

# A guide to applying for the status of an excellent teaching practitioner at NTNU 2024



Photo: Geir Mogen

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Awards for pedagogical merit help to showcase the value of efforts to develop good teaching in higher education. Knowledge of the factors that can improve learning outcomes for students is important for work on the quality of education. Educators who work together and share experiences about teaching are important for the development of our study programmes. The merit scheme has two purposes: first, to provide criteria as a starting point for discussions about the development of learning and teaching; second, to recognize educators who develop and establish approaches to teaching and assessment that systematically develop and support their students' learning outcomes over time.

The status of an excellent teaching practitioner is awarded to educators who meet the criteria and who have tried out and developed teaching activities and the study programme. Those who become excellent teaching practitioners have not only developed their own competence but also contributed to developing competence in their academic environment. Pedagogical research and development work takes time; it requires reflection, planning, follow-up and cooperation with colleagues.

This guide provides advice on how to work with your application.

### Application deadline and time schedule

It is possible to apply for the status of an excellent teaching practitioner once a year.

Overview of time limits and the assessment process:

Month	Activity
January	Updated information to the academic communities.
February	Updated information to the academic communities.
March	<b>Call for applications 1 March 2024</b> <b>15 March 2024</b> – webinar (Information about the merit system and writing applications) in Norwegian Writing application
April	<b>15 April</b> – seminar (Writing applications – Attachments) in Norwegian Writing application
May	<b>15 May</b> - webinar "Question Time" in Norwegian. Writing application
June/July	Writing application
August	Writing application <b>Deadline for applications: 31 August 2024 kl. 23.59 Norwegian time</b> Applications must be submitted <a href="#">online</a>
September	Peer review Information to applicants ( <b>week 36</b> )
October	Peer review Interview of applicants who satisfy the formal requirements ( <b>week 42/43</b> )
November	All applicants receive written feedback with reasons for the peer assessment of their status in terms of pedagogical merit by ( <b>week 48</b> ) Announcement of excellent teaching practitioners at NTNU ( <b>uke 48</b> )
December	Award of diplomas for excellent teaching practitioners in Rådssalen <b>Thursday 14 December 2024</b>

## Application

### Format and structure

The application must show a coordinated presentation of your own competence and development as an educator, focusing on development work and leadership of education. In a reflection note, you provide reasons explaining how your work in teaching, learning and education qualifies you for the status of an excellent teaching practitioner. In the application, you reflect on the criteria for pedagogical merit and present arguments to support your fulfilment of the criteria. Here, reasons must be given for all significant practice related to teaching, learning and education, and references to attachments or other documentation must be provided to strengthen the application. The application should be designed to highlight your own teaching practice during the past five years. It will be natural to emphasize your choices and reflections by referring to your own practice in teaching and assessment and the role you have played in the development of your teaching. It is up to you as the applicant to choose experiences and reflections that support the criteria for pedagogical merit. The applicant needs to describe the choices made, why, and the significance they have had for students' learning outcomes from a course and programme perspective.

For support in the process of preparing the application, it may be helpful to use a model for the development of pedagogical competence (Olsson, Mårtensson & Roxå, 2010),

### Pedagogical competence - the LU/LTH model

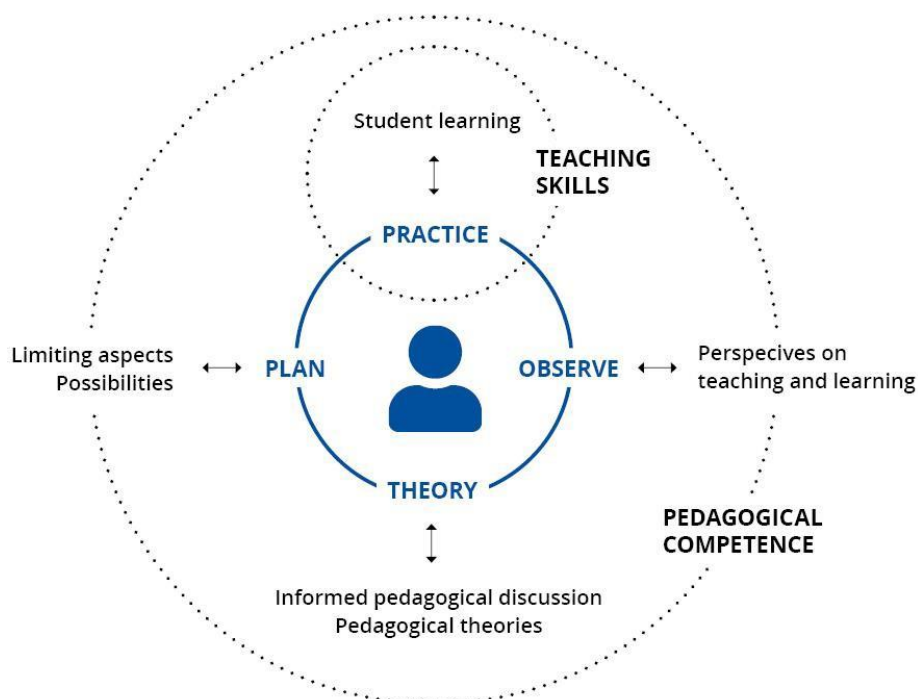


Fig. 1. A model for the dual development cycles of student learning (practice) and the practitioner's pedagogical competence (Olsson, Mårtensson & Roxå, 2010). Edited model.

The model describes a continuous development of the teacher's pedagogical competence (blue circle). A key element of the model is that teaching and learning are not a one-off initiative but need to be planned and carried out with a longer perspective. Practice includes

how both students and the teacher engage in teaching, learning activities and assessment. The pedagogical skills of the teaching practitioner develop over time, and work with teaching and learning activities can be observed and documented. **Observations** relate to a broader perspective on learning that also includes students' learning outcomes as well as the development of the teacher's own competence. **Theory** is linked with development of teaching grounded in pedagogical theories that also give the teacher the opportunity to participate in pedagogical discussions with colleagues. **Plans** concern the planning of teaching as well as the development of teaching in courses and study programmes. The model also refers to participation outside the teacher's own academic environment through publishing and discussing experiences at conferences or in scientific journals. The development of a teacher's pedagogical competence is more than what takes place in the encounter with the student during teaching. The development of teaching quality and pedagogical competence is therefore a long-term project. At the core of the model is the idea that the development of teaching and learning activities aimed at strengthening learning outcomes also requires the teacher to learn and develop.

In the application, all experiences that have developed the applicant's pedagogical competence may provide a basis for recognition of merit, but it is you as the applicant who must choose which teaching experiences and contexts can contribute to fulfilling the criteria. For an activity to be regarded as worthy of merit, the applicant must describe what has been done and why, the impact that it has had on student learning, and the experience that the applicant has gained, preferably documented in attachments to the application.

#### Formal requirements

To apply for the status of an excellent teaching practitioner, the applicant must meet the following requirements. Applicants who do not satisfy the formal requirements will be rejected without further peer review.

- Academic staff in permanent positions in all job categories with teaching duties can apply, except for PhD students/candidates, postdocs, and residents (*spesialistkandidater*)
- Applicants must have at least 5 years' experience of teaching in higher education
- Applicants must document educational competence at a level that is significantly higher than expected basic competence (s.t. requirement for 200 hours of university pedagogical education).

#### Formal requirements for applications

- The application should be written as a reflection note and **must** be structured based on the four main criteria.
- The application must not exceed 8000 words (excluding the attachments).
- Applications can be written in Norwegian or English.
- You can include up to 10 attachments with your application, 2 of which are mandatory (pedagogical CV and a letter of support from the department management). The scope of the remaining 8 attachments may not exceed 25 pages.
- The reflection note and attachments are compiled in a PDF document.
- The document must have the following file name when it is submitted: FirstnameSurname.pdf.

- Digital submission of applications on the website for [recognition of merit](#) by the deadline for applications.

Applications that do not meet the formal requirements for applications will be rejected.

## Attachments

### Mandatory attachments

The application must have 2 mandatory attachments. For the mandatory attachments, [templates are available for the applicant](#) to use.

- **Pedagogical CV**

CVs must include education and educational competence, teaching experience, development projects and educational cooperation, sharing of experience and possibly educational leadership. Maximum 4 pages.

- **Letter of support from the Head of Department**

The letter of support from the head of department shall contain a concrete and binding plan for how the department will use the merited teacher's competence.

### Other Attachments

The attachments must contain documentation suitable for the peer review. It is important to highlight and explain how the content of the attachments is relevant to the application and is worthy of merit.

## Criteria

Four main criteria provide the basis for evaluating applications for award of the status of an excellent teaching practitioner at NTNU.

### 1. Focus on student learning

*This means that the applicant documents that he or she*

- has worked systematically and over time to develop teaching that improves students' learning outcomes from the perspective of both the course and the programme, and the applicant reflects on this development
- works systematically with and applies feedback from students and colleagues to develop teaching and the learning environment in courses and study programmes

### 2. Professional development as a teaching practitioner

*This means that the applicant documents that he or she*

- systematically and over time developed, tested, and reflected on teaching, learning and forms of assessment in their own teaching, and/or through systematic development work and educational leadership at the course and the study programme
- can refer to specific plans for development work and further development of their own teaching competence and practice

### **3. An enquiry-based approach to teaching**

*This means that the applicant documents that he or she*

- gives reasons for the association between learning outcome descriptions and the choice of teaching methods and forms of assessment from the perspective of both the course and the study programme
- reflects on their own teaching activities, from planning and testing to analysis of student learning, with support in relevant research and theory about teaching, learning and assessment

### **4. A collegial attitude and practice**

*This means that the applicant documents that he or she*

- has worked together over time and regularly with students, colleagues, management, and others on pedagogical development to improve the quality of studies in courses and study programmes
- has taken the initiative to share and actively contributes their experience and develop knowledge within and across the academic environment

Four main criteria are used as a basis for assessing applications to be awarded the status of an excellent teaching practitioner at NTNU. Applicants may need clarification of terms used in the criteria:

- *“over time”* means that the applicant can refer to research and development work that has continued for a long period. The reason for emphasizing *“over time”* as a concept is that, in most contexts, changing teaching and education takes time.
- *“worked systematically”* means that the applicant has tried out, evaluated and developed their teaching year by year.
- *“reflects”* means that the applicant shows *why* they have chosen to implement changes in their teaching, at both course and programme level, and *how* this has influenced the applicant’s teaching and their role in teaching.
- *“gives reasons”* means that the applicant provides examples of *how* they have worked on developing their teaching. Here, attachments can be used to support the chosen example in the reflection note.

### Seminars and webinars

Webinars and a seminar will be arranged for applicants in the spring semester of 2024. Here, applicants will receive information about the merit scheme and advice on writing applications. To register, use the [website](#).

The webinars will be held in Norwegian.

Day/date	Time	Content
<b>15 March</b>	Kl. 12.00 – 13.00	Webinar: Information about the merit system (in Norwegian)
<b>15 April</b>	Kl. 09.00 – 10.00	<b>Applicant seminar in Gjøvik (B110), Ålesund (F415) and Trondheim (S21) (in Norwegian)</b>
<b>15 May</b>	Kl. 12.00 – 13.00	Webinar: “Question Time” - writing applications (in Norwegian)



## Peer review

The basis for the peer review is the application and interview. The application must be reviewed by a group of peer reviewers. In connection with the call for applications in 2024, a group of peer reviewers consists of two excellent teaching practitioners and a student representative (appointed by the Student Parliament). In addition, an external peer reviewer<sup>1</sup> will evaluate all the applications. Several groups of peer reviewers will be established based on the number of applications.

Applications will be peer-reviewed based on the criteria for pedagogical merit systems. The peer reviewers will evaluate the applications with appendices, conduct interviews and make a holistic assessment in accordance with the criteria. The timetable for the application process has an overview of the peer review process.

Applicants who meet all the formal requirements<sup>2</sup> will be interviewed. The interview together with the application form the basis for the peer review. The aim of the interview is to clarify aspects of the application. The interview lasts for a maximum of 45 minutes and takes place online. The participants in the interview are the applicant, the two peers who are excellent teaching practitioners and the peer reviewer with the main responsibility.

### Written feedback

All applicants receive feedback. The feedback reflects the criteria for merit, and if the application is not successful, the feedback must also point ahead to areas for improvement. Through the peer reviews, a recommendation to the Rector is prepared for the applicants who qualify for the status of an excellent teaching practitioner. The status as an excellent teaching practitioner is awarded by the Rector on the basis of an individual application and on the recommendation of peer review.

Recognition of status as an excellent teaching practitioner at NTNU requires unanimity among the peer reviewers. There is no right of appeal or right of reply to the peer reviewers' assessment and conclusion.

The peer review is coordinated by the Education Division.

<sup>1</sup> External peer with experience from a merit scheme at their own university.

<sup>2</sup> The applicant must meet the formal requirements for applying for the status of an excellent teaching practitioner. The application must fulfil the formal requirements and include all mandatory attachments.

### Some concrete tips for work on your application

When you start the process of writing your application, it may be important to think through some questions:

- What has been important for your work with teaching?
- How have you worked with teaching and education?
- Why have you chosen to focus on this through your teaching?

It will be an advantage if you also think about the following in your work on the application:

- Does the application have a clear structure linked to the four main criteria?
- Am I addressing the criteria?
- Can I provide examples of how I have worked with teaching and education?
- Are the attachments relevant to the criteria?
- What are your plans for further development in your own academic community and department?
- Am I supporting reflections in the text by using relevant theory?

Further information about [the merit scheme](#) at NTNU.

### References:

Mårtensson, K., Roxå, T. & Olsson, T. (2010). *Developing a quality culture through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

Olsson, T., Mårtensson, K. & Roxå, T. (2010). *Pedagogical competence – a development perspective from Lund university.*

Roxå, T. & Olsson, T. (2013). *Assessing and rewarding excellent academic teachers for the benefit of an organization.*

The articles are available at [www.ntnu.edu/pedagogical-merit/](http://www.ntnu.edu/pedagogical-merit/)