

Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) 2026

Guidance for institutions and
nominated teams

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1. Deadline and assessment schedule

The timetable for the submission and assessment process is as follows:

Date	Milestone
Monday 6 October 2025	Call for nominations opens CATE 2026 Guidance for institutions and nominated teams will be available on the Advance HE website. Teaching Excellence Awards Leads (TEALs) in institutions will be able to access and download the nomination documents from the ‘Teaching Excellence Awards Lead (TEAL) Contact Network’ group on Connect.
Wednesday 11 March 2026	Nominations close Nominated team details and all electronic copies of nomination documents must be uploaded by the TEAL to Advance HE’s Survey Monkey Apply (SMA) online platform by 12:00 noon (GMT). Access to SMA will close to TEALs at this time.
w/c 29 June	Nominated Team Leaders, TEALs and Vice-Chancellors notified of outcome Nominated Team Leaders and TEALs will be informed of the outcome. Vice-Chancellors/Principals/Presidents (or equivalent) of nominating institutions will only be informed of any winners. Please note that this information is embargoed until the official announcement.
Thursday 6 August 2026	Official announcement Advance HE announces the new 2026 CATE winners.
By end of August 2026	Nominee feedback issued Nominated teams will receive written feedback on their nomination; please note that reviewer scores and overall rankings will not be shared. TEALs will be copied into feedback.

This document provides detailed guidelines for the nomination process and for the preparation and submission of nomination documents for the 2026 CATE award round. Institutions that wish to change their TEAL, or the TEAL’s contact details, should email the team at cate@advance-he.ac.uk.

2. Introduction

The purpose of the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) is to recognise and celebrate collaborative work that has had a demonstrable impact on teaching and learning in **UK Higher Education (HE)**. Introduced in 2016, CATE highlights the key role that teamwork plays in higher education. Each award will recognise a team that has enabled a change in practice for colleagues and/or students at an institutional or discipline level.

The CATE scheme is organised and run by Advance HE. In order to participate in CATE, institutions must be Advance HE UK Full or Affiliate members; participation in the scheme is a benefit of membership, i.e., no additional fee is due for participation. Institutions are eligible to enter **one nominated CATE team** via a '**nomination**'.

Nomination documents will be available for download from the private '[Teaching Excellence Awards Lead \(TEAL\) Contact Network](#)' group on Advance HE's Connect platform. If you are a TEAL and do not have access to the TEAL Contact Network group, please contact the Awards Team. TEALs submit nominations via Advance HE's [Survey Monkey Apply](#) (SMA) online platform.

Up to 15 nominated teams will be selected to receive the CATE award in 2026. Nominated teams will be informed of the outcome in the week commencing Monday 29 June 2026. This information is embargoed until the official announcement on Thursday 6 August 2026.

The Team Leader plus one other member of each winning CATE team will be invited to attend a celebratory event in Autumn 2026 where their team's Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence will be awarded. Additional tickets to the ceremony will be available to purchase.

Winning CATE Team Leaders and Deputy Team Leaders will be invited to become a member of the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence Network (CATE-Net), enabling them to become ambassadors for CATE, collaborate with other CATE winners and support the ongoing enhancement of learning and teaching.

Further details of the [CATE Scheme](#) are available on the Advance HE website.

The UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel (UKTEAP) plays a pivotal role in the process. The Panel advises on the criteria, the process of assessment and moderation, and the selection of the winners. The Panel is independent of Advance HE and includes senior Higher Education Provider (HEP) representatives from the UK nations and other relevant stakeholders.

2.1 Updates for 2026

- Nominated teams must now separate and report the word count for each criterion under two distinct headings:
 - Words included in figures
 - Words included in the main body of textThe overall word limit still applies. See section 3.3 for full instructions.
- New guidance has been added on the use of visual elements in Claims (Section 3.3).

- TEALs will now be able to access the nomination documents via the private '[Teaching Excellence Awards Lead \(TEAL\) Contact Network](#)' group on Advance HE's Connect platform.
- The Institutional Statement of Support can now also be written and signed off by the Director of the nominated team's Professional Service area, as appropriate (See 3.2).
- Nominated teams must include headers containing their team leader's name and nominating institution and footers with page numbers (See 3.3).
- CATE Team leaders can now 'opt-in' to share their contact details (name, institution and email address) with the co-ordinating group of CATE-Net (professional network for CATE winners) should they be successful. TEALs will be able to record this decision on SMA at the time of submission (See 3.2).
- A number of minor revisions have been made to the wording throughout.

3. Guidelines for nomination

3.1 Eligibility

The Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) is open to all Advance HE member Higher Education Providers (HEPs) across the UK, including Further Education Colleges and independent ('alternative') providers. Each UK member HEP may nominate **one team** that demonstrates impactful collaboration in teaching and learning.

Institutions are expected to ensure their internal selection processes are inclusive and free from discrimination, recognising the diverse ways staff and students contribute to learning and teaching. Team members may hold **any role that supports teaching and learning enhancement**. Staff at overseas campuses employed by the UK HEP are eligible.

Each team must show direct engagement with higher education students. Student team members are encouraged and may be current students or in representative roles. If students are not part of the team, the team must clearly demonstrate how students are directly involved in their work.

The Team Leader must be directly employed by the nominating UK HEP. External members, such as those from industry or partner institutions (including the Deputy Team Leader), may be included. However, only one institution may submit the nomination - joint applications are not accepted.

Neither Team Leader, nor Deputy Team Leaders, can have an active nomination for the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) in the same round. Similarly, the Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader cannot serve as a TEAL or Deputy TEAL concurrently. If a TEAL or Deputy TEAL wishes to take on a CATE Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader role, they must step down for that cycle. Please notify CATE@advance-he.ac.uk of any changes and provide contact details for the replacement TEAL/Deputy TEAL to reassign SMA access.

The Claim must reflect the nominated team's original work. Advance HE reserves the right to use anti-plagiarism software. While generative AI tools (e.g., for grammar or spelling) may

support the Claim's development, the content must be the team's own. By submitting a nomination, institutions confirm the integrity and authenticity of the team's Claim.

We encourage nominations from College-Based HE and alternative providers, which have been under-represented in previous rounds.

In making nominations, institutions should actively consider equality, diversity, and inclusion, as analysis of previous award data shows **under-representation in the following groups**:

- The wide range of **professional staff that support HE student learning** (to give some examples: learning developers, learning technologists, learning designers, careers and employability advisors, library staff, student support staff, academic skills developers, academic advisors, technicians, placement officers, etc.)
- **Part-time, fractional, sessional, or hourly-paid** staff.
- **Ethnic minority staff groups** relative to HESA statistics.
- **HE staff working within the college sector and alternative providers.**
- **Males** (relative to HESA data)

Institutions are also encouraged to use the internal selection process to raise the profile of nominated teams and continue to promote their work, regardless of award outcome, given the competitive nature of the scheme.

3.2 Nomination documents

Nominations comprise the documents and forms listed below. Nomination documents and nominated team details must be completed and submitted via SMA by the institution's TEAL (See 3.5).

Nomination documents and nominated team information comprise the following:

- **Nominated Team information:** For CATE 2026, TEALs must collect the following information from nominated Team Leaders and Deputy Team Leaders and enter it onto the Advance HE SMA online platform:
 - Name and Title.
 - Job Title, Department and Nominating Institution Name and Address.
 - Contact Details:
 - including a phone number for the Team Leader that they consent to be contacted on, on results day, should they be successful.
 - the Team Leader can also give consent for their name, institution and email address to be shared with the CATE-Net Co-ordinating group, should they be successful¹.
 - Thematic Areas.

¹ This Personal data will be shared for the purpose to connect Team Leaders with the CATE-Net Co-ordinating Group to share events, publications or potential collaborative work. Data will only be processed in line with the Teaching Excellence Awards Privacy Notice

- **Plus, for all team members**, names, status (i.e. staff / student / external partner) and email addresses (max of 13 team members, in addition to Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader - see Section 5.2 for details).
- **Claim:** completed by the nominated team using the Claim pro-forma downloaded by the TEAL from the private TEAL Network group on [Connect](#). Nominated teams use the Claim pro-forma to write a narrative against each of the two CATE award criteria (**maximum 4500 words**) plus a record of the Core Team Composition, an overarching Context Statement (up to 300 words) and a Reference List (see 5.5 for details) for citations used within the Claim (excluded from the word count); see Appendix 1. A bilingual Welsh language version is also available for the TEAL to download. The completed Claim pro-forma should be submitted by the TEAL as a PDF file.
- **Signed Statement of Support:** a statement (maximum 1,000 words) providing endorsement and institutional perspective to support the Claim. This statement should be written by a colleague in a senior position at the nominating institution (at the level of DVC/PVC/Director of Professional Service area, or equivalent), who is familiar with the nominated team's work. It should be submitted using the pro-forma downloaded by the TEAL from [Connect](#) (see Appendix 2). The statement should be signed-off by the institution's Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent). A bilingual Welsh language version is also available for the TEAL to download. The completed Statement of Support must be submitted by the TEAL as a PDF file.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Survey

After the submission deadline, all members of nominated teams will be contacted by the Advance HE Awards team and asked to complete **an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring survey** (please see Section 3.4 below). This data will be used anonymously to report on equality and diversity to the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel. The survey URL will be emailed directly to team members by the Awards Team once nominations have closed on Wednesday 11 March 2026.

3.3 Formatting requirements

The following conventions* should be applied to the Claim. This is to ensure fairness and consistency in the review process across all nominated teams.

- **Word Limit:** Sections A and B have strict maximum word limits. Any words exceeding these limits will not be considered by reviewers.
Nominated teams must provide a breakdown of their word count for Section B under two separate categories:
 1. Word count within all 'figures,' such as diagrams, graphs, and tables – this includes all keys, headings, axis labels, and any other text within visual elements.
 2. Word count in the main body of text, including all section headings, in-text citations, endnotes, punctuation marks, and numerical charactersThe combined total of these two wordcounts must not exceed the overall word limit.
- **Font:** Arial 12 point.

➤ Use of Visual Elements

Diagrams, charts, graphs, tables, and other schematic representations **are permitted** and may be used to support the nominated team's claims. These should present information in a structured or simplified form.

• Examples include:

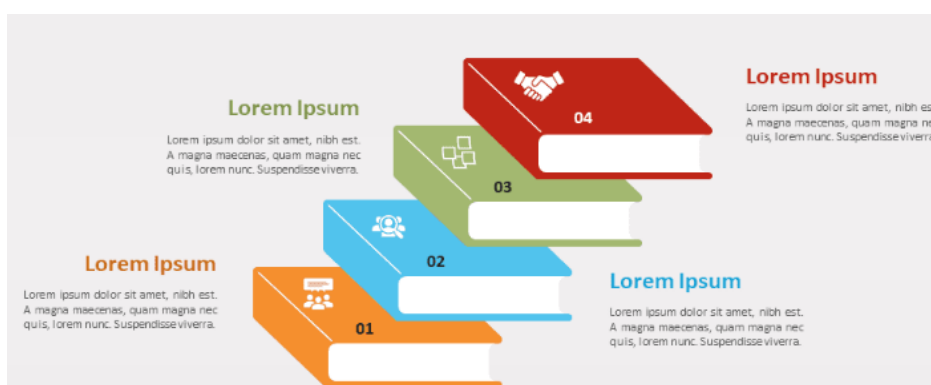
- Tables
- Bar charts
- Line graphs
- Pie charts
- Scatter plots
- Flowcharts
- Process diagrams
- Venn diagrams
- Fishbone (cause-and-effect) diagrams
- Timelines
- Mind maps
- Conceptual diagrams
- Framework diagrams
- Matrices (e.g. SWOT analysis)
- Grids comparing categories or variables

All text within these elements - such as labels, headings, keys, and axis titles - must be included in the 'figures' word count.

- However, non-schematic visuals are **not permitted** and nominations containing these will be returned.

These include:

- Photographs (e.g. images of objects, people, events)
- Illustrations or drawings
- Screenshots
- Logos or icons
- Scanned text
- Decorative or artistic images
- Infographics with non-schematic elements (nominated teams should remove any schematic elements and present these separately). The visual below, for example, **would not be permitted**:



- **Headers and footers:** nominated team must include headers containing their team leader's name and nominating institution and footers with page numbers.
- **Testimonials:** testimonials from students should be credited in a way that provides the relevant context about the learner, whilst keeping their identity private. For example: '*UG Student*' or '*PG Workshop Attendee*'. Testimonials from colleagues or

other stakeholders may include their name with consent or be anonymised if more appropriate.

- **Citations:** can be included in the body text or put as endnotes (rather than footnotes). These must be added to the final word count.
- **Hyperlinks:** do not include hyperlinks as these add additional information outside the word limit. Advance HE will return Claims which include hyperlinks. Internet addresses are permitted in the Reference List to denote online sources, but reviewers are instructed not to follow them.
- **File Saving:** The following naming convention should be used for all submitted files: <Institution>_<TeamLeadersName>_<DocName>; e.g. UniofPoppleton_JamesSmith_Claim.
- **TEALs please note that when files are submitted via SMA, the system generates a list of letters and numbers which it adds to the file name as a unique identifier. This will not in any way affect how the submitted files are processed.**

Advance HE and the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel reserve the right to reject any nominations failing to adhere to these requirements. It is therefore the responsibility of the nominating institution and the Team Leader to ensure that the nomination adheres to the requirements with regard to formatting, required signatures and word limits.

3.4 Monitoring of equality and diversity data

All personal data provided through submitting a team nomination for the CATE scheme will be held confidentially by Advance HE and only relevant documentation will be shared with the reviewers and the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel as explained within this guidance document.

Advance HE is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and collects data relating to team members for statistical monitoring via the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Survey. The information provided does not form part of the Claim and is not made available to reviewers but is used anonymously by Advance HE for statistical monitoring.

The confidentiality of the data submitted is maintained by Advance HE. Advance HE collates the information provided by all members of the nominated team and shares this collated data anonymously to report annually on equality and diversity to the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel.

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Survey is an online survey and **each member of the core team should complete the survey**. The Awards Team will communicate directly with all team members regarding completion of this survey (see Section 3.2 above).

For information about how Advance HE collects, stores and uses personal information about CATE nominated teams, please review our [privacy statement](#).

3.5 Submission and receipt of nominations

Nomination documents must be submitted by the institution's TEAL through SMA online platform. TEALs will need to create an account on SMA to enable them to upload the nomination(s). Full instructions are provided in the TEAL Handbook and SMA User Guide 2026.

All nomination documents must be uploaded by 12:00 noon (GMT) on Wednesday 11 March 2026.

The TEAL is acting on behalf of their institution, and it will be assumed by Advance HE that they are acting in accordance with the expectations of their senior management when submitting their institution's nomination.

Submissions should be in the English or Welsh language; those submitting in Welsh must also include an English language version of all documents for review purposes.

Receipt of uploaded nominations will be acknowledged by an automated email sent to the TEAL from the SMA system. Please note the SMA online system will not allow incomplete nominations to be submitted.

Following submission, Advance HE will confirm that all documents have been received and are accessible in an email sent to the institution's TEAL from the mailbox cate@advance-he.ac.uk by **17:00 on Friday 13 March 2026**. If the TEAL has not received this confirmation from Advance HE by this date, then we advise that they should contact Advance HE at cate@advance-he.ac.uk to confirm document receipt before a final deadline of **17:00 on Monday 16 March 2026**.

4. Award criteria

All team Claims will be assessed on the evidence provided in the nomination documents in relation to each of the **two CATE award criteria**:

CATE Criterion 1: Excellence in the team's collaborative approach

Evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context and the opportunities afforded by it.

CATE Criterion 2: Excellence in the impact of collaborative working

Evidence of the team having a demonstrable impact on teaching and learning, including beyond their immediate academic or professional area.

Reviewers will be looking for evidence of **value, reach, and impact** to be demonstrated in the evidence within the narrative presented in Section B of the Claim. Please note that each of the two award criteria above is given equal consideration in the assessment process and weighted equally in the overall score.

5. Developing the Claim

The 'Claim' is made up of three sections (A-C):

Section A:

Part 1 - Core Team Composition (free word count).

Part 2 - Context Statement (maximum 300 words).

Section B: Claim against the two CATE Award Criteria (maximum 4500 words in total).

Section C: Reference List.

Only Section B, containing evidence against each of the two CATE award criteria, is scored by reviewers; the Context Statement and Reference List are not scored.

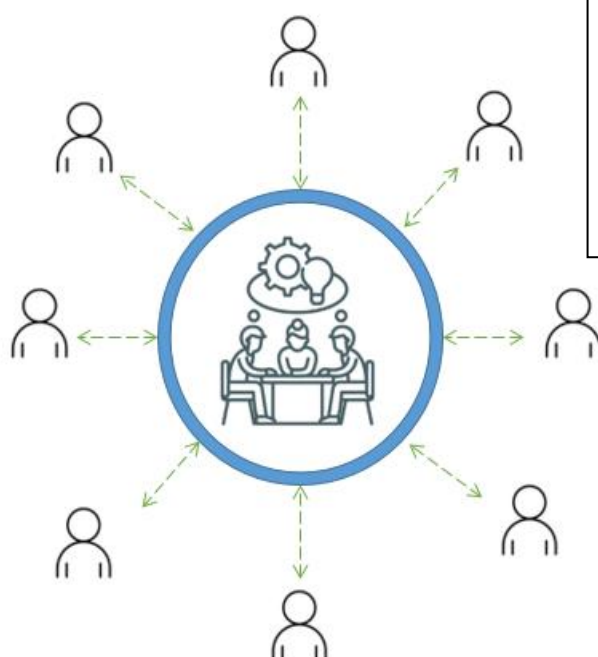
5.1 Core Team

In defining the Core Team to be nominated for CATE, it might be helpful to consider a 'core' team as the initiators of the work that may involve a larger 'extended team.' The extended team engage with the work of the core team and will be part of the evolution of that work. There is often a flow between these two groups as the work develops, and the members of this extended group will influence the ongoing work of the core team. Core team members may be drawn across disciplines, professional teams, students and/or external groups, etc., and all career stages, i.e., not related to seniority or status of members' job roles.

It is expected that core teams will differ widely, reflecting the diversity of work within UK higher education and the unique context of each team; there is no expectation that there will be an extended group of individuals engaged with the work of the core team. There are many different ways of evidencing each of the two award criteria, as appropriate to the nature of the nominated team's work, and reviewers will apply these criteria in turn to the unique claim made by each nominated team.

In demonstrating the depth of collaboration between team members to provide strong evidence against CATE Award Criterion 1, teams are advised to focus on the interaction of the core team members. In order to fully articulate the complexity of a team's collaborative work, below we have included a diagram by Spencer (see p.17 below) which provides some guidance on understanding potential key elements of collaborative practice. Where there is an 'extended group', the work of this group is likely to form part of the evidence across the Claim, to demonstrate Value, Reach and Impact.

To illustrate further what is meant by a core team and extended group/team (but not to set an expectation that a nominated team will conform to this model), the diagram below outlines a possible example of the interaction between the core team and an extended group, with identification of some possible features of each: Please contact us at CATE@advance-he.ac.uk for any queries or further guidance about identifying a team's core team members.



Core team

Distinct group of, typically, 3-15 members.

Establishes the team and holds responsibility for its outcomes.

Characterised by creative input, deep collaboration, developing concepts, ideas and taking responsibility for key decisions.

Distinct roles and expertise within the core team **might include for example** (but this will vary depending on the team's work): Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader, Student Representative, and External Partner.

Extended group

Individuals dispersed across an institution (and/or externally) enacting the interventions/activities originating from the core team.

Participation may be characterised as a temporary alliance or growing engagement.

Possible for core team and extended group members to work closely for delivery in order for ideas to flow both ways leading to continued evolution of the team's work.

5.2 Section A – Part 1: Core Team Composition

The Claim form provides nominated teams with a dedicated space to list the members of their core team. The Core Team Composition will not be scored by reviewers but will assist them in interpreting the team's context.

In this section, CATE teams should provide a list of the names and job titles of their core team members along with the role taken within the team by each member. This information can help reviewers to make clearer judgements about the nature of collaboration when they are reviewing Criterion 1. See the example below. The maximum size allowed for the core team is 15 members, including the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader.

Normally there will be one Team Leader and one Deputy Team Leader, but if there is a strong case for a team to have co-leaders, please contact the Advance HE Awards team at cate@advance-he.ac.uk for advice.

An example of a hypothetical core team is provided in the extract from a completed CATE Claim Form (Appendix 1) below (all names and titles are fictitious). This is not intended to be prescriptive in any way, but simply to illustrate the intended use of the Core Team Composition in Section A, Part 1:

Team Leader name:	Yelda Adem Deputy Head of Public Health Institute at Poppleton University
Deputy Team Leader name	Professor Mukasa Apio Educational Researcher based in the Public Health Institute
Team name:	The Digital Health Team
Institution:	Poppleton University
Section A, Part 1: Core Team Composition (not scored by reviewers)	
Add more rows as required (maximum 15 members including Team and Deputy Team Leaders)	
Name	Role and/or Position
Rosalba De León	Student Partner (3 rd Year Dentistry)
Prof Tomas Grey	Programme Leader Dentistry
Dr Shane Hardman	External NHS Partner (Poppleton Hospital)
Ellis Shah	Chair Community Patient Group for Local Dentistry Services
Rory Simmons	Subject Librarian for Health (based in the Learning Centre)
Siobhan Wood	Digital Learning Designer (Central Educational Services)

5.3 Section A – Part 2: Context Statement

Advance HE and the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel recognise that excellence in teaching and learning support will be situated within specific academic, professional and institutional contexts. The nature of the institutional context and each nominated team's opportunity to contribute will be taken into account. *The Context Statement is fundamental to the review process, to enable reviewers to understand the role and setting of the team.*

There will be considerable variation between nominated teams, reflecting differences in the constitution, context and work of the team. The Context Statement (300 words) is at the beginning of the team's Claim, following the Core Team Composition, and will also not be scored by reviewers. This section should be used to articulate the context, setting, field and/or area of work within which the team is operating.

The Context Statement provides a frame of reference for Section B of the Claim and enables reviewers to orientate themselves into the evidence provided against each of the two CATE award criteria. Teams should use the Context Statement to explain the context of their team and institutional setting. If the narrative in Section B of the Claim draws on evidence from work across different institutions, the wider sector and/or industry or sector bodies, this should also be explained in the Context Statement. Teams should make clear the nature of their teaching and learning practice (e.g., types of learners, discipline(s),

specialist area(s)), and should provide a brief outline of the scope and scale of the practice undertaken by the team.

The Context Statement should not be used to provide information that would add evidence of impact to the narrative set out in Section B of the Claim. The content and structure of the Context Statement is to be determined by the nominated team in order to best showcase the relevant parts of their context that effectively situate the evidence to come in the Claim. Teams should avoid submitting Context Statements that contain a lot of detail about the history and prestige of their institution.

Information needs to be concise as there is a 300-word limit. Some advice to nominated teams about what types of information to include in their Context Statement, and what not to include, is outlined below.

What to include - explaining the team context clearly helps reviewers to understand the team's Claim (they may come from very different contexts), but it can also help them see how the team's work stands out in a particular situation. The team might consider including information such as:

- Information about the institution, which enables reviewers to understand the type of HE environment the team is working in, and the learner body the team works with.
- If the team is drawing on evidence from more than one institution or context include information about all institutions/contexts relevant to the Claim.
- Information about the learners and/or colleagues the team is working with – who are the students whose outcomes are being transformed? Is the team working across a whole institution, or with particular groups?
- Information about the discipline, field, specialist and/or professional area of the team and team members as relevant to the evidence they will be providing under the two award criteria.
- Information and/or basic background that frames the team's activity – for example if the team is discussing a particular project or time period or focus of activity to showcase the team's collaborative approach – is there any information that would set the scene for this?
- Information about any specific roles of team members, or of the whole team, which might be particular to their context, or type of institution – this is to help the reviewers understand the particular characteristics of the team's context.
- Information that provides context to any wider activity the team may be involved in that they are discussing under either criterion, e.g., sector bodies, industry. Remember that activities and evidence of value, reach and impact within Section B must relate to HE teaching and/or learning support. The team may be able to clarify the context for that here.
- Include a timeline to help reviewers see the progress and any ongoing impact from the team's activities which are evidenced under one or both of the criteria.
- Any other information about particular aspects of the team's situation that might be a factor shaping the evidence provided, so for example if it is a relatively new team, or if the team has experienced significant turnover or contextual change, or

if there are any specific limitations on outcomes or reach that the reviewers need to understand.

Please note the Context Statement should be written in the **personal voice (we, our)**.

What not to include in the Context Statement (as better used in Section B):

- Examples of the team's practice and information about specific teaching and learning initiatives that have been introduced by the team as part of the team's collaborative activity – these are probably best included under Criterion 1 or Criterion 2. However, as the focus of Criterion 1 is the team's collaborative approaches, you may need to include some practical explanations about the team activities in the Context Statement. It is important to remember that this will not be scored by the reviewers, so if you see it as 'evidence' for your team's Claim for excellence, it needs to be within Criterion 1 or 2.
- The team's development as a team and how members work together (these are to be used in evidence for Criterion 1).
- Work that impacts upon professional bodies or wider HE communities (these are best included in Criterion 2).
- The dissemination of initiatives and impact across other areas, campuses and/or teams (these could be relevant to either Criterion 1 or 2).

5.4 Section B: Claim against the two CATE award criteria

Nominated teams should use Section B of the Claim to set out the evidence of the **value, reach and impact** of their team's practice against the two CATE award criteria in turn. Overall, Section B must not exceed 4,500 words.

There are many different ways of evidencing each of the award criteria, as appropriate to the nature of the team's work. Some illustrative examples are given below, but nominated teams should not feel limited by these examples as they are included only to provide indicative types of evidence against each criterion.

Key points:

- + teams should use Section B of the Claim to address and provide evidence against each award criterion in turn.
- + teams will need to draw upon explicit evidence of impact to support their claim against each criterion.
- + to illustrate, possible sources of evidence **might include (but are not limited to) some** of the following examples (set out in the table below), depending on the nominated team's context:

Criterion 1 Excellence in the team's collaborative approach	Criterion 2 Excellence in the impact of collaborative working
Examples of effective team working practices, processes and/or outcomes Evidence of shared goals/purpose Evidence of shared and appropriate leadership Evidence of integration of diverse expertise Evidence of team participation, development and conflict resolution (if applicable) Evidence of positive outcomes for team members Review/evaluation processes in place Evidence of improved effectiveness over time Team member/stakeholder testimonials	Student feedback and evaluations Student data (progression, achievement, retention, engagement, etc.) Staff data (participation, engagement, career development, etc.) Feedback/data from work with peers, new initiatives/initiatives in new settings, policy development, etc. Use of team's resources, approaches, publications, etc. Work with other partner/external organisations, professional bodies, etc. Recognised achievements such as awards, accreditations, funding successes, investment levels, external partnerships, etc. Quantitative data to indicate the scale, reach and impact of the nominated team's work.

+ when selecting appropriate evidence, teams should consider:

- use of evidence that is meaningful and convincing in support of the team's Claim; a focus on quality sources and not the quantity of different sources.
- balance of types of evidence; for example, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data where appropriate to the nominated team's context.
- use of evidence that illustrates the inclusive nature of the team's practice.
- in writing the Claim, nominated teams should consider how their writing style and the framing of the Claim best represents the excellence of their practice for a diverse range of readers.

The decision about what constitutes appropriate evidence of impact rests with the nominating institution and the nominated team, but teams are encouraged to ensure that the student voice is made explicit within Section B of the Claim. Teams from various academic disciplines or professional roles inevitably demonstrate different communication and analytical styles and this will be accounted for in the assessment process. Claims will vary considerably in style and content; there is no 'expected' style or 'formula' to be followed.

Value, Reach and Impact

Reviewers will be looking for evidence that demonstrates the **value**, **reach** and **impact** of the nominated team's practice. Teams should be mindful of this requirement and aim to provide evidence that demonstrates a balance of these three qualities across the Claim.

Value - The benefit derived for students and staff (which may take different forms). Value may include qualitative evidence such as a change in approach to learning among students

or staff. For example, evidence may be provided about how the work being described has added value to the student learning experience or to teaching practice. Value may also relate to the quality of enhanced experiences and the meaningfulness of practices. Value might also relate to the benefits of participation for members of the team. Some nominated teams may also be working in settings where there are positive explicit ethical elements to their practice.

Reach - The scale of influence. Though 'geographic' reach may be important for some nominated teams, it is useful to consider other ways that a nominated team can demonstrate reach. Some nominated teams may demonstrate reach at a departmental, faculty, institutional, national and/or global level, for example, but others might provide evidence of how their practice has reached different groups of students, individuals and/or organisations (e.g., postgraduates, commuter students, students from minoritised ethnic groups, online learners, etc.).

Impact - The difference that has been made to policy, practice and/or student outcomes as a result of an activity. The focus here is on explicit evidence of positive change taking place. Impact evidence can be both quantitative and qualitative, but it is important to show how the activities described have changed learning outcomes for students and/or HE teaching practice. The impact on team members, or on the team as a whole as a result of the work is also relevant here.

When developing a CATE submission, nominated teams might focus on value, reach and impact by asking the following questions:

- What is the added *value* of this team working in this way?
- How does working as *this* team, specifically, enhance their *reach*?
- How is the *impact* greater because this is a cohesive team, or because it is this particular team, with these particular members?

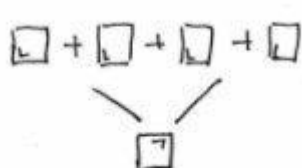
Cooperative v. Collaborative Team Working

Nominated teams should aim to capture evidence of their collaborative working under both award criteria. Collaboration is a state of interdependence that is likely to be much deeper than simply co-operating as members of a team. Successful Claims are likely to encompass aspects of practice that go beyond describing how the team works with others. The ethos of CATE is a recognition of team working as an important element of successful HE practice. Nominated teams should expect to describe how the team was established, has developed and how it continues to work cohesively to achieve effective impact.

The graphic below (reproduced with the permission of John Spencer) outlines some key distinctions between the two concepts. The qualities of collaboration listed in this illustration provide a useful prompt for nominated teams to collect effective evidence of this way of working.

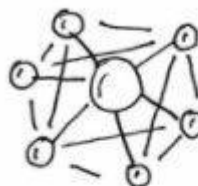
COOPERATIVE V. COLLABORATIVE

By John Spencer @spencerideas



COOPERATION

- Mutual respect
- Transparency
- Shared goals
- Independent and dependent
- Loose network
- Short-term
- Sharing of ideas as a group
- Engagement



COLLABORATION

- Mutual trust
- Vulnerability
- Shared vision and values
- Constant state of interdependence
- Tight culture
- Long-term
- Generation of new ideas as a group
- Empowerment

Addressing Criterion 1: Excellence in the team's collaborative approach

Evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context and the opportunities afforded by it.

Criterion 1 is focused primarily on the approach to, and value of, working collaboratively and planning for reach and impact. To give some illustrative examples, Criterion 1 could be demonstrated by providing evidence of excellence in terms of:

- + having a clear set of aims, objectives and rationale for the team's approach and how the group constitutes a team and developed as a team.
- + demonstrating direct engagement of students within or with the team.
- + illustrating how the team has contributed to wider thematic and sector priorities, for example: assessment and feedback, retention, employability, staff development, students as partners, technology and social media, sustainability, enterprise and entrepreneurship, flexible learning, internationalisation, wellbeing, and EDI.
- + working cooperatively with a range of stakeholder groups.
- + embedding practices across different programmes, disciplines, campuses or institutions.
- + demonstrating team practices, which enable effective working.
- + being flexible and creative in working to address unanticipated situations or events.

- + articulating the processes in place for measuring the impact or outcomes of collaborative work.

Addressing Criterion 2: Excellence in the impact of collaborative working

Evidence of the team having a demonstrable impact on teaching and learning, including beyond their immediate academic or professional area.

Criterion 2 is focused on showing the *reach* and *impact* of the team's work and *value* including beyond their initial context. To give some illustrative examples, Criterion 2 could be demonstrated by providing evidence of:

- + the reach of the team's work.
- + the wider value that has resulted from working as a team.
- + the added value achieved from the reach and/or impact of the team's work
- + the impact of supporting colleagues and/or influencing support for student learning.
- + the impact on student learning or outcomes.
- + the impact of any outcomes/outputs of collaborative work.

5.5 Section C: Reference List

The Claim includes a final section (Section C) where teams should provide a list of any references which they have drawn upon within the evidence they provide against each award criterion. For example, the team may be drawing upon the outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and professional practice and/or engaging with and contributing to the established literature or to their own evidence base for teaching and learning.

Nominated teams **should not** simply list all of their publications and presentations and should focus only on those which are directly linked to the material in Section B. Nominated teams should also be aware that the Reference List must not be used to add hyperlinks to further supporting material.

While there is no word limit for the Reference List, analysis of previous winning nominations suggests that a list containing fewer than 2 or more than 20 references is likely to be inconsistent with successful submissions. The Reference List should **only include citations directly referred** to within the evidence provided in Section B of the Claim.

The Reference List is not part of the review process and so is not 'scored' by reviewers. The purpose of the list is to allow reviewers to identify sources and to provide appropriate credit to an author who has inspired any areas of the team's work that are evidenced within the Claim.

6. Statement of Support

The statement of support is an important element of the claim. It provides confirmation of the significance of the nominated team's work to the institution and is considered by reviewers as a clarification of the nominated team's account. It endorses the Claim made by the

nominated team and frames the value, reach and impact of the team's practice from an institutional perspective.

The Statement of Support should not be seen as a source of supplementary (or new) evidence; the core aspects of the team's Claim, and evidence for these aspects, should be within Section B of the Claim. The institution's Statement of Support is a complementary document intended solely to endorse the claims made within Section B.

We advise that the institutional Statement of Support should be written by a colleague in a senior position at the nominating institution (at DVC/PVC/ Director of Professional Service Area-level, or equivalent) familiar with the nominated team's work. The Statement of Support should validate the impact evidenced by the team, provide institutional context for the team's work, and provide any supporting information that might be more appropriately expressed by a senior colleague familiar with the nominated team's practice; for example, a perspective on the strategic importance of the team's work and/or change arising as a result of their actions.

It continues to be a requirement that the Vice-Chancellor/Principal/President (or equivalent) provides the final sign-off for the Statement of Support to confirm formal institutional endorsement for the nomination.

The Statement of Support (Appendix 2) should be completed using the pro-forma available to TEALs via the private [‘Teaching Excellence Awards Lead \(TEAL\) Contact Network’](#) group on Advance HE's Connect platform. It is recommended that the nominated team's Claim for a CATE award is read prior to composing the institution's Statement of Support as it is most helpful when this statement aligns well with the Claim. In particular, the statement should:

- + endorse the validity of the nominated team's Claim.
- + provide an institutional context within which the nominated team has been identified as having made an impact on teaching and learning and outline any future plans to further disseminate their practice.
- + provide confirmation of institutional support for the nominated team, should they be successful, in terms of carrying out any responsibilities associated with having won a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence.
- + provide any additional supporting information which might be most appropriately expressed by a colleague working in a senior role (e.g., at the level of DVC/PVC/ Director of Professional Service Area, or equivalent).
- + be endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor/ Principal/ President (or equivalent) to formalise the nomination and provide the name, job title and signature of the Vice-Chancellor/ Principal/ President (or equivalent).

7. Review and selection process

Each team nomination is considered by independent, external peer reviewers based on the information nominated teams submit against the two CATE award criteria in Section B of the Claim.

Advance HE peer reviewers are drawn from teaching and learning professionals across the higher education sector and are independent to Advance HE. Reviewers are all experienced

in criteria-based assessment, will have successfully completed a moderation exercise and will have undergone training before acting as a CATE reviewer. Reviewers carry out their role on a confidential basis and their identity will not be shared with team members, nominating institutions or with the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel during the selection and award process.

Reviewers are asked to score (0-9) each part of Section B of the team's Claim against each of the two CATE award criteria in turn, ensuring that each criterion is equally weighted in the assessment process. Strict word limits are set for the Claim and reviewers are instructed not to consider any part of Section B of the Claim which exceeds the permitted maximum word limit of 4,500 words overall. The scoring rubric (Appendix 3) is used by reviewers to allocate scores, with a maximum possible score of 18.

In 2026, Advance HE will allocate all nominations to three reviewers, avoiding any conflicts of interest. The reviewers score each of the two criterion 0-9. A series of algorithms are applied to differentiate scores and create overall ranking. Where one reviewer's scores are defined as discrepant from the other two reviewers' scores, a fourth reviewer will be used and the three closest scores used in the ranking calculations.

All reviewers assess each Claim independently and without consultation.

Advance HE oversees the standardisation of assessment, and monitors and processes all nominated team data in order to report to the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel. The approach used ensures that no nominated team is disadvantaged by discrepancies in marking and that all teams are treated fairly and consistently.

Advance HE is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. In processing nominations, it ensures that no nominated team is treated less favourably than others on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious or political beliefs, disability, marital status, social background, family circumstances, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, spent criminal convictions, age, or for any other unlawful reason.

The UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel reviews anonymised equal opportunities monitoring data, the rankings and reviewer comments and makes recommendations for award winning teams, which are subsequently confirmed by the Advance HE Chief Executive Group.

8. CATE-Net support events

In addition to the guidance presented within this document, members of the CATE-Net (a network of previous CATE winners), run a series of online support workshops for teams developing nominations. Previous attendees have reported that these events provided valuable support for the writing of the team's Claim. The CATE-Net support events are free to attend. TEALs will be sent the booking links and are responsible for promoting the events within their institution.

9. Outcomes and publicity

Team Leaders and their TEALs will be informed of the outcome of their nomination via email in the week commencing Monday 29 June 2026. The Vice-Chancellor/Principal/President (or equivalent) of each nominating institution will also be informed on this date if their nominated team is successful.

The announcement of 2026 CATE award winners will be **strictly embargoed until Thursday 6 August 2026**. While under embargo, successful Team Leaders and their TEALs are permitted to disclose news of their win to other core team members and relevant members of their HEP's marketing and communications team for planning purposes; these colleagues must then also adhere to the conditions of the embargo. Please direct all queries regarding plans for announcement day to communications@advance-he.ac.uk.

It is a condition of the CATE competition that the successful team, and their nominating institution, do not share news of their success before this date in order to maximise publicity. Contravention of this requirement could lead to the award being revoked. The names of the 2026 CATE award winners will be officially announced on Thursday 6 August 2026 on Advance HE's website and in a press release. Institutions are welcome to announce and celebrate their winners from **08:00 (BST) on Thursday 6 August**.

Each successful Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader will receive an **interactive digital CATE badge** on, or soon after, the official outcome announcement date. This interactive badge can be downloaded and shared or added to an email signature. It contains information about the CATE award criteria and displays the Team Leader's/Deputy Team Leader's online certificate. Information for the badge will be taken from the nominated team's information entered into SMA by the TEAL during the submission process. See example badges:



The CATE is a competition and thus the Panel's decision is final and no appeals can be made against their decision. The Advance HE complaints process should be used to address any concerns relating to fair treatment in the administration of nominations. In the first instance if any questions or concerns arise, please email cate@advance-he.ac.uk.

9.1 Publicity Information and Photographs

The following information will be requested by the Advance HE Marketing and Communications team from successful Team Leaders and Deputy Team Leaders at the time that the individual outcomes have been communicated (see above, week commencing 29 June 2026) for use on the Advance HE website and in the ceremony brochure. Information and photographs will need to be submitted to Advance HE's Communications Team (communications@advance-he.ac.uk), via an online form (link to be provided) by **13 July 2026**.

Nominated Team Information:

- + Team profile (long). A 350 word personal profile written in the third person ('they' or 'the team') to include:
 - Overview of the team. This should give brief details of the team members and their contribution to the team;
 - Overview of impact. This should give highlights of the collaborative work of the team that has had a demonstrable impact on teaching and learning;
 - The team's personal story. [Examples of previous winners' profiles](#) can be found on Advance HE's website for reference.
- + Team profile (short). A 50-word summary of the Team profile, written in the third person.
- + Social media contacts e.g. LinkedIn profile, Bluesky Handle etc. (as appropriate).

Photograph:

- + Photograph requirements:
 - One high-resolution photograph of 1Mb and 300dpi (minimum) of the team (note that this can be achieved with most smartphones and non-professional cameras);
 - Photograph submitted in JPEG format and in landscape format;
 - The team may submit an institutional logo in lieu of a group photograph if needed.

Please note that in submitting an image to Advance HE, the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader is providing consent for Advance HE to use this image for promotional purposes or publicity and also confirming that the team is the owner of any intellectual property rights or have appropriate license to share this image with Advance HE and for Advance HE to use the image provided for this purpose.

If team information and photograph (or institutional logo) are not received ahead of the deadline, the winning team's profile will show their team name and institution **only**. We

cannot guarantee that information and imagery received after the deadline (13 July 2026) will be edited and uploaded in time for the official announcement.

9.2 Feedback

Following the publication of the outcome of CATE 2026, Advance HE will issue written feedback to each nominated team and their TEAL by end of August 2026. This timeframe is necessitated by the large volume of CATE nominations received, and the considerable work that goes into checking and collating the written feedback from each of the three reviewers over both CATE criteria. This qualitative feedback from the reviewers is intended to support plans for future development. Reviewer scores and nomination rankings are not released.

10. Award ceremony

A celebratory dinner will be held in Autumn 2026 (date and venue to be confirmed), to which two members of the team, and the Vice-Chancellor/Principal/President (or equivalent) will be invited. Additional tickets are also available for purchase.

Appendix 1: CATE 2026 Nominated Team Claim Form

Team Leader name:	
Deputy Team Leader name:	
Team name:	
Institution:	
Section A, Part 1: Core Team Composition (not scored by reviewers)	
Add more rows as required (maximum 15 members including Team and Deputy Team Leaders)	
Name	Role and/or Position
Section A, Part 2: Context Statement (not scored by reviewers) (300-word limit)	
Word count for Section A, part 2 (maximum 300 words)	<i>Enter word count for Section A, part 2 here :</i>
Section B: Claim against the CATE Award Criteria	
(evidence against each Award Criterion 1 and 2 scored separately by reviewers)	
Criterion 1: Excellence in the team's collaborative approach	
Evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively; commensurate with their context and the opportunities afforded by it.	

Criterion 2: Excellence in the impact of collaborative working	
Evidence of the team having a demonstrable impact on teaching and learning, including beyond their immediate academic or professional area.	
Total word count for Section B (maximum 4500 words)	<i>Words contained within figures:</i> <i>Word contained within main body text:</i> <i>Total word count:</i>
Section C: Reference List (not scored by reviewers)	
Team Leader signature*: (A typewritten name is acceptable)	
Date:	
By submitting this document, I confirm that: • I am not a TEAL or Deputy TEAL or a nominee for NTFS 2026 • I agree that the TEAL for my Institution can complete the team's online nomination, including the personal information required. • This Claim is solely the work of the nominated CATE team • I have read, understood and agree to the Advance HE Privacy statement	

Appendix 2: Statement of Support

This Statement of Support should be **completed** by a colleague in a senior position at the nominating institution (DVC/PVC/Director of Professional Service Area, or equivalent) familiar with the nominated team's teaching and learning practice and **signed** by the institution's Vice-Chancellor/ Principal/ President (or equivalent). It is important that the team's Claim is read prior to composing this statement. It is most helpful if the Statement of Support aligns well with the Claim.

Name of person writing Institutional Statement of Support:	
Position:	
Contact details (work address, email and phone):	
Name of nominated CATE team:	
This Statement of Support should: - o endorse the validity of the nominated team's Claim for outstanding impact; - o provide an institutional context within which the nominated team has been identified as having outstanding impact and outline any future plans to disseminate their practice; - o provide any additional supporting information which might be most appropriately expressed by a colleague in a senior role (at the level of DVC/PVC/Director of Professional Service Area, or equivalent) familiar with the nominated team's work.	
Enter Statement of Support here:	
Word Count (Max 1000 words):	Enter word count here
Institutional sign off by Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)	
Name, position and contact email	
Electronic Signature* (*scanned signature and not typewritten)	
Date:	
By signing this document, I confirm that: • I endorse this nomination and confirm that the internal nomination process which led to the selection of the named CATE team was fair, transparent and adhered to our institutional equality, diversity and inclusion policy (or equivalent). • I have read, understood and agree to the Advance HE Privacy Statement. • Advance HE may use this form as confirmation that the institution will fully support the nominated team in the conduct of any and all activities associated with the role of a CATE winning team if successful.	

Appendix 3: 2026 CATE Scoring Rubric

Reviewers use the scoring rubric below to 'score' each of the two parts to Section B of the nominated team's Claim against each of the two CATE award criteria (i.e. an overall maximum score of 18 from each of the three reviewers).

	0 points	1-2 points	3-4 points	5-6 points	7-8 points	9 points
Criterion 1: Excellence in the team's collaborative approach	Evidence is not related to excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context.	Partial evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context.	Some good evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context.	Good, with some very good , evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context.	Very good, with some outstanding , evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context.	Exceptional evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context.
Criterion 2: Excellence in the impact of collaborative working	Evidence does not demonstrate the team's impact on teaching and learning.	Partial evidence of the team's impact on teaching and learning, including going beyond their academic or professional area.	Some good evidence of the team's impact on teaching and learning, including going beyond their academic or professional area.	Good, with some very good , evidence of the team's impact on teaching and learning, including going beyond their academic or professional area.	Very good, with some outstanding , evidence of the team's impact on teaching and learning, including going beyond their academic or professional area.	Exceptional evidence of the team's impact on teaching and learning, including going beyond their academic or professional area.

Contact us

cate@advance-he.ac.uk

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   @AdvanceHE

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communications@advance-he.ac.uk

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