



TEACHING ADVANCEMENT AT UNIVERSITY (TAU) FELLOWSHIPS

Information about the TAU Fellowships Programme (2021)

TAU PROGRAMME

The TAU Fellowship Programme is a nation-wide intervention, which seeks to advance teaching quality and the professionalisation of teaching and learning in the public higher education sphere. It involves the professional development of a cohort of mid- to senior level academic staff from varying disciplines in all South African public universities, by means of a combined residential and distance learning approach. Participants, who are disciplinary specialists, are familiarised with developments relating to teaching and learning in higher education, introduced to Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) research, and positioned as change agents. Over the period of the TAU programme they work on an educational project situated in their own environment, as well as on a group project, and build partnerships with colleagues from other institutions. On conclusion of the programme, they are equipped to lead change processes relating to teaching and learning in their home institution. TAU is included as a component in DHET's National Framework for Advancing Academics as University Teachers and is funded as a collaborative project through the UCDP; individual institutions do not need to budget for their participation in TAU.

The first TAU fellowships programme was initiated in 2016 through HELTASA with the aim of contributing to the transformation of Teaching and Learning in the higher education sector in South Africa. In TAU, academics nominated from public higher education institutions across the country work collaboratively on a range of activities and tasks. In the current version of TAU the individual TAU institutional projects are collectively intended to strengthen the teaching and learning environment for students and staff by advancing social justice and challenging the legacies of inequality inherited from the past.

The aims of the Programme are as follows:

1. To contribute towards the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa by supporting the development of a cadre of academics across institutions and disciplines as scholars, leaders, change agents and mentors in their fields;
2. To foster an engaged and responsive understanding of teaching in varied institutional and disciplinary contexts;
3. To enable TAU participants to develop their capabilities to engage in and insert themselves as change agents, individually and collectively, in building a socially just education.

The TAU curriculum objectives seek to build these aims into a coherent programme.

1. To enhance a critical and expansive **understanding of the SA higher education context** within an African and global framework.
2. To promote and strengthen **scholarly teaching** that is engaged and responsive to context and focused on advancing social justice.

3. To strengthen **blended and online teaching practices** that are inclusive and sensitive to issues of social justice and the digital divide.

4. To advance an understanding of the **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)** as a form of disciplinary focussed educational research and its connection to social justice and change as conceptualised by the notion of SoTL from the South.

5. To establish **self-reflexive practice** in relation to professional knowledge, learning, teaching practice and role as a change agent.

6. To strengthen capacity to be a **change agent and leader** in relation to advancing socially just teaching and learning practices in their institutions and beyond.

7. To explore possibilities for achieving social justice within scholarly teaching through **collaborative engagements** at an institutional, regional, cross-institutional, Interdisciplinary level and in partnerships with communities.

The TAU programme seeks to maximise participant engagement, and to promote collaboration across universities and disciplines. It draws on the principles of authentic learning and teaching and foregrounds critical reflection on what constitutes effective teaching and learning in diverse contexts.

The programme is constructed around three themes:

- Teaching engagement and responsiveness
- The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Contributing to change in your context.

We believe that collaborative learning is a powerful means of expanding what we can achieve and so each TAU participant is assigned to an Enquiry Group (EG) of between 5 and 6 members. Each group will have an advisor and be constituted around a theme that relates to the individual institutional projects of its members.

Enquiry Groups will comprise participants from diverse disciplinary and institutional contexts. We believe that working with people outside one's discipline and institution offers opportunities to better understand the higher education terrain. It may also contribute to a better understanding of the complex ways in which institutional context shapes how Teaching and Learning takes place as well as how interventions can be applied.

Programme participants attend several intensive Sessions in a face to face or online environment to share ideas, experiences and insights. The TAU Sessions offer a range of presentations by experts and TAU participants as well as group and individual activities aimed at supporting participants' completion of 3 main tasks by the end of the TAU programme.

For more details see <http://www.taufellowships.org.za> or email taufellowships@uj.ac.za

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