

The NWU Community Engagement (CE) Awards

Rules and guidelines for applicants

1 Executive summary

Against the background of the dream to be an internationally recognised University in Africa distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and ethic of care, the outcome of the CE process is to assist in creating value or to contribute to making positive impact in all communities both internal and external. However, this requires continual monitoring and evaluation and longitudinal reflection and analysis to ensure that the University can report on its social responsiveness and impact. As research institution it is in the position to evaluate its impact and report on how the University is contributing to societal development and the co-creation of new knowledge and management of unintended or unplanned impacts.

This document spells out the rules for academic staff, support staff and students to be recognised for their contributions to community engagement and provides the procedures for nomination, different categories of applications, deadlines, and submission content, as well as selection criteria and rules of eligibility and use of the awards.

2 Introduction

These awards recognize the outstanding work of individuals and parties in pursuit of the public purposes of community engagement. The individuals and institutions celebrated through these awards demonstrate the impact the University can make in our commitment to strengthen our communities in partnership with external community-based organisations, to move in the direction of greater justice, greater equity, and greater collaboration. Qualifying candidates will not compete but will be nominated for their exceptional contributions in line with the rules stipulated below. The recipient(s) of the award will be recognised for:

- Activities that have resulted in demonstrable mutual benefit to the external non-academic constituency (community) and the academic enterprise.
- Evidence of *shared planning with community partners and decision-making practices* in the initiative/activity, as explained in the CE policy- Link: https://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/i-governance-management/policy/2021%20Update/CE_Policy/CE_Policy_2021_e.pdf
- Proving sufficiently how the initiative has enhanced the core business of the university which includes teaching/learning and/or research/innovation and/or sustainable development processes and sharing of expertise: must be presented by the applicant to demonstrate scholarship of engagement.
- Documented excellence in extending knowledge production, dissemination, integration, and application of knowledge through community engagement, including publications and/or post-graduate outputs including feedback to the community partners on social media platforms and other events.

3 Procedure for nomination

- The nominees and their nominators must sign the attached nomination form.
- Nominations must indicate the relevant partnership type (staff, support staff, students, community partners) as well as the category they are applying in.
- A portfolio of evidence must accompany the form.
- Submissions are made via office of the Deputy Dean responsible for Community Engagement in faculties, or support unit management, or relevant SRC structures.
- **Final submissions must be received by the end of July annually.**
- Complete nominations and portfolios of evidence must be provided to line-management, that implements an in-house selection.
- **This in-house selection team will apply the criteria and nominate their finalists to the DVC CE**
- Reports from community partners, evidence on community engagement input and output, performance evaluations are considered and should accompany the submission. This can be included in a portfolio of evidence.

- The DVC Community Engagement will constitute the CE awards panel. The panel will be representative of Deputy- Deans CE, Sustainability and Community impact and other relevant representatives such as the SRC and community partners.
- **Finalist recommendations must reach the office of the DVC Community engagement by end of August each year.**
- The CE awards panel will then select the category winners for the year.
- Finalists are recognised and honoured at an annual NWU function as mentioned above.
- A feedback process will be implemented where applicants were not successful with their application, and this will be arranged *ad hoc* by the relevant line-management in faculties and thereafter from the CE awards panel, where necessary.

4 Categories of awards

- The award is known as the North-West University Community Engagement Award. Nominees that meet the eligibility requirements—as evaluated by the various awards committee and final panel—will be honoured at the annual awards ceremony.
- Faculties, support units, and Student Life must nominate the top performers in their units and recommend their finalists to the CE evaluation committee to select the top performers in the various categories (see Table 1):

Type of partner contribution	Category: Engaged teaching and learning	Category: Engaged research and innovation	Category: Scholarship of engagement	Category: Volunteerism and/or outreach	Sharing of expertise
<i>Novice Academic staff</i>					
<i>Established Academic staff</i>					
<i>Support staff</i>					
<i>Student leaders</i>					
<i>Outstanding community partners</i>					

Table 1: Types of awards and categories to be considered.

- The definitions of the various categories can be found in the addendum.

5 The nominations/applications must include the following:

- A completed nomination form (see page 4).
- A portfolio of evidence containing: A nomination essay or narrative (no more than 500-1000 words) describing how the nominee/applicant(s) fulfil(s) the stated criteria. The narrative should include aspects like an outline of the aims, scope and impact and outcomes of the CE initiative, its methodology and the nature of partnerships involved with an emphasis on reciprocity and mutuality. Additional guidelines to clarify the kinds of evidence per category can be found in the addendum.
- A short letter of commendation/reference from an external/internal (for partners) constituency commenting on the nature of the CE activity in which the candidate(s) has/have excelled, the developmental and reciprocal nature of the initiative, the nature of partnership, and the impact of the activities. Photographs without any captions and context will not be accepted. (*The Office of the Director: Sustainability and Community Impact can assist with this aspect upon request, this assistance will also be availed to the nomination of exceptional partners*).
- Letter of nomination from a line-manager or supervisor detailing accomplishments in moving the university toward CE goals.
- Strictly 250-word biography, unredacted *Curricula Vitae* are not accepted.
- High quality print-ready digital photo of the nominated candidate/ candidates.
- Note evaluation criteria are provided on the last page, and lack of clear supporting documents will influence the marks obtained.
- For further clarification of required documentation, a supplementary explanation is provided in the addendum as per category.

6 Deadlines and number of awards

- The completed applications must reach the Deans and/or Deputy Deans, support unit managers or their delegates for Community Engagement recommend their selected and completed nominations to the Community Engagement Excellence Awards Committee by **the end of July annually**.
- Self-nominations of support staff and students will have to be supported by management structures within the university (this would be line-management of the support staff and SRC structures for students).
- Faculties or other units will select their finalists by **end August** and forward supporting documentation to the Director SCI.
- The CE Awards Panel will be constituted by the DVC CE, and a selection process will take place during **15 Aug-15 September** and recommendations will be made to the DVC for recognition at the annual ceremony.

7 The evaluation committee

- The evaluation committee is formed by the DVC for CE, the Director SCI and nominated Deputy Deans for CE and a nominee from the Executive Directorate Student Life that will select the final winners.
- The selection process is made by this committee and all recommended nominees (after being evaluated by various NWU units) that have submitted the required documentation for the award will be considered for the final awards.

8 Rules for award use and eligibility

Use of award

- The award is embodied in a certificate of recognition and a financial award that can be used in that align with similar practices as set-out for IREA and ITEA awards.
- The new account type KC (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE AWARD) exists in KFS, and awards winners will be able to create a 1KC account to receive the award.

The following rules would apply to align with existing awards like ITEA/IREA:

- The money can only be used for a community engagement project- either the current one (if it was still active) or
- any new CE activity or project.
- If the project is not continuing staff may apply for personal use of the funds from this account, however, no more than 50% can be drawn as personal compensation and this needs to be taxed and signed -off by the incumbent's direct line-manager as part of personal income
- The alternative is that they use the development account for attending conferences, symposia, or training as personal development in community engagement.
- In the case of external award winners or several participants, the project leader should indicate how they would like to share the funding.

The following rules apply for student coordinated community engagement projects, and community partner projects forming part of the co-curricular programme:

- The award money may not be issued to the individual(s) in their private capacity and must be used to support university sanctioned community engagement projects coordinated by students or community partner projects, forming part of the Co-Curricular programme presented by Student Life.
- Award money linked to a specific award must be applied to support an initiative or intervention that is similar to the category it was awarded for, i.e., an existing or planned community engagement project, and must be processed in accordance with university policies, rules and processes.
- The expenditure of the award money to a community engagement project contemplated above must be approved by the relevant Campus Director: Student Life, after consultation with the Director: Sustainability and Community Impact.
- The awards are given at the discretion of the North-West University, which reserves the right to cancel or withhold the awards for certain categories.

9 Eligibility rules

The award may not be made to the same person two years in a row, although different units from another campus in a faculty would be considered by the committee as in the case of the Law Clinic. The Director: SCI is responsible for updating the record of all awards made in terms of these rules.

Nomination form for the NWU Award for Excellence in Community Engagement.

Name/s of applicant/s for the award:

Faculty / School:

Contact information

Email:

Telephone:

Title of project/activity:

Category of application (see table)

Nominator: Name and signature: _____ Date

Signature: Nominee _____ Date

Commendation of Dean/ Deputy Dean/ Line manager

Signature _____ Date

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR NWU CE AWARD

Category 1: Basic/procedural indicators	Yes = 1; No = 0
Is the applicant eligible for the award? ¹	
Is the applicant supported by his/her management? ²	
Is the project supported by a community partner/ constituency? ³	
Did the applicant include a short CV or description of the team?	
Is this project registered on the CE data base?	
Is this project registered on the database reports of the faculty/ unit/ SCC reports?	
Does this project speak to Goal 3 of the APP in the Faculty/ Department/ NWU?	
Is this part of your annual performance agreement?	
Total for category:	

Category 2: Feasibility indicators	
Is the project based on (a) an actual need in a particular community; (b) a particular development challenges; or (c) social justice? ⁴	
Is/was the community involved in all aspects of the project (e.g., planning, implementation, evaluation, etc.)?	
Are the project's goals clearly defined and measurable?	
Is there clear governance and sound management in place (includes accounting and meeting procedures, risk management, ethical clearance obtained if needed)?	
Have you formulated a theory of change/ provided monitoring and evaluation inputs for measuring impact in the relevant community context?	
Is the project furthering or positively improving the circumstances of the NWU and its constituents?	
Total for category:	

Category 3: Impact and significance of Project- Sustainability indicators	
Is the project mutually beneficial to the NWU, its partners and the beneficiaries?	
Is there appropriate feedback provided to all partners involved in the project and are appropriated methods of communication used to inform internal and external parties of the progress?	
Is the project linked to the NWU's strategic plans and/institutional CE's vision, mission, and goals?	
Does the project enhance teaching and learning and research? (Is the project integrated into the core academic functions of the NWU?)	
Do this project/its outputs have the potential to influence national/international policy?	
Did the project result in any outputs for the university (students, articles, conference presentations, etc.)?	
Total for category:	

Scholarship of Engagement	
Has the community partners evaluated the service provided by NWU staff and students?	
Is there evidence of proper reflection and learning procedures built into the project design for students and staff and community partners?	
Has evidence been recorded to indicate that community partners have contributed to the project and is the recognized?	
Does the project/activity contain elements of all the core business activities i.e., it is linked to both research and teaching-learning outcomes?	
Are there indications of proper communication and feedback channels between the NWU and its partners?	
Grand total	/25

¹ NWU staff or member of formal or informal group linked to the NWU, no limitation from recent previous awards (See rules).

² Letter of support and/signature from rector/vice rector and dean.

³ Letter of support from the relevant partners or beneficiaries

⁴ Any one of the three aspects can qualify for a point.

ADDENDUM

DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

All definitions can also be found in the current CE policy.

https://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/i-governance-management/policy/2021%20Update/CE_Policy/CE_Policy_2021_e.pdf

Defining community stakeholders:

Community stakeholders range from the University's internal community, such as staff and students, to an array of external communities (e.g., "communities of interest" and/or "communities of practice" also including digital groupings) in the public and private sectors and can be local, national, or international. Internal stakeholders cover all staff and students that contributes to CE in the name of the NWU.

The term "**community**" signifies a social grouping of society involved in an interaction the NWU's staff students at any given moment. The definition is used for the wide range of communities that are served and includes 'communities' at various levels of society, *inter alia*:

- The more immediate communities of the university close to the different campuses, e.g., those communities that benefit directly from activities and services.
- International, national, regional, and local users of expertise and services of the university
- The public and private sector (e.g., SASOL and other companies, state departments such as DTI, DST, Department of Sport and Culture, or other, NGOs, PBO's, NPC's and communities of practice etc.).

Defining the activity / engagement process:

Community engagement

CE is a process, function, programme, activity, or project used by the NWU which integrates teaching and learning, research, innovation, and outreach/volunteerism in partnership with communities to advance social responsiveness, development, and an ethic of care. CE, as core function of the University, exists to nurture and manage partnerships with communities, the intention being to facilitate cooperation between various communities and the University, as well as to provide the means whereby both parties can actively discover knowledge, teach, and learn from one another in a reciprocal, mutually beneficial manner. The university mandate is not to function as philanthropic organisation or as implementer of community upliftment/development projects exclusively, and sustainable long-term partnerships are encouraged.

Engaged teaching and learning

Teaching-learning-related CE activities, all of which are mostly for learning experiences and/or 'not-for-profit' sharing of expertise, including professional community services and outreach as well as developmental activities with a recruitment focus. It may include subsidised development engagement involving work-integrated learning and service-learning in service of communities.

Engaged research and innovation

Research/innovation-related forms of engagement encompass consultations, contract research/innovation, internal corporate ventures, associate/subsidiary companies, technology licensing, and not for profit activities. These are activities that are normally subsidised by research funds (external and internal) aimed at addressing development challenges and needs of all types of communities using a diverse range of participatory methods that ensure reciprocity or demonstrable mutual benefit (see terms) and the co-creation of knowledge. Traditional research conducted on phenomena in communities could incorporate the principles of reciprocity and respect as required by applicable codes of conduct and ethical guidelines.

Volunteerism and outreach

These are additional activities and engagement by any staff and students to assist communities in need, especially, the communities within which the University's campuses are based. Examples are voluntary-based 'enablement/empowerment/development/non-discipline-based outreach' activities such as services that are not always regulated by the University. Such activities are guided by the needs of the community, not necessarily the University per se. Any formal linkage with the NWU will require adherence to the general rules of engagement with an emphasis on empowerment and sustainability rather than creating dependency or expectations beyond the NWU 's mandate.

Sharing of expertise

Special provision must be made to ensure feedback to the broader society of the knowledge generated, not only through formal scientific channels, but also through professional community service and popular (public) communication. This can include contributions to communities of practise or specialised interests' groups.

Scholarship of engagement is regarded as projects or activities that address community needs in partnership with the communities. The principles of reciprocity are applied, and *the key activities include engaged research and engaged teaching and learning, sharing of expertise and community partnerships all form part of the activity.*

Terms:

Demonstrable mutual benefit:

Demonstrable mutual benefit implies contributing to positive sustainable change in the status of recipients or related activities that the NWU contributes to, for example better access to information, training, changes in behaviour, and better quality of life, etc.

Impact on the University regarding research outputs (publications), training of students, new information obtained—whether its baseline or other scientific proof and measurement—should be available for verification. Therefore, the impact/change/benefit achieved in the community must be measurable. It is however, up to the recipient of the award to prove the benefit or return in order that every programme or initiative can be measured on its own merit.

Shared planning and decision-making practices

Shared planning and decision-making must include needs assessments, methods used, and proof of meetings (such as minutes, etc.). Continuous community stakeholder engagement and dialogue should be demonstrated.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

All applicants are required to submit the required documentation as per the type of application as stipulated in paragraph 5

Academic staff please note:

- To fill out and submit the application and nomination template on page 4, it's a requirement.
- The award is open to individual staff and formal or informal groupings within the university. Staff must be employed either on a permanent basis or under a limited-term contract of at least two years and must have been employed for a period of not less than 12 months prior to the date of nomination.
- A candidate or group is only eligible for re-nomination after a two-year cycle. More than one candidate can be nominated from a management unit. Site-specific activities can be separated in the case of campus-associated programmes within faculties (for example the Law Clinic).
- A novice award may be granted to staff that have been in the employ of the university for less than four years.
- Must work towards embedding the following: service-learning, participatory engaged research, co-curricular activities to enhance the University's contribution to inclusive, multi-disciplinary CE, scholarship of engagement (publications), social justice, promoting CE for the public good, and reciprocal and impactful campus-community partnerships.
- Must indicate the kind of CE category (see addendum for definitions)
- Must register the activity/ action/ project on the NWU CE database.
- Must provide proof of planning and collaboratively working towards a common purpose with community organisation.
- Must provide evidence of monitoring and evaluation, and impact measured with specific targets as negotiated with the beneficiaries of the CE activity/ project.
- For Service-Learning (SL) programmes, comment will be invited on their structure according to sound educational principles that complement the theoretical components of the curriculum; demonstration of adequate supervision of participants; and the regular and adequate assessment of the initiative in collaboration with the DVC Teaching and Learning and /or his delegates.
- The service-learning course has run for two or more years. Must provide a clear link between the academic goals and the service goals.
- The SL component is credit bearing.
- Must ensure inclusion of community partner organisation(s) throughout the process (planning, executing, evaluating)
- Provide evidence of regular reflections with community partner organisations and students. Students have compiled portfolio of reflection and anonymous randomised examples can be submitted to support the application.

Support staff please note:

- To fill out and submit the application and nomination template on page 4, it's a requirement.
- The award is open to individual support staff, formal or informal groupings within the university.
- Staff must be employed either on a permanent basis or under a limited term contract of at least two years and must have been employed for a period of not less than 12 months prior to the date of nomination.

- A novice award will be granted to staff that have been in the employ of the university for less than 4 years.
- They must have created, supported or lead, an action-based, issue orientated project with a community partner either through a course or through volunteer efforts connected to a discipline or through a community identified concern.
- Must register the activity/ action/ project on the NWU CE database.
- Must indicate the kind of CE category that they wish to apply for as set out in table 1.
- Must provide evidence of collective planning and a focused plan.
- Must ensure that monitoring and evaluation of the intervention is provided on the NWU CE database, and evidence of notable impact is recorded.
- Must show case collaboration, leadership, and teamwork.
- Must collaborate with SCI/CE office.

Students please note:

- To fill out and submit the application and nomination template on page 4, it's a requirement.
- The student community action leaders award honours undergraduate and postgraduate students of the NWU, who have made a commitment to community engagement through collaborative action with community partners as recommended by the Executive Director of Student Life and / or designates.
- Nominees must be currently enrolled as a student of the NWU.
- Must have created, supported or lead, an action-based, issue orientated project with a community partner either through a course or through volunteer efforts connected to a discipline or through a community identified concern.
- Must inspire fellow students by demonstrating clear and purposeful outreach, activism, advocacy, or awareness raising for a social, environmental, or economic issue.
- Must be part of an organised volunteer programme registered with the NWU CE Database and the SRC.
- Must provide evidence of a good working relationship with partner organisation(s) and fellow team members.
- Must provide evidence of substantial investment of time and expertise (beyond the minimum requirement of the programme).
- Must be in their second (or more) year of volunteering at NWU.

Outstanding community partners

The incredible dedication of partner institutions and work to uplift our society and contribute to the co-education of our students in CE is celebrated. This also includes community-based research and engaged research, which is accomplished through strong partnerships.

Outstanding community partners nominated by NWU partners, please note:

- To fill out and submit the application and nomination template on page 4, it's a requirement
- Must be partners that have partnered with the University on multiple initiatives over time and that have assisted in articulating the mission of community engagement will be eligible.
- Must have contributed to work-integrated learning or service-learning or co-curricular activities that have contributed to students gaining skills that complement their curriculum, while becoming more involved and engaged citizens in communities.
- Must have a formalised partnership with a North-West University department(s)/ grouping.
- Must provide evidence to confirm active engagement with students and University staff (Photographs and videos must be annotated or have captions).
- Must have collaborated/communicated with SCI stakeholder forums.
- Must be able to provide recorded evidence of notable impact made in targeted communities
- Must be part of a registered the activity/ action/ project on the NWU CE database.
- Must provide feedback on behalf of the community partner organisation.