Applying for Academic Promotions Workbook: The Learning & Teaching Component

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How to Write a Successful Academic Promotion Application: THE LEARNING & TEACHING COMPONENT

MAY 2019

Teaching Practice

- Observation (About Student Cohort)
- Interpretation (Impact)
- Data Collection
- Research Question
- Hypothesis
This booklet has been prepared by the Office for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, University of Southern Queensland. The contents are designed as an academic development resource informing how to: address the learning and teaching component of academic promotions applications, design scholarship of teaching and learning, and write philosophies of teaching.

If using this booklet, please reference as follows:
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Introduction

This workbook has the following intended learning outcomes. By reading this workbook, and completing the provided exercises, it is intended that university academics at all levels will be able to:

- Define the terms and describe the process of academic promotion.
- Collect appropriate and compelling evidence of notable contributions to, and improvement/enhancement of, teaching and learning.
- Differentiate between Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) and Research, and include SOTL in promotions applications.
- Tell the story of their teaching, and facilitation of their students’ learning, in a written format.
- Be purposeful, intentional, clear and succinct in applications.
- Provide strong and multi-faceted evidence of meeting promotions criteria.
- Differentiate between outcomes and impact, and determine how to present both in applications.
- Articulate a 25-word summary and a descriptive philosophy of teaching.
- Inform their journey of lifelong learning and continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

In summary, this workbook is intended to respond to frequently asked questions, such as:

- How do I write the teaching and learning section of my academic promotions application?
- I have a pretty good idea of how many, and what kinds of, publications I need as evidence for the research part of my application, but the teaching and learning part seems so much more confusing and ill-defined. How will I know if I’m ready? How many pieces of evidence is the panel looking for, and of what?
- People talk about a Philosophy of Teaching. What is that and what is it supposed to look like?
WHAT IS ACADEMIC PROMOTION?

Academic Promotions is a normative higher education process, held at universities across the world. University staff in continuing academic positions engage in this process to progress their careers, and scale-up contributions (and salary), from level to level. In most Australian universities, academics commence the process by applying for Level B (Lecturer), then Level C (Senior Lecturer), then Level D (Associate Professor) and finally, Level E (Professor). In most North American universities, there are no Lecturer or Senior Lecturer titles and promotions goes from Assistant to Associate to Full Professor. Each level brings heightened responsibilities for leadership.

Most universities run academic promotions processes annually and require that academics work at their current level, gradually taking-on more responsibilities, building capacity and collecting evidence of contributions for a minimum of three years, prior to applying for progression to the next level. It is most common to have balanced profiles, known as the 40/40/20. Forty per cent teaching and learning; Forty per cent research; Forty per cent service (internal and external to the university). Some universities allow applicants to articulate their own percentage-based profiles (e.g. 60% Teaching & Learning, 20% Research and 20% Service). Universities are increasingly creating some positions as Teaching-only and others as Research-only, meaning that academics either teach without doing research, or vice-versa. Other universities believe that effective academics need to balance and intentionally create overlaps between teaching and learning, and research responsibilities. For example, academics may be required to stay current and up-to-date in disciplinary research, so that they are teaching these research findings as curricular content to their students.

Some authors believe that service is the least defined and articulated of the three core academic roles.

Academic promotions is almost always evidence-based, peer reviewed and criterion referenced. This means that promotion is not automatic. It is not the case that after academics have met key performance indicators (KPIs) for three years at a particular academic level, that they are automatically progressed to the next level. Academics are required to create a robust application with substantive evidence of striving for excellence across the portfolio, and being ready for the next level. University human resource departments usually administer and collect the applications. Most universities require that potential applicants have conversations with their respective Executive Deans before beginning their applications to discuss whether the applicants are “ready.” Most universities require that the Executive Deans write a letter of reference to accompany the academic promotions applications (at some universities the applicants are able to read this letter and at other universities they are not). A panel assesses the applications. The panel usually includes University Senior Executives, Academic Delegates at or above the level of application, and external academics (from other universities). Sometimes the panel is Chaired by an external. Applications are written to address specific performance criteria. Similar to a rubric, these criteria scale-up alongside academic levels.

A helpful source of sample Academic Promotion Criteria, as well as ideas, tips and exemplars for strong applications is:
http://uniteachingcriteria.edu.au/
WHY GO FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTION?

There are some obvious (person-centred) reasons to go for academic promotion:

- Annual salary is higher with each progressive level.
- Achieving promotion is good for self-esteem.
- More prestigious titles garner more respect, and therefore sometimes higher chances of being awarded research grants and teaching awards.
- Some universities align workload assignments and role choices with academic levels. For example, Lecturers often teach high-enrolment undergraduate required offerings, whereas Professors work alongside highly motivated postgraduates.

There are also some reasons that are less obvious, but equally important. The first set of reasons is oriented to personal gain, whereas the second list of reasons is more about collective gain, including for students.

- Moving-up the ladder of academic positions carries further responsibilities for leadership and mentoring. These are important social factors in sustaining and continuously improving the education sector and overall knowledge enterprise.
- Some professional accreditation bodies and ranking bodies use the number of Professors as a criterion, or indicator for comparative university quality. In other words, academic promotion is not only good for you, but for your University.
- Some students, and particularly those from countries with high-esteem for status, hierarchy and titles, are more motivated and thereby engaged, when taught by Associate Professors and Professors, than they are by Lecturers and Senior Lecturers. In other words, those who have “earned their stripes” are regarded as trustworthy authorities. While it would be difficult to establish a causal relationship with high validity and reliability, it may be that academic promotions is good for student learning.
- Finally, it may also be that the process of going for academic promotions is as important as the outcome. Academic promotions applications require university staff to organise their thinking, structure their approaches, provide evidence of solving problems for students, consult others and reflect deeply and intentionally about teaching and learning, and how to improve both. Such reflection is an important part of becoming a better teacher, and thereby making outstanding contributions to student learning.

Here are some suggested books for reading further about improving your teaching, and your students’ learning, through reflection:


Teaching is a complex matrix of actions, intended to contribute to, and enhance students’ learning. Just as teaching is complex, so too is writing about it. This booklet is intended to support academics in thinking about, gathering evidence to support, and writing-up teaching (and thereby contributions to student learning) for the purposes of academic promotion.

While you may choose to work your way through this booklet in a different order than presented here, or you may choose to only read a chapter or two, this booklet has been designed to provide a sequential, step-by-step approach to writing the teaching and learning component of your academic promotions application.

Here are a set of steps you might take to organise your academic promotions application process. Each of these steps is addressed through the chapters of this booklet.

1. Step-back to think about who you are and why you teach.
2. Create your 25-word summary for the top of the L&T section.
3. Write your philosophy of teaching and insert directly beneath the 25-word summary.
4. Articulate how you have improved courses (subjects) you have taught.
5. Describe SOTL you have completed (and possibly published).
6. Add other ways you have intentionally developed your teaching.
7. Ensure that you have included your innovations and contemporary approaches.
8. Proofread your application to ensure that you have not confused outcomes with impact.
9. Double-check that you have been evidence-rich throughout your application.
10. Apply a quality checklist, to ensure you have written a high-quality application.
Chapter Two
WHO ARE YOU? THE SPIRAL MODEL OF SELF-CONCEPT

Name: ____________________________________________________________
Contact: __________________________________________________________

1. The first time you said to yourself, I want to be a ____ when I grow up, what was it? _______
   ____________________________________________________________________________

2. What was it about that career that appealed to you? ________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

3. What’s the most meaningful compliment that anyone can give you? ________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

4. Describe a day you had that you didn’t ever want to end. __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

5. What’s a fun and/or meaningful day at work for you? _________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

6. What’s one of the best books you’ve ever read? ________________________________
   What did you love about it? _________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

7. If you were a farm animal, which animal would you be? Why? ______________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

8. Insert your own question you’d like to answer. __________________________________
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Choose one question (and answer) and share it with someone else.
Writing a cohesive academic promotions application is only possible if you are clear about your own identity. Your identity is your belief about who you are, what you stand for, and why you make the decisions you do. Your identity is important in the context of teaching, because we give of ourselves in the process. Your self-concept underlies what you choose to share in your academic promotions application.

But how do students get in touch with their identity to be able to talk about it? How can university academics help them develop and practice this important employability skill?

The *Spiral Identity Employability Tool* is based on the spiral model of self-concept, designed and researched by authors such as Marsh (1990), Mendaglio and Pyryt (1995), Pyryt and Mendaglio (1994) and Rosenberg and Kaplan (1982). This model says that people are complex and have many facets to their identity. These facets vary from person-to-person and change across the person’s life as they meet new people and try new things.

Some of the elements of our identity matter more to us than others. There are three main ways in which the identity of people is informed. Becoming aware of these ways can help us become more self-informed and allow us to change and thus become more confident and more promotable.

(a) **Self-Attribution** – When we do well at something (e.g. research) and there are positive consequences (e.g. a publication), this tells us what we are good at, and this can become part of our identity.

Pay attention to what you do well at, as this might help you decide how to present yourself in your application.

(b) **Social Comparisons** – People are constantly comparing themselves to others. Sometimes we compare upwards (e.g. Wow! She’s really accomplished. I’m not there yet, but I strive to be.) Sometimes we compare downwards (e.g. I was acknowledged by my Head of School and I deserved it. I’m better at that than my colleagues.)

Pay attention to who you are comparing yourself to and in which direction. Find some role models and inspiration. This can help you decide who, what and how you want to become. Try not to always compare upwards, as it can be intimidating and shake our confidence in ourselves.

(c) **Reflective Appraisals** – Important figures in your life influence the way in which you feel about yourself. What is important to realise, is that it is actually our impression (and not necessarily the reality) of what others think of us that influences our self-concept (identity) which does not always match how they actually feel about us. Even when it does match, it is important that individuals sort out the source of influence and form our own identities. For example, you may think that your Executive Dean does not recognise and acknowledge your strengths and contributions. Is there a chance that this is incorrect? Do you have evidence? Have you asked for an open feed-forward conversation?
How can the *Spiral Identity Employability Tool* help students shape their own identity? How can academics use the *Spiral Identity Employability Tool* to support the employability of their students?

Think about the following facets of your student life and identity: sport/athletics; performing arts; music; club and/or society membership; chosen career/discipline/industry; family; spirituality and/or religion; social justice; money/income; being a leader; entrepreneurship; love; my friends; technical skills; being good at spoken and written communication; my reputation; my heritage/culture; my love of adventure; travel; my need for security/stability; personability/getting along with others; creativity; getting good grades; health and fitness; my hobby or hobbies; my social media profile; my sense of humour; advocating for rights; love for animals; desire to be successful.

**REFERENCES**


0 = Don’t include a dot on this little spiral

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Filling-in this identity tool can help you decide who you are, what matters to you, and how you want to present yourself in your academic promotions application. This tool can also help you find the words to describe yourself in your application.
Write down any other facets that this list made you think of – that you didn’t see here.

For each of these facets, give yourself a score from 0 to 3 –
0 = Not at All
1 = A Little Bit
2 = Somewhat
3 = Absolutely!

1 Overall (including how you expect to feel 5–10 years in the future) [INSERT FACET] defines me. Then insert as a little SPIRAL on the overall big SPIRAL. Write the words of this facet on or near the little spiral.
3 = Close-in near the I
2 = On a big ring, a little further out, but still somewhat close
1 = On the outer edges of the big spiral
0 = Don’t include on your big spiral

2 How important and relevant is [INSERT FACET] to you right now (i.e. this month). Insert a dot on the little SPIRAL.
3 = Close-in near the centre of the little spiral
2 = On a little spiral, a little further out, but still somewhat close
1 = On the outer edges of the little spiral
0 = Don’t include a dot on this little spiral

Filling-in this identity tool can help you decide who you are, what matters to you, and who you want to become through your education and into and through your career. This tool can also help you find the words to describe yourself to future employers on your resume and in interviews.
Chapter Three

WRITING YOUR 25-WORD PROFILE: FOR THE TOP OF YOUR APPLICATION

Here is my 25-word summary as example:

For making impact, like a Mallee Bull, on student experience, teaching and learning, graduate employability, co-curriculum, academic leadership, and education research that improves higher education.

- 25-word profiles/distinctive value propositions work well at the top of: promotions, award and job applications. Many people now insert these statements at the top of their CVs.

These 25-words answer the questions: who are you; what is your distinctive identity; what makes you – YOU; and what is your deal.

- The first word is often – FOR – which leaves only 24 words remaining. The words are used-up quickly and you do not want to waste them on adjectives, adverbs or unnecessary prepositions.

- The second word is usually an action word (verb) such as: teaching, researching, creating, collaborating, leading, directing, writing or evaluating.

This word answers – what is it that you DO?

Circle one of the action words above, that resonates with you. Or write new words here –

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Many of the remaining words are like the keywords of a journal paper. Keywords are searchable. They are identifiers that provide a clear indication of who you are and who you are not. Keywords for university employees include such terms as: students, learning, experience, assessment, retention, success, curriculum, digital, online, technology, employability, research and supervision.

Circle some of the keywords above – that resonate with you and/or write new keywords here –

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Avoid jargon and use plain language. Could someone with primary school education and/or no knowledge of your discipline, understand your meaning?

Pretend that you stepped into the lift and you realised that it was just you and the VC inside. You are riding-up two floors together and she says – If you can tell me who you are, what you do and why it matters, by the time we arrive at our floor, I’ll give you grant money for you to spend any way you want, as long as it is aligned with what you tell me.

In 25-words, what would you say? Use the action word and the keywords from the previous page. Have a first-go here; you will have the chance to refine as you go along.

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<th>Your 25 words needs to be a narrative. It needs to tell a very short story. It cannot be a disconnected series of words.</th>
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<td>If you are in a particular discipline and/or supporting particular cohorts of students, identify these contexts in your 25 words.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Your 25 words need to be compelling, distinctive and not ordinary. What will you say that will make people stop and listen – and remember?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paint a picture through your words. Ensure you are in the middle of that picture. Make it a clear picture (no abstract art)</td>
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Use this page to draft versions of your 25 words. When you arrive at a part or a whole that you like, try it out with someone else.

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WHAT IS A PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING?

A philosophy of teaching can be defined as articulated values, beliefs, assumptions and theories that influence the overall approach you take, as an academic, to facilitating the learning of your students.

Here is an example:

My name is Sara Hammer and I work in program quality and enhancement in a teaching and learning unit. Like E.M. Forster, I believe that we achieve the most powerful educational outcomes through the twin amplifiers of human connection and conceptual clarity. I have achieved long-lasting positive change in university teaching and learning by valuing what can be achieved with a multiplicity of minds and ideas. I have contributed value as a specialist by marshalling my conceptual perspicacity as part of my service to my colleagues. I believe that if we work in ways that harness these amplifiers, then everybody is empowered, like boats rising together with the tide.

Here is another example:

I believe that students do not come to any given learning experience as blank slates. They bring with them preconceptions (and sometimes misconceptions!) about the subject matter and their own values and beliefs, as well as prior life and learning experiences. It is important for me to acknowledge that which my students bring to the classroom, but also challenge them to think differently and to understand the relevance of what they are learning to their personal and professional lives. I invite students to utilise their life experiences when learning the course material. I involve students in activities, ask for examples from their lives, and allow time for reflections and reactions to the material. I take big theories down to possible answers to everyday life questions.

There are a few additional terms, and associated questions, that are interwoven with our academic philosophies of teaching.
ONTOLOGY

Your ontology is your stance on the nature of existence.

In contemplating your philosophy of teaching, it is important that you ask yourself –

*Do I believe that there is a fixed reality out-there, that I can contemplate and try to understand, so that I can teach my students about this reality?*

OR

*Do I believe that there is no fixed reality out-there, and rather, that reality is subjective and constructed between people in a time and place culture? Therefore, do I believe that it is my role as an academic to probe and trouble understandings and move to new shared conceptualisations, or to identify dominant and challenging paradigms and perspectives?*

Respond Here:

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EPISTEMOLOGY

Your epistemology is your stance on how people come to know. As such, your ontology and your epistemology are interrelated. As you read above, the questions about what you believe about the nature of existence did not stop there, but probed further, into the implications about how you share that knowledge.

Do I believe that people can only come to know through direct sensory contact? Therefore, is it my role as academic, to organise and bring those sensory experiences into my teaching?

Or can people come to know through being told by others? In other words, is it my primary role to become as knowledgeable as I can and then pass this wisdom on through lectures?

Do I believe that students arrive at university as blank slates, and it is my role to make them knowledgeable? Or do I believe that they come with rich and diverse cultures, beliefs, values and experiences that will deeply influence how they assimilate new understandings?

Do I believe in the distinct boundaries between the role of the teacher and that of student, with me as authority, and them as learners? Or do I believe that I can learn just as much from them, as they from me, and that the educational relationship is about a meeting of the minds?

Use the rest of this page to jot your responses to these questions.

Respond Here:
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AXIOLOGY

In summary, ontology is the study of the nature of our existence, and epistemology is the study of how we come to know. Axiology is the study of what we value, and therefore values that are important to us.

For example, the Staff from the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (OALT) got together to team-define what USQ’s three values mean to us. Here are our definitions.

RESPECT
Respect is when we value and accept everybody, and their ideas, regardless of who they are or whether we like them. It is a “doing” word. Furthermore, respect is the way we interact with others, as a demonstration that we value their individual worth.

INTEGRITY
Integrity is courage in action that demonstrates accountability, honesty, transparency, openness, value of actions over words and fairness over self-interest.

EXCELLENCE
Excellence is a commitment to realistic aspirations and an honest desire to continually improve.

You may be asking yourself, at this point, how to tie the complex notions of ontology, epistemology and axiology into a cohesive, ‘writeable’ philosophy of teaching. Let us look again at Sara Hammer’s philosophy of teaching.

My name is Sara Hammer and I work in program quality and enhancement in a teaching and learning unit. Like E.M. Forster, I believe that we achieve the most powerful educational outcomes through the twin amplifiers of human connection and conceptual clarity. I have achieved long-lasting positive change in university teaching and learning by valuing what can be achieved with a multiplicity of minds and ideas. I have contributed value as a specialist by marshalling my conceptual perspicacity as part of my service to my colleagues. I believe that if we work in ways that harness these amplifiers, then everybody is empowered, like boats rising together with the tide.

Sara has not used the words ontology, epistemology or axiology, but it is obvious in her philosophy of teaching that she deeply understands all three and that her perspective is a cohesive interplay of these three concepts. It is up to you whether or not you choose to use these words in your philosophy of teaching.

It is apparent that Sara’s ontological perspective is that there is not a fixed reality out-there, for us to observe and decipher, but that we construct the world together. Her epistemological perspective of shared, constructed understandings is apparent in the phrases she uses such as “human connection,” “conceptual clarity,” and “multiplicity of minds and ideas.” What matters most to Sara, in the educational interchange, or in other words, her axiological convictions, are “long-lasting positive change,” “service to colleagues” and creating conditions that empower.
Are you feeling overwhelmed about coming-to-terms-with and writing your philosophy of teaching. Here’s an easy solution. The Teaching Perspectives Inventory is a free test you can take. It will not only diagnose your primary philosophy of teaching, but the items in the inventory will also give you lots of words and phrases to choose from in writing your statement.

Your score will reveal whether your ontological, epistemological and axiological convictions can be drawn-together to derive a philosophy of teaching that can be categorised as:

- **TRANSMISSION**
  “Effective teaching requires a substantial commitment to the content or subject matter.”

- **APPRENTICESHIP**
  “Effective teaching requires that learners perform authentic tasks within their zone of development.”

- **DEVELOPMENTAL (SOMETIMES CALLED CONSTRUCTIVISM)**
  “Effective teaching must be planned and conducted from the learners’ points of view.”

- **NURTURING**
  “Effective teaching assumes that long-term, hard, persistent effort to achieve comes from the heart, not the head.”

- **SOCIAL REFORM**
  “The object of teaching is the collective rather than the individual.”

Reading these statements might have already helped you identify, and articulate, your philosophy of teaching. It might be a combination of these perspectives.

There are no right or wrong answers and, as well, your philosophy may shift and change over time, and depending on the discipline of the students you teach.

However, it is important that you reflect on, and identify your philosophy of teaching, including for your academic promotions application. Your philosophy of teaching determines your teaching behaviours and decisions, and what you choose to spend, and not to spend, your (and your students’) time and energy doing.
WORKING PAGE TO DRAFT AND RE-DRAFT YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

Ask a colleague to read it and give you feedback as a Critical Friend. If you are stuck, Google “Philosophy of Teaching Examples” and you will find that many have been shared online.
Chapter Five
HOW HAVE YOU IMPROVED YOUR COURSES (SUBJECTS): AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

One of the required elements of academic promotions applications is that you, explicitly and specifically, provide evidence that you have improved the courses (known at some universities as subjects or units), in ways that enhance the learning of the students you teach.

Improving your teaching, for improved learning facilitation involves asking five basic questions:

- **Where are my students now?** (in regard to their learning)
- **What do I want my students to know and be able to do?**
- **How will I get my students there?**
- **How will I know when my students get there?**
- **What will I do if my students don’t get there?** (i.e. Next Steps).

Education research has shown that when students are asked to rate the quality of courses and teaching, it is not the most innovative, or those with the most wow-factor, that are most highly rated. Students expect a basic quality learning experience through their university courses and the academics who teach them.

Here is a framework that you can use to improve your courses. You may want to self-evaluate your course using these criteria. You might also want to ask your students to evaluate your course, anonymously highlighting the red, yellow or green item in each row. Finally, you can ask a colleague, or critical friend, to evaluate your course. When you all agree that all of the criteria are in the green (happy face) zone, this course has been quality improved. For the purposes of your academic promotions application, clearly and specifically describe what you changed/enhanced in the course to improve the learning experience. Some teaching ideas are also available below.

CHAPTER FIVE

Here are three recommended books to provide further educational theory, background and strategies for improving your teaching to enhance your students’ learning.


You can use the form below to document, and organise evidence, of improving the learning experience for the students you teach, through each of your courses.

**Do not provide these worksheets as raw data, to your academic promotions application. Summarise and present your course improvement work in a narrative form. Chapter Six, regarding the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) process, will give you further ideas and strategies for writing this course data as a compelling story or narrative in your Academic Promotions Application.**
# COURSE IMPROVEMENT/ENHANCEMENT ACADEMIC WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Your Course Role  
   e.g. Course Examiner |
| Most Recent Year and Semester |
| Years & Semesters You Have Had this Role in this Course |
| Course Number |
| Course Name |
| Place of Course within Program  
   e.g. UG, FY, Required |
| Mode of Course and Campus  
   e.g. Online only |
## STUDENT COHORT CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Numbers</th>
<th>Details (Elaboration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. Two visually-impaired students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Students Overall (Enrolment Number)**
- **First in Family Students**
- **Students from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Communities**
- **Students with Disabling Conditions**
- **International Students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds**
- **Other Student Cohort Characteristics**

Regarding the **Student Cohort Characteristics** Table, above, what specific approaches/course enhancements have you put into place to address the needs of these students?

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
LEARNING DATA OVER TIME
Include data for this course for the last three years of offer, with the most recent on the far right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Data</th>
<th>20xx</th>
<th>20xx</th>
<th>20xx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Average</td>
<td>Course Data</td>
<td>School Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Evaluation of Courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many students completed MyOpinion survey/how many enrolled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Evaluation of Courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score of MyOpinion Overall Question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Evaluation of Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score of MyOpinion Overall Question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many students failed the course/how many students completed the course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many students dropped the course post census date/how many students completed the course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the Learning Data Over Time Table, above, explain any data trends, e.g. I became the course examiner in 20xx. The subsequent MyOpinion response rates, overall course and teaching scores have gone up. Fail rates and drop rates have gone down.

---

NEEDS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Place a check mark in each of the boxes to the left, where you recognise that this was a problem for students in this course.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students find this course boring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students cannot see the relevance of this course to their employability/future career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students have difficulty navigating this course site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students do not know what to read, when.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment is not well-matched to the course content, and/or students appear to have difficulty understanding assessment expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students do not feel that they have adequate feedback to inform improvement in the next piece of assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is minimal online interaction in this course, with either the academic and/or the other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the **Needs for Improvement** items ticked above, copy and paste the applicable items into the Table below, and complete the rest of the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Need for Improvement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Specific Measures Taken</strong></th>
<th><strong>How you Know the Measures Worked</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Assessment is not well-matched to the course content, and/or students appear to have difficulty understanding assessment expectations.</td>
<td>e.g. Key course concepts identified, assessment task descriptions re-written, formative assessment added, rubric designed for each summative assessment added</td>
<td>e.g. Between last year and this year, student MyOpinion comments about assessment went from complaints to commendations. Fail and Drop rates both decreased.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE IMPROVEMENT/ENHANCEMENT ACADEMIC WORKSHEET cont’d

Did you seek any supports to improve this course?

e.g. Seek the help of an Educational Designer

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
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___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you have any other comments regarding improving this course?

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
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Chapter Six
SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (SOTL): COMPARISON WITH RESEARCH

This booklet chapter provides responses to three questions:

- **What is Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) and how does it differ from Research?**
- **How do I determine priorities for teaching and learning improvements, and how do I design and structure the process?**
- **As an Academic, how do I use SOTL to complete the section of my Academic Promotions Application about Teaching and Learning?**

Furthermore, there are tips, strategies and tools to help you thrive in higher education teaching and learning, and continually make education better for our students and graduates.

One of the hardest parts of writing Academic Promotions applications is completing the section about your teaching, and what approaches/contributions you are making to your students’ learning. It has been hard for academics to find clear and explicit information about what panels are looking for in this section of the application. The sad-truth is that even the panellists are often unsure. The teaching part of academic promotions applications tends to be of an ineffable nature. Panellists know it when they see it, but are often unable to describe the parameters. Academics need a structure, and some guidelines, to frame the story about their teaching and their students’ learning.

There is a growing interest, and need, to conduct rigorous and robust research into teaching and learning. When higher education staff cast their sights on teaching and learning, it is to explore and synchronously improve education. We want to know what works better for learning and then change what we are doing in response. We want to have short and long-term impact on education, for our students and our graduates. Casting our sights even further, through improving education, we want to equip our students and graduates to improve our communities, societies and global well-being. Saving our planet and future generations from the disastrous consequences of global warming, are within the reach of improved education. Those who are committed to, and passionate about, teaching and learning, want to continuously improve education through informed, evidence-based changes to design.
We are building the plane, while flying it. We are improving learning, through refining teaching approaches.

The goals and intentions of this booklet are to give the reader a conceptual framework and accompanying set of tools to help you tell teaching and learning stories. These stories are fact, not fiction. The heroes of these stories are the students. Academics use these stories to achieve academic promotion and often to get-published. The purpose of the publications is to let even more people, at more institutions, into the secrets of their teaching and learning successes, for heightened impact.

Stories - for academic promotion, evidence-based improvements to teaching and learning, and for publication - often overlap. For example, chances of academic promotion go up, when the applicant has authored publications about teaching and learning. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) is the metaphoric backbone of: (a) the way in which tertiary education staff systematically improve teaching and learning; (b) academic promotion teaching stories, and (c) research publications about teaching and learning.
THE COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (SOTL)

What is Research?
Research is a structured approach to informing a response to a question.

What is Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)
SOTL is a structured approach to informing response/s to question/s about students and their education (including achievement, retention, transitions and success); using these responses to make improvements; and sharing process and outcome knowledge with other educators.

The following table depicts what elements are present in each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>SOTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation/s</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question/s</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of the data &amp; argument</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires ethics approval</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability, validity or other quality design factors</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample/participant sizes must be intentional</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be predictive, if designed to be</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative, qualitative or mixed designs</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses a variety of methods and methodologies</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different from evaluation</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be published in quality outlets</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance, importance and prestige</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career benefits</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can involve teaching reduction / buy-out</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic boundaries (about Learning &amp; Teaching)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing-the-Loop (making improvements)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five elements of the table above require brief statements of elaboration. First, SOTL is NOT a poor-second-cousin of research. Both require the same amount of design and executed rigour. Both can be published in high-ranking outlets and have positive consequences for tertiary staff’s careers, including for academic promotion. Second, while research can be about a variety of topics, and in a wide range of fields, SOTL is always about education, curriculum, pedagogy, students, graduates and other such topics, related to teaching and learning. Third, while there are no requirements for research to be applied to improve practice and have positive impact, SOTL is by nature/definition, design-based. In other words, there is a cyclical loop between teaching and learning, and inquiry, not just into how-to improve education, but closing-the-loop and observing whether the changes work. Application does not come after investigation and publication, but is part of the cycle. Fourth, both research and SOTL are different from evaluation. Evaluation is investigation into quality, and indeed, research and SOTL can be evaluated. However, the questions of research and SOTL are based on observations of phenomena. Finally, teaching buy-out is not a part of SOTL, because scholars need to be working in the area of teaching as part of the cycle. Consideration should be given to buying SOTL scholars out of research.
The overall conceptual framework of Research and of SOTL are different.

Research follows the step-by-step process of the scientific method.

SOTL follows a six-part cycle.
SOTL may commence at any phase of the cycle, but most commonly commences at the Teaching Practice. This means that tertiary education staff are teaching courses (otherwise known as units or subjects) to students and/or involved in the many other teaching and learning responsibilities of education institutions. For example, they may be supporting students with work-integrated learning or Students as Partners initiatives.

The cycle moves from Teaching Practice to Observation (About Student Cohort). The staff person makes an observation, or in other words, notices something about the particular students and how they are variously engaging with or benefiting from educational approaches. For example, the staff person may notice that the particular approach to teaching, does not seem to be working for students from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities. In other words, this teaching approach does not appear to be contributing to their learning. At this point, the staff person may check-in with colleagues in other disciplines and/or in other institutions. Is the same gap occurring?

The cycle advances from the Observation to a Research Question. The staff person clearly articulates a research question. This is an important juncture in SOTL. It is at this step that the staff person ventures beyond teaching practice to SOTL. The Question is an important part of the cycle that is commonly forgotten in SOTL. The staff person focusses observations and articulates a specific question that will bound the inquiry. For example, the scholar may articulate the question as to whether the use of the contemporary social media approach to student interaction is inhibiting the participation of the mature aged learners.

From the Question, the scholar moves to a Hypothesis. To form the Hypothesis, the scholar reads, classifies and analyses literature. What SOTL has previously investigated the same, similar or related question? What were the results? What theory guides thinking about this question? To carry-on with the example of the Question above, the scholar may form the hypothesis that mature aged learners, who have significant other responsibilities in addition to those required by the student-role (e.g. full-time work, dependants) are less likely to use the contemporary social media approach, and will thereby miss-out on peer-to-peer interaction within the course.

The scholar then decides what methodologies and methods to apply in Data Collection. The scholar needs to apply for ethics. The scholar needs to carefully think through whether the investigation will put undue stress on the students, and are there implications regarding power imbalance and coercion if the scholar is both the teacher and the investigator. For example, will students think that their grades will suffer if they choose not to participate? Furthermore, experimental and control groups are challenging in SOTL, as the scholar cannot deprive some students of approaches that are expected to advantage them. Random sampling is also highly problematic in SOTL, as the investigator cannot decide/control who does and does not enrol in a given course. While these considerations are essential in SOTL, they do not make inquiry impossible. There are a plethora of rigorous, influential publications, and entire journals that only publish SOTL, that are creatively designed and have had impressive positive impact on education.
After the data has been collected, the scholar then engages in Interpretation. The SOTL scholar always has the matter of impact in mind. Can these results lead to the improvement of teaching and learning? The scholar returns to the Question and answers it, using the results/data as evidence. The results of this inquiry are compared and contrasted to those of the published literature that was analysed early on. The scholar articulates a clear argument that can be used to improve teaching and learning. The scholar writes, ‘This document argues that …’

The cycle continues as the SOTL scholar casts attention fully on Teaching Practice, applying and actioning the results and implications of the inquiry. In addition to being published and/or promoted, the scholar improves approaches to teaching and thereby has impact on students’ learning. The cycle continues, as scholars strive for continuous improvement to teaching and learning.

The SOTL cycle, as described here, is highly relevant for both academic promotions applications and research publications about teaching and learning.

In regards to academic promotions applications, the SOTL cycle serves as the backbone of the section of the application on teaching and learning. In other words, the SOTL cycle can be used as a structure, a source of headings, wording, and a beginning, middle and end of the teaching description. In short, the SOTL cycle can be – how to tell the story of your teaching for academic promotions applications. Using the SOTL cycle approach can resolve common issues that get in the way of academics being promoted. Storying your teaching according to the SOTL cycle ensures that the teaching and learning portion of your application:

- has a narrative structure, with a beginning, middle and end
- is data-rich and evidence-based
- has a purpose and rationale, meaning that the assessor can see why you made the changes you did, and what the consequences (and impact) were
- keeps the focus on the students and their learning.

In regards to publications, such as in first-quartile journals, the SOTL cycle serves as a guide to the design of the inquiry, as well as an organised format for writing-it-up. The SOTL cycle can be like the string of a necklace, on which we slip the beads. If the string is removed, the beads fall to the ground and roll away.

In other words, the SOTL cycle can be a way for you to structure your research - how to write research papers that get published about your teaching and your students’ learning. Using the SOTL cycle approach can help avoid common problems that often result in editors rejecting submitted papers. Using SOTL ensures that your research papers about teaching and learning:

- are rigorous and structured
- go beyond teaching, programme description or evaluation
- draw meaningful, impact-rich conclusions and compelling arguments.
ADDITIONAL ADVICE REGARDING – HOW TO TELL THE STORY OF YOUR TEACHING FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS APPLICATIONS

• Include data from the last three years and/or since your last academic promotion.

WITHIN THE SOTL CYCLE STRUCTURE, PROVIDE RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

[Organise your responses by semester.]

• In what courses (otherwise known as units or subjects) do you play a role and what is that role in each course? (e.g. course examiner, tutor) Include the Course Abbreviation and Number, as well as the full spelled-out title of each course.

• How many students were enrolled in each course?

• What were the withdrawal rates, pass rates, and grade distribution? Explain any surprising numbers.

• What was the teaching mode (on-campus – which campus? and/or Online?) If multi-modal, how many students were in each modal cohort? Describe your multi-modal teaching approach. For example, did you teach from one campus and students from other campuses either joined-in synchronously on/through Zoom (or other audio-visual technology) and/or on-their-own-time primarily via lecture capture?

• Did any of the students require design considerations (including accessibility), additional supports and/or accommodations related to student equity / widening participation? For example, were there international students from non-English speaking backgrounds, students from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities, and/or students with disabling conditions? If so, did you collaborate with, invite-in and/or refer your student/s to any University services/supports (e.g. Student Relationship Officer, Learning Advisor)? Did you redesign any features of the course for increased accessibility? What were the results? Did students in these categories complete and pass the course?

Telling the anonymised story of students, with particular learning needs, and how you went above-and-beyond to support their success, aligns fittingly with the SOTL cycle.

Include a data table, reporting your Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching (SECT e.g. MyOpinion) survey results. This is the data part of the SOTL cycle. You may want to report the data using the following table, and/or in an alternate format, but including the same fields as below.
## Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching Data Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Number of Course</th>
<th>Year &amp; Semester of Course</th>
<th>Response Rates Number of students who completed survey / Number of students enrolled in the course</th>
<th>Mean Score out of total possible score on General Question e.g. 4.5/5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provide the full wording of the question stem, for which you provided the mean score. Also consider including (and discussing) any notable scores on other questions. For example, if your course redesign efforts have resulted in an upward progression across course offerings (over semesters/years) in scores on the questions related to assessment, include this data (and comments).

**ASK YOURSELF WHAT STORY THE DATA TELLS**

(this is the interpretation part of the SOTL cycle)

Pre-chew the data for your panellist audience. Provide narrative text to tell this story. For example, have the response rates gone up over time? What did you do to encourage the students to complete their surveys? Have your mean survey scores been going up over time? What have you been changing in your course, curriculum, assessment and/or teaching and learning approaches that might have led to these improvements? Was there an anomaly year/semester/score? In other words, did you try something new, that you did not quite get right the first-time, and as a result, your score dipped for that semester? Were there unique characteristics of the particular cohort that explain a score that breaks a pattern?

**CONSIDER INCLUDING COMPARATIVE DATA**

For example, is your SECT score higher than the average score within your program/school/faculty? If so, include this comparative data. Do not let the data speak for itself. Explain why. Why is it that your scores are higher? What do you do that goes above-and-beyond and is reflected in the students’ opinions?

Include explicit discussion regarding closing-the-loop. In other words, you are returning to the teaching practice part of the SOTL cycle. If the students in one year gave you feedback that changing some element of the course and/or your teaching would improve the course, did you make these changes for the next year’s offering? Specifically what changes did you make? How did you communicate to the new cohort of students that you made these changes because of what the previous students wrote in their feedback surveys? You can frame this section as:

- Past students said –
- I responded by changing –
- I communicated this to the next group of students by –
Have you participated in any University initiatives to improve student engagement in *Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching*? For example, did you participate in *Mid-Semester Check-in Surveys*? Describe your participation and the outcomes.

Do not bulk-list student comments, no matter how flattering. Panels will skip over long lists of student comments. Only use student comments within a narrative explanation. Use specific student comments to support the point/s you are making (i.e. within the SOTL cycle). For example, do not include “She’s the best lecturer I ever had.” If you are describing a change you made to assessment and the observation that it is now working better, include one student comment that specifically refers to that feature of assessment.

- In addition to *Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching* (SECT), what else did you do to evaluate and thereby get feedback on your teaching (and approaches to supporting learning)? In other words, what data did you collect as part of the SOTL cycle? Did you benchmark your online course site (StudyDesk) with those of the equivalent course at other institutions? Did you participate in *Peer Observation of Teaching*? Did you invite your Head of Program and/or School to give you feedback on a particular element of your teaching and/or learning approaches? If so, describe these approaches, results, and closing-the-loop (what you changed as result of this feedback) in your application.

- In what professional development in the area of teaching and learning did you participate? For example, did you attend a Teaching and Learning Orientation through your Learning & Teaching Unit (OALT)? Did you participate in an online webinar? Did you complete a MOOC about teaching and learning?

Did you attend a Teaching and Learning Conference? List the title, provider, and date of all professional development. Do not leave it to these demographic details. It is important to include how you closed-the-loop. What did you learn through this professional development? What specific and practical changes/improvements did you make to your teaching and approaches to learning as a result?

- What theory and/or frameworks are you using to guide your teaching and learning practice? Within the SOTL cycle, your hypothesis is informed by reading and considering what to make of your observations. Thorndike wrote, “there is nothing as practical as a good theory.” Just as you are expected to stay up-to-date in your field / discipline you teach, you are also expected to stay up-to-date and apply theory and the latest SOTL results, and thereby advancements, in teaching and learning.

- Have you worked alongside an Educational Designer (otherwise known as Learning Designers or Instructional Designers)? This is a practical strategy/means of closing-the-loop in the SOTL cycle. Staff who have made it their full-time business to improve teaching and learning, can support you to make observations, form hypotheses, plan data collection, and make responsive changes that can be expected to have positive impact on student learning.

Many consider the following book to be The Definitive and Seminal source of Higher Education Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). It is well-worth a read in preparing your application for Academic Promotion.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE REGARDING – HOW TO WRITE RESEARCH PAPERS THAT GET PUBLISHED ABOUT YOUR TEACHING AND YOUR STUDENTS’ LEARNING

Rigorously applying the SOTL cycle to the design and write-up of your investigation into teaching and learning will ensure that you achieve each of these elements that are important to peer reviewers and editors. You are encouraged to use this as a check-list prior to submitting your paper.

• The paper is a pleasure to read. The narrative has a beginning (introduction), middle (results and discussion) and end (conclusion). Navigational cues are provided for the reader throughout the paper.

• The paper makes a new and novel empirical contribution to the literature, and to education practice. It builds-upon key published literature and findings that have been previously published. Significant and influential authors and studies in the area are described and cited. The paper is theoretically grounded, and appropriate and relevant theory is described and cited.

• Key ethical considerations have been considered in the design and are noted in the paper. The paper makes explicit reference to obtaining ethical clearance.

• The paper has research question/s and well-chosen methods and methodologies that lead to data directly responding to the question/s. The paper stays bounded and focussed throughout and does not include extraneous data. The only data included is that which speaks directly to the research question/s.

• The discussion section directly articulates data/evidence-based approaches to the posed question/s. The findings of the empirical studies that were described in the literature review are compared and contrasted to the results of the study in the submitted paper.

• The sample/participant size and make-up are appropriate to respond to the articulated question/s. The authors do not exaggerate the findings or implications, and explicitly address strengths and limitations of the study’s design.

• The whole paper hangs together. The reader feels like being led along to an exciting destination. If there are multiple authors, the overall voice has been unified and it is impossible to identify where one author left-off and another began.

• There is a clear so-what to the paper. Scholars are compelled to read the paper because it is destined to have impact on teaching and learning.
SOTL CYCLE FILLABLE WORKSHEET TO PLAN AND MAP THE TEACHING PART OF YOUR ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS APPLICATION AND/OR YOUR TEACHING AND LEARNING PUBLICATION
Sometimes academics are heard to say statements like, ‘My professors read to me out of a textbook, or from lecture notes. I got my degree and had a successful professional career. If it was good enough for me, it is good enough for my students.’

The approach of reading content to students is not good enough, and will not earn academics promotion to the next level.

Today’s academics are expected to:

- Be enthusiastic and model excitement about the discipline and about learning.
- Stay up-to-date in the latest research discoveries and publications about their discipline.
- Practice the latest skills and techniques, and use the latest software in their industry.
- Demonstrate care for students and their learning.
- Identify the challenges and barriers for particular cohorts of students and make authentic efforts to facilitate the learning of diverse student cohorts.
- Seek continuing professional development in teaching and learning and continually improve teaching approaches and strategies.
- Actively participate and engage with students in on-campus and online courses.
- Provide clear assessment guidance, expectations and exemplars and provide timely and specific feedback, so that students can apply this learning to the preparation of subsequent assessment.
- Learn how to use educational technology and embed digital teaching and learning tools and approaches, including technology-enabled and technology-enhanced learning, in courses.
- Help students shape their emerging professional identities, discover who they are becoming through their student journeys, and help them establish industry-relevant networks.

The Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) specifies

“These requirements include knowledge of contemporary developments in the field they are teaching (which is informed by continuing scholarly activity), skills in teaching, learning and assessment relevant to the needs of the student cohorts involved.”


Each of these guidelines is paramount to being an academic at any level. If academics are not able to demonstrate meeting these guidelines, they are unlikely to be successful in academic promotions applications. Furthermore, academics must provide evidence in their applications that they are applying contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.
Successful Academic Promotions Applications present panels with evidence. In other words, these applicants present compelling data to prove that they are effective teachers who make tremendous contributions to their students’ learning.

Evidence divides into two categories.

1. **Outcomes**

Outcomes are often nouns (things) that derive from teaching and learning work. Examples of outcomes are the number of students taught, the number of courses on-record, the number of publications about teaching and learning approaches and the number of times each was cited.

Academic Promotions Panels tend to be more interested in Impact than in Outcomes. Impact is a verb, rather than a noun. In other words, it is a *doing* word. What was accomplished? What was changed? How did your teaching approaches improve learning for your students? How do you know? What is the evidence that it worked?

The easiest way to differentiate between outcomes and impact is by going back to the SOTL questions, problems or challenges for students.

For example, it might be the case that there have been higher than average drop and fail rates in one of your courses. The MyOpinion scores might be low as compared to other courses in the same discipline. Evaluation and investigation, through the support of an Educational Designer, asking a peer to observe your teaching and look at your course site, and detailed reading of the student comments in MyOpinion, might have indicated that the students do not see the relevance of the outlined assessment, are not meeting the assessment requirements, and believe that they are not receiving enough feedback to improve. Outcomes would include new rubrics, assessment criteria sheets, exemplar assignments and new online formative quizzes. Impact would include lower drop-rates, lower fail-rates and higher student satisfaction, as indicated by MyOpinion scores.

If you have evidence that your added or improved teaching practices have resolved problems or barriers for students, and their learning, then you have achieved impact. Be sure that you can connect the dots between what you have done, and what changed.

Are you sure that you can draw a connection between the two? How do you know that what you did, resulted in that change? Is there a chance that the situation might have changed without your input? For example, are you simply dealing with a different cohort of students this semester? Rigorously applying the SOTL cycle will assure you of impact validation.

Some further helpful reading in the domain of teaching and learning impact are:

The Impact Management Planning and Evaluation Ladder (IMPEL)

and

**Chapter Nine**

**CHECKLIST OF LEARNING & TEACHING SOURCES OF EVIDENCE THAT CAN BE USED FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS APPLICATIONS**

Remember to embed these data-points in the narrative. Tell the story of your teaching and learning, using these types of data-points as evidence. In other words, support your claims with data. Do so in a context-rich narrative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data-Points</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of publications about teaching and learning, e.g. Books, Book Chapters, Case Studies, Journal Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of peer-reviewed research publications about teaching and learning, e.g. Journal Papers, Full Conference Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total downloads of publications (about teaching and learning)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of countries downloading those publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of institutions/companies downloading those publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of subscribers to podcast channels (about teaching and learning)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of citations of research publications about teaching and learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of citations of highest cited research journal paper about teaching and learning</td>
<td></td>
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<td>h-Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keynotes and plenaries delivered about teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Countries visited as speaker/delegate on teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of competitive grants awarded to research teaching and learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total competitive research grant income (in the area of teaching and learning)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reports from peer review of teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reports from external evaluators about your teaching and learning initiatives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Being written-up as an exemplar, or case-study of teaching and learning in another author’s publication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluation scores and comments from workshops you put on about how to improve teaching and learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emails from those workshop participants who applied your strategies to their teaching and learning practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student comments and mean scores of likert scale questions, on end-of-semester Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching (SECT), provided that the question stems and comments are directly related to the specific initiative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Letters of commendation from Executive Deans and/or Heads of Schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teaching and learning awards as evidence of recognition for next-level awards (e.g. using University Teaching Excellence Award as evidence for National Teaching Excellence Award)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student achievement significantly higher for students who enrolled in your unit as prerequisite (versus in another unit)</td>
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<td>Significant improvement in the number of graduates employed (which can be linked by evidence, to your curriculum-embedded employability initiatives)</td>
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<td>Mined and followed-up LinkedIn and Facebook data about what graduates of your teaching are doing now</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emails or formal evaluation reports from employers that they are more satisfied by interns and/or graduates who you have taught (linked back to intentional improvements you made)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Changes to University policy, protocols, guidelines or formal whole-of-university practices, based on your teaching and learning initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being included and referenced in government reports (as a teaching and learning expert or practice exemplar)</td>
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</table>
Appendix One

CHECKLIST FOR THE LEARNING & TEACHING COMPONENT OF SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS APPLICATIONS

- Is the Learning & Teaching Component of your Academic Promotions Application, clear, focussed and succinct?
- Have you included an introduction, body and conclusion that says what it is going to say, says it, and then says what it said? Is the body a context-rich narrative?
- Do you convey a clear sense of who you are as teacher and what you believe, and practice, about learning and your students?
- Is your application data and evidence-rich, including evidence of impact? (i.e. Have you resolved problems and barriers for your students?)
- Is it obvious throughout your application that you are staying-up-to-date and using contemporary approaches to teaching and learning (including digitally enhanced learning) and that, through you, your students have access to up-to-date skills, knowledge and attributes in the respective discipline/industry?
- Do you put energy and enthusiasm into your teaching and your students’ learning, and does this translate onto the pages of your application for academic promotion?
- Have you included a 25-word statement at the top of the teaching and learning section?
- Have you included a well-informed and coherent philosophy of teaching?
- Have you framed your investigation and actions, in the domain of teaching and learning, through the SOTL cycle?
- Have you discussed your application and readiness with your Executive Dean and followed their advice?
- Have you asked a critical friend to carefully read your application and give you feedback and recommendations for improvement?

If you would like further advice, about your full application, see:
APPENDIX TWO

APPLYING THE WORKBOOK CONTENT TO USQ’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TEACHING AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING COMPONENT OF ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS APPLICATIONS

This Appendix provides the word-for-word instructions for completing USQ’s Teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Component of Academic Promotions Applications, and then applies the “Checklist for the Learning & Teaching Component of Successful Academic Promotions Applications” to the USQ context.

USQ’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS:

(I) TEACHING AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In accordance with the above definitions, this criterion may include: face-to-face classroom teaching; the various modes of distance education teaching (including online mode, the preparation of print, voice, visual or electronic materials and contact with students directly or by telephone, computer link, or video link); the teaching of groups other than award students (including fellow employees); postgraduate supervision; curriculum, course and instructional design; educational leadership and scholarship associated with teaching.

To address this criterion, you should prepare a teaching and learning portfolio that is a summary of your major accomplishments and strengths in teaching and in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Documentation should clearly indicate not only your level of productivity, but also the quality of your output.

The summary should present an overall picture of your interests, achievements, and the impact and influence of your activities including on the student, academic and/or broader community. Note that teaching includes supervision of student projects and higher degree research.

It should include some or all of the following:

1. A brief statement of your philosophy and/or general approach to teaching and scholarship and their relationship to the University mission.

2. Evidence of the effectiveness and quality of your teaching and scholarship of teaching and learning and educational leadership

   • an outline of the objectives in your teaching/scholarship and how these were achieved
   • student evaluation/rating summaries
   • assessments by peers or independent experts
• student achievement
• honours and postgraduate students supervised to successful completion
• provision of intellectual stimulus for students
• monitoring, evaluation and improvement of teaching and subjects
• preparation and production of teaching materials for conventional and flexible delivery, including study book authorship, together with users'/readers' evaluative comments.
• contributions to an innovation in educational methodology, curricula and teaching materials
• receipt of a teaching award or similar accolade
• receipt of an award for the design and delivery of teaching materials
• other significant activities

3. Evidence of effective educational leadership
• course coordination
• unit team leadership
• course and curriculum design
• staff development and mentorship

4. Evidence of research and innovation in teaching and learning
• published outcomes in books/refereed journals
• refereed conference proceedings
• commissioned reports of a developmental nature
• teaching grants

5. Other evidence as appropriate, for example, for employees in other than ‘research only’ positions, evidence of interest and participation in professional development activities that enhance teaching, learning and assessment at USQ.

1 Evaluation of teaching should include: self assessment, peer assessment and student assessment. Applicants should, where possible, provide factual, statistically-valid information which will take precedence over uncorroborated claims and the opinions of others (including students).

2 Please supply your teaching profile and SET summary by completing the table in Section G of the application form. The University provides instruments for student evaluation of courses in all modes. For your external courses and online courses check the evaluation questionnaire is included. For day-mode courses check with the head of your academic course to ensure it is administered. Include for the Promotion Panel any qualitative comments you wish to make, e.g. that you teach a compulsory or service course. Alternative instruments may be used if desired. Applicants are advised of the risk of not including the results of student evaluations in their portfolio. Equally applicants are strongly advised not to rely solely on student evaluations and to use other quantitative and qualitative evaluations wherever possible.

3 Applicants, particularly those whose discipline or interest is in educational research, may choose to include this matter either under the Teaching and Scholarship criterion or under the Research and Original Achievement criterion but not both.

THE CRITERIA ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

Teaching is a creative activity designed to foster students’ learning, their ability and desire to undertake scholarly work, and their personal development and creativity. Teaching draws upon the professional and disciplinary expertise of staff and is continually revitalised by research, scholarship, consultancy or
Teaching includes the design, implementation and evaluation of curriculum materials for all modes of delivery.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning refers to the scholarly inquiry into student learning which advances the practice of teaching by making research findings public.

Teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning includes face-to-face classroom teaching; the various modes of distance education teaching (including online mode, the preparation of print, voice, visual or electronic materials, and contact with students directly or by telephone, computer link, or video link); the teaching of groups other than award students (including fellow employees); postgraduate supervision, curriculum, course and instructional design, education leadership and scholarship associated with learning and teaching.

### THE CHECKLIST FOR THE LEARNING & TEACHING COMPONENT OF SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS APPLICATIONS APPLIED TO THE USQ CONTEXT

<p>| | |</p>
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| ![ ](image) | **Is the learning & teaching component of your academic promotions application, clear, focussed and succinct?**  
*Even though the USQ instructions separate responses into 5 headings, the whole section needs to be cohesive and hang-together.* |
| ![ ](image) | **Have you included an introduction, body and conclusion that says what it is going to say, says it, and then says what it said? Is the body a context-rich narrative?**  
*It is recommended that you insert an introduction prior to addressing the 5 specific areas, then address the 5 areas (in narrative form, and using the word-for-word headings), and then summarise and highlight key-points in a succinct conclusion.* |
| ![ ](image) | **Do you convey a clear sense of who you are as teacher and what you believe, and practice, about learning and your students?**  
*This narrative aligns effectively with USQ Heading 1 – A brief statement of your philosophy and/or general approach to teaching and scholarship and their relationship to the University mission. Retrieve USQ’s Strategic Plan and explicitly align your philosophy and approach with text from that plan.* |
| ![ ](image) | **Is your application data and evidence-rich, including evidence of impact? (i.e. Have you resolved problems and barriers for your students?)**  
*It is essential that you provide evidence (particularly of impact) throughout your application. This is particularly relevant advice to USQ Heading 2 – Evidence of the effectiveness and quality of your teaching and scholarship of teaching and learning and educational leadership. It is important that you not only list WHAT you did, but what that changed for the better? Provide evidence that links your approaches and efforts to positive (and measurable impact) on student achievement, retention and success, and graduate outcomes.* |
Is it obvious throughout your application that you are staying up-to-date and using contemporary approaches to teaching and learning (including digitally enhanced learning) and that, through you, your students have access to up-to-date skills, knowledge and attributes in the respective discipline/industry?

This is applicable throughout your USQ application and particularly for area 3 – Evidence of effective educational leadership and area 4 – Evidence of research and innovation in teaching and learning. It is important to evidence that, not only are you staying up-to-date, but that you are sharing your approaches with others, through leadership and publications.

Do you put energy and enthusiasm into your teaching and your students’ learning, and does this translate onto the pages of your application for academic promotion?

This energy and enthusiasm should radiate from the pages of your academic promotion application, and particularly in your response to USQ area 1 – A brief statement of your philosophy and/ or general approach to teaching and scholarship and their relationship to the University mission.

Have you included a 25-word statement at the top of the teaching and learning section?

It is recommended that you include this before, or as part of, your introduction (to the 5 areas), or within your response to USQ area 1 – A brief statement of your philosophy and/ or general approach to teaching and scholarship and their relationship to the University mission.

Have you included a well-informed and coherent philosophy of teaching?

It is recommended that you include this as part of your introduction (to the 5 areas), or within your response to USQ area 1 – A brief statement of your philosophy and/ or general approach to teaching and scholarship and their relationship to the University mission.

Have you framed your investigation and actions, in the domain of teaching and learning, through the SOTL cycle?

Using the SOTL cycle is good-practice for writing a response to USQ area 4 – Evidence of research and innovation in teaching and learning. Do not simply insert the references (citations) for your publications about teaching and learning. Use the SOTL cycle to articulate what your questions were, what you found, how you applied your findings to improve teaching and learning for your students, and how you know that your efforts worked (had impact).
<table>
<thead>
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