

Information on the merit award scheme of UiA 2019-20

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A merit award scheme for all who teach at UiA

Information on the scheme for 2019-2020

About this document:

This document is for employees who wish to apply to the merit award scheme for teaching excellence at UiA. It mainly concerns information on the practicalities around the award scheme for the period 2019-2020. Please note that the information provided here is not exhaustive. For updated information on information meetings and workshops, we refer to the website on the UiA Merit Award Scheme: <https://www.uia.no/en/centres-and-networks/puls/merit-award-scheme>. On this website, you will also find the latest version of the information document, links to important resources and «Frequently Asked Questions»

Introduction:

White Paper no. 16 (2016–2017) *Quality Culture in Higher Education* describes the Government's expectation that all Norwegian higher education institutions are to implement a qualification framework for teaching excellence by 2020. As part of UiA's strategic goal *Learning and Education for the Future* (LUF), a preliminary project was launched for the scheme in 2017-2018. Morten Brekke from the Department of Engineering Sciences received the award for Teaching Excellence on 12.09.2018. After this preliminary project, the report *Follow-up research of preliminary project for «Merit Award Scheme for Teaching Excellence at UiA»* (Kyllingstad and Lauvdal, 2018), as well as a case file with proposals for a permanent merit award scheme, were presented to the University Board.

The University Board of UiA decreed on 13.03.2019 (case 31/19):

1. The Board decides to establish a collective merit award scheme for teaching excellence at the University of Agder
2. The Board agrees to the principles for the merit award scheme as presented by the University Director's case file.
3. The Board requests the University Director to ensure that salary categorization of Teaching Excellence awardees will be implemented in UiA's salary policy.
4. The Board requests that the merit award scheme is assessed after two announcements.

A merit award scheme for all who teach at UiA:

Citation from the case file on which the decisions of the Board are based:

«...the intention with a pedagogical qualification framework is to bring more attention to teaching competence and to increase the status associated with educational work and teaching within the organisation. This occurs when the teaching achievements of those who systematically and continuously work on educational development and who document their teaching activities and share their experiences with others, are recognized and rewarded. A qualification framework for excellence in teaching will highlight and reward scientific employees who contribute positively to

educational development as a part of the pedagogical community in their respective institutions/departments/professional environment...»

During the preparational work on developing guidelines for the merit award scheme at UiA, experiences have been exchanged and inspiration gained from other higher education institutions. Here in Norway, NTNU, Uit and UiB have made the most headway in this respect. They may have used some slightly different models, but all above-named institutions were clearly inspired by the merit award scheme of Lund University in Sweden.

In the case file for the Board's decision the University Director requested that the Board agree to the principles for a merit award scheme for teaching excellence at UiA as described below.

Who can apply?

As a main principle, the University Board has decided **that all permanent employees in any scientific position with at least five years of teaching experience at a university or university college, with a basis of pedagogical competence**, are eligible to apply to UiA's merit award scheme for the period 2019 -2022

More on basic pedagogical competence

There are several ways to meet the requirements for basic pedagogical competence. Such competence may be obtained by participation to a course (for example UNIPED) or by practical teaching experience. Universities Norway (UHR) lists guidelines that define and can help document basic university competence. [Click here for guidelines UHR-pedagogisk basiskompetanse \(only in Norwegian\)](#):

<https://www.uhr.no/temasider/karrierepolitikk/nasjonale-veiledende-retningslinjer-for-uh-pedagogisk-basiskompetanse/>

Other principles concerning UiA's merit award scheme for the period 2019 – 2022:

- A collective merit award scheme for teaching excellence is established at all departments
- Rewards are allocated every second year
- Criteria for teaching excellence are:
 1. Focus on students' learning
 2. Clear positive progression
 3. Scientific approach
 4. Collegial attitude and sharing of experiences
- The Rector may come with additional criteria for applicants from one or several departments, in consultation with the board of the department
- Evaluation is based on pedagogical documentation folder and interview
- The Rector appoints the evaluation committee
- The expectation is that a merit award scheme for teaching excellence will contribute to an increase in knowledge, among other towards potentially building a pedagogical academy at UiA.

- The University Board assigns the status of teaching excellence to the awardee

Economical incentives of the UiA merit award scheme

Those who are awarded will go up two steps in salary.

Head of Departments' role with regards to the merit award scheme

The Head of Department's responsibility as outlined under the *Instructions for Head of Department* (point 2i), consists in encouraging staff members to participate in the university's merit award scheme.

Time schedule 2019 - 2020:

The period up to the merit award announcement can be divided into three phases:

- Phase 1: Information and discussion meetings
- Phase 2: Creation of the pedagogical documentation folder /career portfolio
- Phase 3: Final submission, evaluation and feedback

Phase 1: Collection of information and discussion meetings

Phase 1 occurs in the period between 12.12.19 – 31.03.20

During this phase, several information and discussion meetings will be organized. All interested applicants are encouraged to participate in these meetings.

1. Information meetings took place on 12 December 2019 at both campuses
2. Discussion meetings will take place in January and February 2020 at both campuses
3. Experience-sharing meetings with previous awardees will take place during March

Final deadline for application to the UiA merit award scheme for the period 2019-2020 is 25 March 2020.

Phase 2: Creation of the pedagogical documentation folder/career portfolio

Phase 2 occurs in the period between 01.04.20 – 31.08.20

During this phase, applicants put together their pedagogical documentation folder/career portfolio.

Details on how to create a pedagogical documentation folder/career portfolio can be found further on in this document under the heading: *Contents of the pedagogical folder/career portfolio*

Phase 3: Final submission, evaluation and feedback

Phase 3 occurs in the period between 01.09.20 – 15.10.20

During this phase, the candidate's application will be assessed by the evaluation committee. This evaluation committee is appointed by the rectorate, and will consist of:

- Three staff members of the university or university college, of which:

- At least two members are active in the same field of expertise, and one member has previously been awarded the merit for teaching excellence.
- At least one member with pedagogical/didactic knowledge
- One or two external members
- All members must be able to document a high level of competence within teaching and facilitation of learning processes within higher education
- One student representative (from the study program in question or similar)

The evaluation consists of an assessment of the application criteria, and an interview.

The committee is headed by an external educator who has previously been awarded for teaching excellence

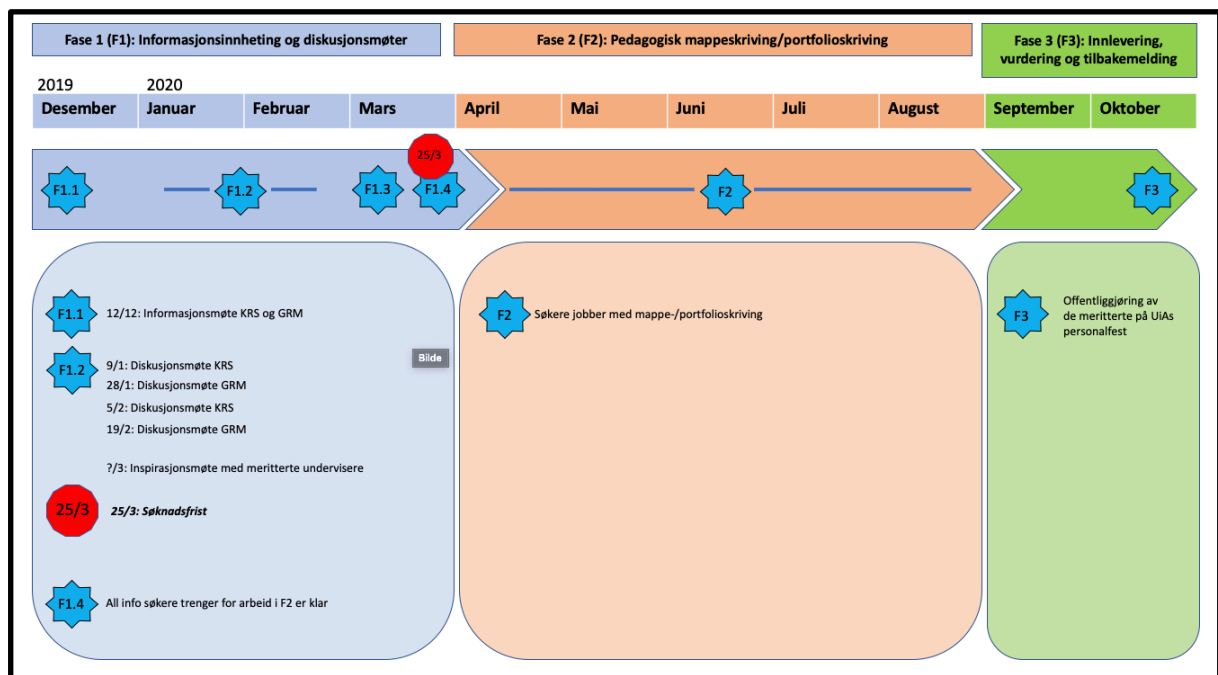


Figure 1: Time schedule for merit award scheme UiA, period 2019-20

Documentation

The application to the merit award scheme for teaching excellence is based on the creation of a pedagogical documentation folder. This folder, including its attachments, must document that the applicant meets the requirements.

Contents of the pedagogical documentation folder/ career portfolio

The pedagogical information folder/portfolio documents the teaching experience and related R&D activities of the applicant. It is a portfolio of relevant experience which should focus on chosen teaching methods, argumentation for the chosen methods, consequent teaching results and critical self- reflection.

The folder/portfolio consists of two parts:

Part 1: Profile document

- A cohesive text of maximum 7500 words in which the applicant presents a summary of his or her development as an educator.
 - Literature overview comes as an addition and is not included in the 7500 words limit.
- To be assessed as an eligible awardee, the applicant must ensure that the document reflects the mentioned requirements and criteria. It should be especially clear that the applicant meets the four main criteria (with sub-criteria as detailed later in this document).

Part 2: Attachments

- Clear documentation of competence for each subject the applicants wishes to accentuate.
- Total number of attachments is maximum 15.
 - Attachments should be numbered; attachments should refer to the profile document in such way that their relevance is clear.
- CV concerning teaching experience/competence.
 - This is an obligatory attachment
 - Make sure to use the specially prepared CV template which you can find on the website
- Written recommendation from your closest superior; this should state in which way the department benefits from the candidate's competence and which opportunities for further development are being offered to the candidate.
 - This is an obligatory attachment
- Other types of attachments
 - Experience/results can be documented by, for example:
 - Peer assessment – Colleague coaching
 - Student evaluation reports
 - Video clips of own teaching
 - Artistic expression

Key Topics in the profile document

The profile document must contain the following topics:

1- Biography.

Short description of the applicant, his or her career in higher education, detailing among other seniority as educator/coach, and on which level the teaching/coaching occurred.

2 – Teaching repertoire.

Which teaching methods have been used, experiences with these, developments over time, self-reflection on further development of own competence.

3 – View on teaching and learning.

Description of the applicant's basic view on teaching and how this was reflected in his/her choice of teaching methods in the past. Reflections of own views on teaching and learning, anchored in theory and linked to own teaching.

4 – Planning of lectures and contribution to own professional environment

Experiences with planning of courses and study programmes, experiences with collaboration with colleagues and students on teaching, as well as other contributions that strengthen teaching and learning at the own department.

5 –Assessments from others.

Under this topic, the applicant may refer shortly to assessment statements by others, such as student evaluation reports, or peer assessments that the applicant deems of importance. Documentation must be provided by attachment(s).

6 – Documented pedagogical development projects, including development in teaching tools.

Why was the pedagogical development project initiated, what was achieved, what was learned, and what are the further plans? How has the applicant documented and communicated his/her teaching experience?

7 – Pedagogical management

Experience from formal and informal leadership roles and how the applicant achieved a contribution to the teaching quality at the own department/within own area of expertise?

8 – Self-reflection and hindsight.

Based on learning theory, the applicant is to critically analyse and reflect over previous views and methods which have influenced his/her teaching and explain how this analysis and reflection have led to improvement and further development.

UiA's assessment criteria

When creating the pedagogical information folder/career portfolio, the candidate should keep in mind the four main assessment criteria. These are the criteria on which the evaluation committee will base their final decisions on which candidates are recommended to the University Board as awardees.

1 – Focus on students' learning

- Applicant is clearly focussed on students' learning, and the learning environment during all teaching activities.
- Applicant is aware of the correlation between different ways of teaching, learning result and type of assessment.
- The applicant's principal ideas on teaching are cohesive and substantiated by theory.
- Applicant has a good relationship with his/her students, follows up and reacts constructively on student feedback.

2 – A clear positive progression

- Applicant has intentionally and systematically aimed to develop teaching methods and contents in order to support students' learning
- Applicant has ideas and concrete plans for continuous development of his/her teaching competence and teaching practice.

3 – A scientific approach

- Applicant actively uses the quality system to continuously develop his/her teaching.
- Applicant plans, maps, assesses and modifies his/her teaching practice depending on what most effectively supports students' learning.
- Applicant is aware of the correlation between teaching method, type of assessment, coaching and learning outcome.
- Applicant reflects on his/her own teaching based on university pedagogical theory and didactical knowledge relating to his/her teaching subject.
- Applicant practises research-based teaching; meaning that he/she teaches content knowledge that is based on the most important and up-to-date research, and that students also implement elements from research processes into their own learning activities.

4 – Collegial attitude and sharing of information

- Applicant shares experiences with others and collaborates constructively with students and colleagues in order to develop the quality of teaching.
- Applicant interacts with others via knowledge exchange platforms such as discussions, conferences or publications.
- Applicant contributes to fulfilling the institutions strategic goals for teaching quality by undertaking educational development activities or managerial tasks.
- Applicant initiates or manages study plan activities, educational development work, collaboration projects or research project related to teaching.

Technical tools

During phase 2: The Pedagogical information folder/career portfolio should be created via Canvas. Prospective applicants will be invited to a separate Canvas room as students. Access to this Canvas room will be given at the beginning of phase 2 (01.04.20). The room will be closed again at the end of phase 2 (31.08.20). Instructions on how to use Canvas during this phase will be available latest 01.04.20.

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