TEACHING AND LEARNING
INNOVATIONS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT GRANT

A: Guidelines

1. Purpose statement

The purpose of creating a Teaching Innovation and Quality Enhancement Grant is to enable the provision of funds for piloting and supporting innovations and quality enhancement initiatives in teaching and learning in the university.

2. Introduction and background

In the University of KwaZulu-Natal Strategic Plan (2007-2016), STRATEGIC GOAL FOUR - EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING - commits the university to promoting excellence in teaching and learning through creative and innovative curriculum design and development, pedagogical strategies, and assessment practices in accordance with the highest quality management principles**.** The Teaching and Learning Office (UTLO), established in 2008 with the aim of advancing the University's vision and mission with regard to promoting and sustaining excellence in teaching and learning, has the specific responsibility for operationalising Goal 4. In furthering this goal, the university has also committed itself to promoting research-led and informed teaching and learning and to this end a Teaching and Learning Competitive Research Grant was established in 2009.

The necessity for establishing a grant to support innovations and quality enhancement in teaching and learning emerged out of UTLO's administration of the Teaching and Learning Competitive Research Grant. It was found that several proposals received for the Teaching and Learning Competitive Research Grant could not be regarded as research per se but were rather requests for funds to explore and experiment with innovative teaching activities, approaches and materials or for quality enhancement initiatives. This grant therefore responds to a different but equally crucial need within the University, to fund projects or initiatives that focus on innovations related to the broad range of aspects related to teaching, learning, assessments, curriculum development and delivery; and demonstrates commitment to continual improvement in educational quality in the university.

The awarding of this grant recognises that by enabling creative exploration, piloting and experimentation, better implementation of changes related to teaching and learning may be possible, especially in anticipating challenges when going to scale in innovation or quality improvement initiatives.

3. Definition of terms

3.1 Innovation in Teaching and Learning:

For purposes of this grant, innovation refers to the use of novel, original, different, fresh, unusual, unfamiliar, uncommon, inventive, ground-breaking, and transformational approaches, activities and resources to promote and sustain excellence in teaching and learning in higher education. Innovation, experimentation and creativity in educational practice can lead to

improvement in quality[1].

3.2 Quality Enhancement

Quality enhancement refers to measures taken within a course, programme or university to enhance or strengthen activities, processes, outcomes and products related to teaching and learning. These can relate to curriculum transformation, adoption of innovative educational approaches, the use of new technology to enhance the way students learn, or aspects of staff development, among others.

4. Objectives of the Grant

The objective of the grant is to provide academics/teams with financial support and thereby the means for innovation, piloting or development of some or other aspect of teaching and learning that may not otherwise be possible. It is meant primarily to be seed funding providing small grants to try out some idea, resource or approach to teaching and learning; and that open possibilities for accessing other funding sources. Having innovated or enhanced quality on a smaller scale, new or further opportunities for researching innovations or quality enhancement may also become available.

5. Scope of the Grant

The grants for innovation and quality and enhancement of teaching and learning are available to all full time university academic and support staff, including contract staff members, who are employed on a continuous 2 year contract.

These guidelines and procedures should be read in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Competitive Research Grant and the Competitive Research Grant.

This grant should also be seen as complementing funds made available by School, Faculty, College or Support Divisions for innovations and quality enhancement in teaching and learning

6. The Grant

This grant provides the means for addressing key teaching and learning innovation or quality enhancement issues identified as important in a particular area.

It seeks especially to support inter-and multi-disciplinary initiatives, particularly those that cross school, faculty and college boundaries. Requests for grants may also include partnerships with support service units attempting to innovate or enhance quality directly or explicitly in relation to teaching and learning in the university.

Proposals must explicitly address relevance and potential to contribute to innovation in teaching and learning and quality enhancement in higher education in general, and to UKZN in particular. Grants will be made for innovations and quality enhancement in the following, but not limited to:

- curriculum transformation and development
- teaching methods and approaches
- assessment
- alternative modes of delivery
- monitoring and evaluation approaches (programmes; peers, student, policy, etc)
- staff development

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[1] David Hargreaves (2003, p. 27), a leader in educational innovation, states: "innovation or knowledge creation means that practitioners learn to do things differently in order to do them better".

- student support
- communication and language
- new media and technologies
- policy development and implementation
- self-directed learning
- activities, materials that engage student diversity
- distance education and "E Learning" materials

Proposals that reflect engagement with the university's teaching and learning vision, mission and goals; that advance African Scholarship; contribute to the university teaching, learning, assessment, language and related policies and procedures; have creative designs, and that are collaborative or team based are especially encouraged.

B: Procedures

1. Administration of the Grant

The University Teaching and Learning Office will administer the Teaching and Learning Innovation and Quality Enhancement Grant.

2. Submission Procedure

A call for submission of applications will be made once a year via the UKZN LAN Notice System. Closing dates will be posted on the University Teaching and Learning Office website.

Application forms for the Teaching and Learning Innovation and Quality Enhancement Grant can be downloaded from the University Teaching and Learning Office Website.

Completed forms, signed by the Head of School and Dean, should be submitted to the University Teaching and Learning Office, Howard College Campus.

3. Evaluation of Proposals

Each application will be evaluated for its novelty, academic merit, feasibility, and budget. Proposals for funding will be evaluated on a competitive basis.

A Teaching and Learning Innovation and Quality Enhancement Grant Selection Committee will review each proposal and will make the final decision on funding.

Key considerations in evaluating proposals will include:
- relevance to the University's mission and values
- importance to the advancement of teaching and learning in the particular area
- clarity of aims and objectives
- arguments, motivation and information supporting the innovation
- understanding of issue to be addressed and knowledge of relevant literature
- evidence that the proposed activities are based on the principles of good practice
- commitment to collaborative approach and reflective practice
- realistic aims and objectives, timelines and well defined budget
- potential project impact and benefits for the school, sector and the University as a whole
- implications of outputs for broader macro level rather than narrow micro level

• dissemination of project outcomes

Applications from teams of three or more as well as comprising different levels of staff are preferred rather than from single members.

4. Use of Funds

A majority of grant awards of below R25 000 will be made with a selected exceptional few up to a maximum of R50 000. However, it is expected that Colleges, Faculties and Schools will also contribute towards making up for funding shortfalls. These grant values will be reviewed subject to available funds, the demand for these grants and impact potential of proposals.

Funds may be used to:
* release staff from a portion of their teaching responsibilities to enable them to work on the project subject to appropriate approval
* employ research assistants to work solely on the project
* employ students holding postgraduate scholarships subject to the prescribed university rules for employment in work directly related to the project

Where staff are employed to work on a particular project, (e.g. part-time tutors, research assistants) individual coordinators/leaders will be responsible for ensuring that they are able to fund such appointments from within their budgets and with approval from respective line managers.

Funding for the following is generally excluded
* study or research leave
* travel
* office equipment (e.g. computer, fax, etc)
* conference costs
* consultant fees

Proposals which address research or topics within a discipline will not qualify for funding. That is, the proposal must address innovations or quality enhancement in teaching and learning of the discipline.

All expenditure must be accounted for. Coordinators/Leaders will need to detail expenditure in their final reports. Where appropriate, copies of invoices and other documentation should be included. All expenditure must be made against designated project line items. Any funds that are not justifiably (as outlined in their approved budget) expended by the completion of the project should be returned to the UTLO. Surplus funds will be reabsorbed into the Grant.

5. Funding Period

Project duration will be no more than one year unless explicitly agreed to otherwise. Project commencement dates are taken from the date the award is made and the project must start no later than 2 months after notification of funding approval, unless differently negotiated with UTLO. Allocation of individual project funds will be performance based, and thus part awards could be made subject to the submission of approved progress reports.

6. Ethical Approval

These grants, which are made for innovation and quality enhancement, are not deemed research and therefore would not ordinarily require ethical approval. However, should they incorporate or take the form of research, ethical clearance will be required. University research policy and procedures require that studies involving animals or human subjects must receive ethical approval. In such cases funding will only be released once UTLO has been provided with proof of ethical clearance. It is the

responsibility of individual project co-ordinators/leaders to ensure that ethical clearance is obtained, where necessary, including once the project has commenced.

7. Intellectual Property

Due consideration should be given to issues of intellectual property and material prepared for educational or scholarly purposes. Where necessary, it should be discussed with the Intellectual property and Technology Transfer Office in the University Research Office or the University Legal Office. Copyright may be applicable to published print-based material as well as video or multi-media products. Clarification of copyright and intellectual property issues is the responsibility of the coordinator/leader and is especially important when material is developed by organizations outside the university (e.g. computer software).

8. Reporting Requirements

Accurate record keeping are required for reporting. A final report must be submitted on or before dates nominated by UTLO. However, UTLO may request interim reports if and when necessary.

The final report should be submitted within two months of the completion of the project. The final report should include a description of the project, provide an overview of its development, and identify conclusions, outcomes and achievements in relation to the identified project objectives. The final report should also be accompanied by a full financial report. All final reports should include an evaluation component.

Project co-ordinators/leaders should ensure that reports are submitted on their behalf if they will be away on leave near the nominated dates. Failure to provide the required reports may result in termination of the project and funding. If a co-ordinator/leader is unable to continue with a project, another coordinator may be appointed with the permission of UTLO. A request for change should be submitted at the earliest possible stage. If a suitable co-ordinator cannot be found, all remaining money must be returned to the UTLO.

9. Changes

Any changes to the original proposal must be authorised by the UTLO. Any such request should also state whether the original budget will be affected by the changes and a revised budget submitted if necessary.

For any project not likely to be completed within the one-year period, the co-ordinator/leader must apply for an extension and an application for unspent funds to be carried forward. The maximum time allowable for extension to projects is normally three months.

10. Termination

Failure to comply with the policy and procedures may result in termination of the project and necessitate the return of the remaining funds to UTLO.