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HEA Teaching and Learning Conference

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Leading Change Together: Building the Future of
Teaching and Learning in Higher Education



Supporting a Culture of Excellence in Teaching and Learning: The DELTA Award and Beyond



Institution(s) and Partner Organisations Involved

Munster Technological University- Teaching and Learning Unit

Contributor(s)

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What level(s) of your institution does this work affect?

- Programme level
- Institutional level

Date and Timeframe

2021 and Ongoing

Alignment and Focus

Focus

- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Digital Transformation in the Tertiary Sector
- Best Practice in Upholding and Cultivating Academic Integrity

Frameworks, Policies, or Strategies Aligned

- MTU Strategic Plan 2022-2027
- Professional Development Framework, National Forum for the Enhancement in Teaching and Learning.
- Inclusive Curriculum Framework
- Universal Design for Learning
- Academic Integrity Policy and Generative Artificial Intelligence
- Disciplinary Excellence In Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DELTA) Award, National Forum for the Enhancement in Teaching and Learning.

Discipline

- Arts and Humanities
- Business, Administration and Law
- Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction Generic programmes and qualifications
- Health and Welfare
- Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics
- Teaching and Learning

Impact, Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Impact and Evidence of Success

MTU has achieved 5 successful applications, 3 renewals, with 2 programs awaiting feedback and 2 commencing applications. These outcomes reflect disciplinary excellence, enhanced reflective teaching, and improved student engagement. The DELTA process empowered staff to adopt innovative assessments, authentic learning, and student partnership as standard practice. This recognition from the HEA affirms MTU's commitment to teaching excellence and staff development, creating lasting benefits for staff, students, and stakeholders while elevating MTU's national and international reputation as a leader in higher education.

Future Plans and Sustainability

The DELTA initiative will be sustained through strong institutional support and scalable actions, with leadership ensuring the award remains valued. Enhancing the DELTA learning community will foster collaboration and streamline applications, aided by preapproved ethical procedures and Student Engagement Associates for meaningful participation. Discipline teams will use the National Forum framework to guide projects, while early stakeholder engagement boosts relevance and scalability. A formal review of the DELTA support framework is underway to capture staff experience and improve processes.

Top Tips

- Build university infrastructure and culture to support distributed leadership.
- Support staff with dedicated time and resources to reflect on and enhance their disciplinary practice.
- Create formal/informal learning communities/mentorship to share best practice, streamline applications, scale the initiative and enable sustainability.



Funding & Acknowledgements Details

- The Higher Education Authority's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.
- SATLE – Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding in Higher Education
- Pathfinder Funding
- Systems Performance Funding
- MTU Institutional Funding through, for example, the TLU Combined Funding Call.
- Technological Sector Advancement Fund

Initiative Description

Aims and Objectives

- Enable and empower disciplinary teams to evidence and enhance excellence in teaching and learning practice.
- Build institutional capacity and consistency in supporting DELTA applications through structured mentorship and community of practice.
- Embed a sustainable culture of evidence-informed enhancement and recognition of teaching excellence across MTU.

Outline or Description

Nationally the DELTA Award recognises disciplinary excellence and, more importantly, provides a roadmap for continued excellence and enhancement into the future. To date, MTU has been the recipient of 5 successful DELTA applications and 2 successful renewals. The success rests on an ecosystem of teaching and learning excellence fostered by MTU's Teaching and Learning Unit. The aim of this project is to capture key factors that facilitated this success. Understanding these factors not only supports future DELTA applicants within MTU but also contributes to sector-wide knowledge on how to scale and sustain disciplinary excellence in teaching and learning enhancement. Successful applications in MTU are a result of 4 main factors:

University Leadership

Continued leadership commitment from President Prof. Maggie Cusack, VP Academic Affairs Prof. Christine Cross and Head of TLU, Dr. Angela Wright have ensured long-term financial and personal resourcing that recognises teaching excellence as core academic work. The vision and dedication of Marese Bermingham, Head of TLU & AnSEO Student Engagement Office 2014-2025 to engage with leadership and academic staff to bring DELTA to the forefront of our work has contributed greatly to its continued success.

Dedicated Teaching and Learning Unit initiatives

- A dedicated DELTA project where programme teams receive year-long support from the TLU team and past participants. This provides applicants with space and time to lead, plan and prepare their DELTA application through a DELTA Learning Community where previous recipients collaborate with new applicant teams. MTU's most recent DELTA awardee, the Dept. of Tourism and Hospitality utilised this opportunity.
- The Reimagining Assessment and Feedback Together (RAFT) is a year-long action research initiative enhancing assessment and feedback through partnership and co-creation. Through the Strategic Alignment for Teaching and Learning Enhancement (SATLE) Fund,

successful applicants receive time buyouts to facilitate enhancement. For example, the Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies team used RAFT to support their DELTA Application.

- Transitions Funding, Learning Communities, T&L Development Fund, and Learning Enhancement Projects (LEPs) are staff-led, TLU-enabled initiatives empowering staff to propose and implement teaching and learning innovations. This exemplifies distributed leadership in MTU. An example of this is how the Dept. of Marketing and International Business who availed of the LEPs initiative.
- DELTA Award recognition at MTU seminars and events including TLU Works and Conversations on Teaching and Learning (CoTal), establishing institutional value of the award.
- Academic staff with DELTA experience are seconded to the TLU to mentor discipline teams interested in applying.
- The AnSeo Student Engagement Office supports teams in engaging students and provides access to trained Student Engagement Associates (SEAs) to work with staff and students during the process.
- The SUCCED (Standardising the Use, Communication and Capability of studEntsurvEy.ie Data) project provides applicants with data to evidence their applications.
- TLU's CPD offerings including the MA in Teaching and Learning in HE, Professional Accreditation Fellowships, Certificate in Coaching, and Leadership Development programmes have supported DELTA leaders and participants.

Discipline Specific Approach

- Clear commitment from Head of Dept. to give time and energy to support the process. Practical examples of this include having weekly email updates on the application process and constant updates and reviews at Dept. meetings throughout the process.
- Appointment of DELTA Champions to streamline processes, align projects with Department and to oversee the full application. The identification and support of these team lead allow them to spearhead applications and bring key stakeholders together.

DELTA Champions

