

Higher Education Bioscience Teacher of the Year Award 2021

Guidance Document

Background

The Higher Education Bioscience Teacher of the Year Award seeks to identify the UK's leading bioscience higher education (HE) teachers, recognising the invaluable role they play in educating and inspiring the next generation of biologists. The competition is open to all employed bioscience teachers in the UK HE system and individuals can be nominated either by self, peer, management, or student nomination using the nomination form.

We are seeking nominations which represent and celebrate the whole of the HE bioscience teaching community across all career stages. Nominations are particularly encouraged for women and/or people from minority ethnic backgrounds because these have been under-represented in previous application pools.

The HE Bioscience Teacher of the Year Award recognises outstanding learning and teaching practice in the biosciences. The scheme rewards lecturers who:

- Display individual excellence through the development and implementation of approaches to teaching that have proven successful in promoting bioscience student learning and achievement
- Undertake scholarly and professional developmental activities that actively influence and enhance the learning of their students
- Support colleagues and influence bioscience student learning beyond their own department and institution
- Exhibit innovation in relation to teaching that has proven to improve their teaching practices and enhance student learning
- Embeds inclusive approaches to bioscience teaching, ensuring equality of participation and outcomes for those from disadvantaged backgrounds

The HE Bioscience Teacher of the Year Award has been developed from the UK Centre for Bioscience's Ed Wood Teaching Awards, which were established in 2008/09 to provide an annual opportunity for bioscience academics to receive national recognition for their outstanding learning and teaching practices.

Since the closure of the UK Centre for Bioscience in 2011, the award has been offered and managed by the Royal Society of Biology. The Society and the sponsors, Oxford University Press and Heads of University Biosciences, are delighted to support the continuation of this award.

Aims of the award

The Award supports the Royal Society of Biology's objective to 'support and recognise excellence in biology teaching'. The main aims of the Award are to:

- Provide national recognition and reward for excellence in teaching and supporting innovative student learning in the biosciences for individuals in any of the UK home nations (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)
- Raise the status of teaching in the biosciences as a scholarly activity
- Support individuals in reflecting upon and enhancing their professional practice in support of student learning
- Develop case studies of effective and/or innovative student learning and disseminate these nationally to enhance bioscience student learning experiences across the UK

The prize

The winner will receive the Ed Wood Memorial Prize of £1,000 to spend as they wish. The Ed Wood Memorial Prize is named in honour of Professor Edward J. Wood, who established and became the first Director of the Learning and Teaching Support Network for Bioscience, subsequently the UK Centre for Bioscience, and who dedicated himself to the promotion of biochemistry and molecular biology education.

The winner will also receive £250 worth of OUP books of their choice; and one year's free Membership of the Royal Society of Biology at the appropriate grade (MRSB or FRSB). The winner also gets the fee for their first year of Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach) waived, should they wish to apply.

The remaining finalists will each receive a £150 prize for their case study, and will also receive one year's free Membership to the Royal Society of Biology, and the fee for their first year of Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach) waived.

The winner will be announced and the award presented at the two-day HUBS Annual Meeting at the Francis Crick Institute, London on 12-13 April 2021. All shortlisted candidates will be invited to present their case studies at the conference and their delegate fee will be waived.

Who is eligible?

The competition is open to all bioscience teachers in UK higher education, at any stage of their career, including those involved in higher education provision within further education. We adopt a broad definition of bioscience, so entrants from any bioscience discipline (e.g. genetics, biomedical science, ecology, biochemistry etc) are welcome to apply. To enter, the bioscience teacher in question should be currently employed by a UK educational institution on a part-time or full-time, fixed term or permanent basis.

There is no limit to the number of applications per year from an individual bioscience department/institution.

Previously shortlisted applicants are not eligible to apply the year after they were shortlisted but are encouraged to apply again in subsequent years. Applicants who are not shortlisted may enter in consecutive years.

How do I enter?

Round 1

The first round involves entry by self, peer, management or student nomination, by completion of the nomination form. Applications should address the criteria as set out below and should aim to give the judging panel enough information to build up a picture of the candidate's teaching. A limit of 500 words applies to each section of the application form (excluding references).

Please note that all applications reviewed by the judges in the Round 1 will be anonymous. The name on your application and your department will be anonymised.

Applications will be judged using equal weighting given to the following four criteria:

1. Demonstrates a passion for bioscience education through the development and implementation of novel approaches to bioscience teaching that have proven successful in promoting student learning and achievement;
2. Articulates how their teaching approaches are grounded in evidence-based pedagogical principles, and justifies how those approaches represent innovation at either a local or national level;
3. Embeds inclusive approaches to bioscience teaching, ensuring equality of participation and outcomes for those from disadvantaged backgrounds; and implements approaches that are demonstrably sustainable/scalable over time;
4. Provides evidence of the impact of their work on both student learning and the teaching practices of their peers;

Application forms should be received by **the end of the day on Sunday 29 November 2020**.

Candidates will be informed in **January 2021** of the judges' decisions. Those who have shortlisted will then enter the second round.

Round 2

In the second round, successful finalists will be asked to prepare a written case study and an accompanying 15-minute presentation based upon the case study. Finalists must also provide a letter of reference from their head of department or line manager. These must be submitted by the following deadline:

Case study and presentation submission deadline	Sunday 28 February 2021
--	-------------------------

Case studies should provide information on the finalists' teaching methodology and practice. They should highlight one teaching methodology or element of practice which has been proven to enhance the bioscience student learning experience and explain the rationale for using this approach, with evidence of innovation and success. The case studies should be around 1500 words long.

Previous finalists' case studies from [2012 onwards](#) are available online.

As a guide, case studies may be organised in the following way:

- I. Background
- II. Reasons for introducing this teaching method
- III. Lecturer's perspective
- IV. Students' perspective
- V. Innovation
- VI. Inclusivity
- VII. Issues
- VIII. Evidence
- IX. Reflections
- X. Publications

Finalists may follow this format, or devise an alternative format that they feel best conveys their case study.

The presentation will be given in person to the judging panel, and should be approximately 15 minutes long. Presentation time should be used to discuss the finalist's case study and general teaching practices further. Finalists will then complete a 30-45-minute interview with the judging panel based on the evidence submitted in the Round 1 application form and the Round 2 written case study and presentation. Finalists should be prepared to answer questions on their presentation and case study but also their general practice, methodologies, philosophies, and wider teaching practices.

In the second round, case studies and presentations will be marked using the same four equally weighted criteria identified for round 1.

A final score is then generated using the total from round 1 (weighted at 40%), and the total from round 2 (weighted at 60%).

Advice to applicants

On the basis of previous years, the following are characteristics of a strong application. This advice applies equally to Round 1 and Round 2.

- Personality and passion. We want to get to know you as an educator. What drives your teaching philosophy? Why do you think you connect well with students? What makes you an effective colleague in driving teaching innovation? In general, applications written by the nominee are more effective at communicating this than those written by e.g. Heads of Department, but applicants will be scored equally whether it is a self or student/colleague/peer nomination. We would recommend that HoDs/peers work with applicants on their nominations to ensure that the applicants 'voice' is well represented.
- A short statement explaining your teaching context e.g. are you a programme director or a junior teaching fellow. Give an indication of your level of responsibility, the types of teaching you do (practicals, field courses, online etc) and the types of students at your institution (e.g. are there a high proportion from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, BAME etc).
- A clear explanation for the rationale behind your teaching approach. Why do you teach in the way you do? This might be informed from the scholarly literature, workshops/conferences attended, formal or informal teaching networks that have influenced your practice etc.
- Quantitative evidence of your impact. This might be in terms of assessment results, NSS scores, retention rates, awarding gaps etc.
- Qualitative evidence of your impact. This might be in terms of testimonials from colleagues or students, module evaluations, NSS free text comments etc. Strong applications usually have evidence of support from outside your institution, but this is not a requirement, particularly for early career applicants.
- Student voice. Supportive statements from students or examples of work produce can really 'lift' an application. Make sure you have permission to share any student generated materials (may require checking with your local ethics committee).
- Consideration of inclusivity. Is there evidence that your teaching strategy is actively inclusive of e.g. BAME students, those with Specific learning Differences (e.g. dyslexia), commuter students etc?
- Consideration of innovation. What evidence do you have that your teaching is actually innovative – it is easy to use the word, but we are looking for actual evidence. Innovation might be relative to your local context, or at the national level.
- Figures or visual aids. Consider including graphs to illustrate quantitative data, screenshots of your teaching materials, examples of student work etc.
- Evidence of teaching impact. This might be through HEA fellowship (any level), institutional or national teaching awards, teaching related scholarly publications, number of hits on a teaching YouTube channel etc.

The judging panel

The 2021 judging panel will consist of the following:

- Oxford University Press Representative – Jonathan Crowe
- Previous winner (2014) – Dr Nick Freestone
- Previous winner (2016) – Dr Katharine Hubbard
- HUBS representative – Dr Sandra Kirk
- Royal Society of Biology Council member – Professor Yvonne Barnett

More information

Any questions about the scheme may be addressed to hubs@rsb.org.uk

Sponsored by:

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

HUBS
Heads of University Biosciences