understanding of important concepts and development of transferrable skills and broad graduate attributes, is both a quality and a social justice issue. For a university to provide anything less than high quality education is unacceptable. Good teaching, and associated learning opportunities for students, is the *raison d'être* of a university, the reason students come to university. On the other hand, there is always room for improvement, and therefore the university as a whole needs to be constantly engaged in quality enhancement, which the Scottish Quality Assurance Agency (quoted in the CHE Quality Enhancement Project framework¹²) defines as, "taking deliberate steps to bring about improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experiences of students". Good teaching is a social justice issue because in South Africa, more than in many countries in the world, university education makes an enormous difference to the earning potential, and therefore the prospects for a good standard

¹² Council on Higher Education (2014). Framework for Institutional Quality Enhancement in the Second Period of Quality Assurance. Pretoria: CHE.

of living, for graduates, their families and their communities. Students, many of whom come from very poor economic circumstances, deserve the best possible education that the university can provide. Good teaching is central to that.

However, many academic staff do not feel able to put time and effort into developing themselves as good teachers without a change in institutional culture. There is a growing consensus globally that in the 21st century higher education institutions must actively support, encourage, recognise and reward academics in their role as university teachers. The European Union document on improving teaching and learning¹³ stressed the need to,

..create conditions in which the higher education sector gives parity of esteem to both teaching and research, so that the higher education teacher knows that he or she has to invest not simply in a command of his or her discipline, whether it is law, literature or science, but must invest in being a good teacher and will be rewarded appropriately for doing so.

Wits needs to create such conditions. This involves aligning policies, plans, practices and attitudes so that time and resources are made available for Continuous Professional Learning. In addition, in the words of the DHET's National Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers, the university should, "Ensure that academics are recognised and rewarded for the work they do as university teachers".

Several recent developments will contribute to creating favourable conditions for promoting CPL at Wits, including the following:

1. The Centre for Learning, Teaching and Development has been reconfigured and strengthened.
2. A workload policy has been developed which includes, among other things, time for professional development.
3. A policy for the evaluation of courses and teachers has been approved, which will ensure that regular feedback is provided to various role players to be used as the basis for personal development (of the teacher) and quality enhancement (of the course).
4. A performance appraisal system is being implemented, which will include personal development plans for each staff member in which, among other things, CPL opportunities can be identified, supported and recognised.
5. The *Wits Learning and Teaching Plan 2020-2024* foregrounds the importance of enhancing academics as university teachers, as well as support and professional staff in their teaching roles. The plan will serve as a guide for teaching and learning related resource allocations and applications for external funding over the next few years.
6. University and faculty-specific promotions criteria have recently been revised and include criteria related to teaching.
7. An Early Career Academic Development Programme is being trialled for 40 new academic staff per year using funds from the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) grant for 2018 to 2020. This is in addition to the Faculty of Science probation programme, which has been in place for a number of years.

¹³ High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (June 2013). Report to the European Commission on Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions.

8. A Post-Graduate Diploma in Education in the field of higher education has been offered since 2015 and enrolls about 15 people a year. This is in addition to the existing Post-Graduate Diploma in Health Sciences Education.

8. Guiding principles of CPL related to university teaching at Wits

CPL at Wits will be guided by the following principles:

Participation in CPL

1. Continuous Professional Learning at Wits is important for all academic staff and support and professional staff who play a role in university teaching, for both personal development and enhanced professional expertise and effectiveness.
2. CPL must be career-stage appropriate and take place over an entire career.
3. Time must be allocated in workload distribution for participation in CPL activities.
4. Participation in CPL activities will be recognised in performance appraisals and be integral to personal development plans.

Early development as a university teacher

5. Students who perform teaching tasks, such as tutors and teaching assistants, need initial training in university teaching, mentoring and oversight.
6. All new academic staff members need induction into their role as university teachers. They should participate in a structured induction programme of at least one year's duration at Faculty or university level or a combination of both. Workload allocation must take such participation into account.

Probation and promotions

7. Probation criteria should explicitly require evidence of participation in professional learning related to teaching and proficiency in university teaching.
8. There should be alignment of academic appointment and promotions criteria across the university to ensure consistency, while allowing for necessary contextual variation, in what is required and how evaluation will be done in the areas of teaching proficiency, teaching-related activities and contributions, and professional growth as a university teacher.

Support for teacher and teaching development

9. Programmes and structures that support and advance professional learning in the areas of teaching and student learning at the university should be appropriately staffed and resourced. Associated staff should be given support to enable them to participate in CPL.
10. Opportunities for staff to undertake projects to innovate or to enhance teaching in various ways will be provided, for example, through work release time, teaching sabbaticals and access to funding and other resources. Such projects could include, for example, visits to other universities with particular expertise in an area of interest,

developing new or renewed courses or programmes, and introducing novel teaching approaches.

11. Staff wishing to undertake formal study in discipline-related teaching and student learning or related more generally to teaching and learning in higher education should be supported.
12. Research on teaching and student learning will be encouraged, supported and funded. Such research should be eligible for funding and should attract the same rewards and kudos as any other research.

Evaluation of teaching

13. Course and lecturer evaluations will be undertaken regularly and used as a tool for the personal development of lecturers and enhancement of courses.
14. Multiple forms of input from students into their learning experience will be solicited, and feedback should be provided to them on enhancements planned or undertaken.
15. Academic staff will be supported in developing teaching portfolios that provide, among other things, a record of, and reflection on their teaching activities, philosophy and growth over time, together with feedback from students, peers and other relevant stakeholders within and beyond the university. These portfolios can be used by the staff members as a record of their activities and reflections, as well as for applications for rewards or recognition, such as promotion or teaching awards.

Promoting teacher excellence

16. Leadership in promoting teaching and student learning at Wits will be developed, supported and rewarded.
17. Excellent teaching will be recognised through a number of vehicles. This may include an expanded number and range of awards at school, faculty and university levels. It may also include the formation of a university structure, such as a Wits University Teaching Academy¹⁴, comprising members who have demonstrated teaching excellence and who play a leadership role in enhancing teaching and student learning at Wits.
18. Opportunities for sharing learnings, insights and new ideas related to teaching and learning will be supported at many levels in the university. This could include, for example, high profile university-wide conferences, forums on specialised topics, such as writing intensive courses, and faculty or school level events.

¹⁴ See, for example, the Pedagogical Academy at Lund University (which applies to the Faculty of Engineering, rather than the university, but has impacted the whole university). Olsson, T and Roxå, T (2013). Assessing and rewarding excellent academic teachers for the benefit of an organisation. *European Journal of Higher Education Development*, 3 (1), 40-61.