Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) 2026

Guidance for Reviewers

Contents

1. CATE 2026 reviewer schedule

The timetable for the review process is as follows:

Date	Milestone
Monday 6 October 2025	**Call for CATE nominations opens** All NTFS Guidance released.
Dec 2025-Feb 2026	**CATE 2026 Reviewer training** The reveiwer training moderation exercise will be released to those reviewers requiring training on **Monday 15 Dec 2025** with a deadline of **23:59 on Monday 19 January 2026**. Reviewers must also attend a webinar to discuss outcomes from the moderation exercise to complete the training. CATE Training webinars will be held at the following times in Febuary 2026: • CATE Training 1 - Wed 4 Feb, 10:30-11:45 • CATE Training 2 - Tue 10 Feb, 12:00-13:15 • CATE Training 3 - Thur 12 Feb, 16:00-17:15 Reviewers undergoing training will be required to book onto <u>one</u> of these sessions on completion of the moderation exercise once the deadline has passed.
Wednesday 11 March 2026	**Nominations close at 12:00 noon (GMT)**
Thursday 12 – Monday 16 March	Reviewers will be informed of the (approximately six) Claims that they have been randomly assigned to review, and are asked to **please respond by return, but, at latest, by 12:00 noon on Monday 16 March 2026 with any conflicts of interest.**
Tuesday 17 March 2026	Reviewers will be given access to their allocated Claims on SMA by end of working day.
Tuesday 17 March 2026 - Wednesday 15 April	Trusted Reviewers to be available during this period to accept and review reallocated claims. Reviewers are encouraged to contact the Teaching Excellence Awards Team (ntfs@advance-he.ac.uk) if they have queries about the Claims they are reviewing.
Wednesday 15 April 2026	**Please submit all scores and feedback by 23:59 on Wednesday 15 April 2026.**
Thursday 16 April - Wednesday 6 May 2026	Fourth Review period – fourth reviewers to please submit scores and feedback by **23:59 on Wednesday 6 May 2026**.
Wednesday 6 May 2026	**Please complete the reviewer Equal Opportunities Monitoring Survey by 23:59 on Wednesday 6 May 2026.**
Summer 2026	Reviewer Debrief Session (optional), date tbc.
By end September 2026	Reviewers will receive feedback on the 2026 CATE cycle.

1.   Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document provides guidance for peer reviewers of the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) 2026.

CATE is organised and run by Advance HE. Its purpose is to recognise, reward and celebrate teams who have made an outstanding impact on student outcomes and/or the teaching profession in UK Higher Education. All Advance HE UK member institutions are eligible to nominate one team involved in **teaching and/or supporting learning in Higher Education**. This selected 'nominated team' is forwarded by their institutions for consideration, and up to 15 nominated teams will receive awards in 2026.

Peer review is crucial for the CATE selection process. Advance HE and the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel ('the Panel') rely on reviewers' assessments to recommend award winning teams. Reviewers' feedback is also an essential part of the process to direct nominated teams' future development. We greatly appreciate the professional time, energy, and expertise reviewers contribute to the scheme's success.

This guidance outlines the process for reviewing, scoring, and providing feedback on CATE nominations.

We hope you find the review process straightforward and enjoy reviewing your allocated Claims.

Note: Members of CATE Teams nominated in 2026 cannot also serve as reviewers in 2026.

1.2   Reviewer's Role

As a CATE 2026 reviewer, your role is to assess nominations against the Award criteria using the 2026 Scoring Rubric (Appendix 1) and provide feedback to nominated teams and the UK Teaching Excellence Awards Advisory Panel (the 'Panel'). Please note that nominated teams do not receive their scores; your feedback is crucial for guiding them on improving future submissions if they wish to reapply.

Reviewers are asked to maintain confidentiality regarding nomination details and **refrain from disclosing any information without prior written consent from the nominated Team Leader and Advance HE**. The information in any nomination and this guidance document is for peer review purposes only.

Your scores and comments for the Panel will remain anonymous. Advance HE will use the scores from three reviewers to rank nominations for the CATE awards. Examples of reviewer feedback may be used anonymously by Advance HE for future guidance.

Your qualitative feedback will be shared verbatim, where possible, with nominated teams and senior leaders at their institution. If you wish to discuss any nominations, please contact the Advance HE Teaching Excellence Awards Team at: cate@advance-he.ac.uk.

2. Updates for 2026

+ Nominated teams must now separate and report the word count for each criterion under two distinct headings (the overall word limit still applies - see '*CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams*,' Section 3.3):
    o Words included in figures
    o Words included in the main body of text
+ Nominated teams have received new guidance this year on what is and is not permitted when using visual elements in their Claims (see '*CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams*,' Section 3.3)
+ 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 '*CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams*' Section 3.2).
+ A number of minor revisions have been made to the wording throughout.

3. Nomination Documents Overview

3.1 Parts of the nomination for review

Institutional nominations include several elements, but as a reviewer, you will only receive the following two documents for review:

+ **Nominated Team Claim**

+ **Institutional Statement of Support**

In 2026 the Nominated Team Claim has 3 sections (A-C):

+ Section A Part 1: Core Team Composition (free word count, **unscored**).

+ Section A Part 2: Context Statement (maximum 300 words, **unscored).**

+ Section B: Claim against the CATE Award Criteria (maximum 4500 words across both criteria, **scored**).

+ Section C: Reference List (guideline of 2-20 references, **unscored**).

Only Section B of the Nominated Team Claim, containing evidence against each of the two CATE award criteria, is scored by reviewers.

Section A ('Core Team Composition' and 'Context Statement') and Section C ('Reference List') provide added information to help you review the Claim but should not be scored.

3.2   Section A Part 1: Core Team Composition

The 'Core Team Composition' section provides a dedicated space, outside of the main Claim in Section B, for teams to provide a concise overview of the composition of their core team. Here they can assist reviewers by identifying the key individuals and positions held by each within the team.

Nominated core teams can include **3-15 members**, including the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader. The **core team** can be seen as the originators of a broader group's work, with an **extended team** that engages with and influences the core team's efforts as the work evolves. Core team members may include individuals from professional services, student groups, and external partners, as well as a range of disciplines, representing all career stages, regardless of seniority or job status. Please see Section 5.1 of the '*CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams*' for full discussion of the core and extended elements of CATE teams.

3.3   Section A Part 2: Context Statement

Nominated teams will vary in constitution, context, and activities. The Context Statement (up to 300 words) introduces the team's Claim but is not scored. It should outline the team's context, setting, and their main areas of activity. Nominated teams have been provided with guidance on what to include in the Context Statement in Section 5.3 of the '*CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams*'.

The Context Statement frames Section B of the Claim, helping reviewers understand the evidence submitted against the two CATE Award criteria. It should clarify the nominated team's institutional context, professional responsibilities, and any evidence that spans other institutions or wider industry/sector work. Nominated teams are encouraged to outline their teaching and learning practices, including details about the learners involved, their discipline, and the scope of their work. The team may also include timelines to illustrate the currency and sustainability of their practice. In addition, they may also highlight any challenges or constraints the team has faced which have shaped their evidence base. Reviewers should be mindful that CATE teams may come together for a relatively short period of time before dispersing, and that this should not affect their scoring. There is no expectation that teams will be long-lived, as this would not reasonably reflect the context of all CATE teams.

The Context Statement should not include information that adds evidence of impact to the narrative in Section B.

3.4   Section B: Claim against the CATE Award criteria

Nominated teams use Section B of the Claim to set out the evidence of the value, reach and impact of their practice against the two CATE 2026 award criteria in turn. The two parts of Section B must not exceed **4500 words**. As a reviewer, you will 'score' each of the two parts separately. Please refer to Section 5 below for full details.

Reviewers should only consider evidence discussed in Section B of the Claim. If nominated teams accidentally include hyperlinks in Section B, reviewers should not follow them, as they will be treated as additional evidence not subject to review.

3.5   Section C: Reference List

The Reference List is **not** scored by reviewers; its purpose is to help reviewers identify sources and for the nominated teams to credit authors who have inspired their work.

While there is no set word limit for the Reference List, nominated teams are advised to include between 2 to 20 references, as excessively long or short lists are typically misaligned with successful nominations. The number of references included does not affect scoring. The list should only contain citations directly referenced in Section B of the Claim. Further guidance on using the Reference List is available in Section 5.5 of the '*CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams*'.

3.6   Institutional Statement of Support

The institutional Statement of Support should be prepared by a senior colleague (DVC/PVC/Director of Professional Service Area, or equivalent) familiar with the nominated team's relevant practices and signed by the Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) for formal endorsement. Its purpose is to validate the nominated team's Claim and highlight the value, reach, and impact of their practice from an institutional perspective.

The Institutional Statement of Support is not a source of new evidence but a complementary document that should:

+ Endorse the nominated team's Claim of outstanding impact.
+ Provide institutional context for the nominated team's recognition and outline future plans for disseminating their practice.
+ Confirm institutional support for the nominated team if awarded a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence.
+ Include additional supporting information best expressed by a senior colleague familiar with the nominated team's work.
+ Include formal endorsement from the Vice-Chancellor/Principal/President (or equivalent), along with their name, job title, and signature.

4. Reviewer Responsibilities

4.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to participate we ask that CATE reviewers:

+ are not part of a CATE nominated team in 2026.

+ <u>either</u> have Senior or Principal Fellowship <u>or</u> are previous winners of NTFS <u>or</u> a winning CATE Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader.

+ complete the full reviewer moderation training exercise and webinar held December 2025 - February 2026 (if a new reviewer, or one who last completed CATE reviewer training before 2025).

+ commit to reviewing approximately six CATE Claims between **Tuesday 17 March 2026 and 23:59 on Wed 15 April 2026**.

4.2 Reviewer Roles

To fully support the CATE review there are three different reviewer roles. More information about the function and timelines for each is set out below:

1. **First Reviewers**

+ The majority of 2026 reviewers who will be randomly assigned ~6 CATE Claims to review against the 2 CATE Award Criteria between **Tuesday 17 March 2026 and 23:59 on Wednesday 15 April 2026**.

2. **Trusted Reviewers**

+ A small pool of reviewers, held back from the initial allocation and deployed if a First Reviewer withdraws.
+ Invited to take on the role in September 2025, in recognition of excellent review work in the previous year.
+ Particularly valued for their flexibility and responsiveness - we ask that Trusted Reviewers remain available throughout the review period - **Tuesday 17 March 2026 and 23:59 on Wednesday 15 April 2026** - (and the days shortly after its close) to review claims at short notice.
+ There is no guarantee they will be called upon, as this depends on withdrawals.
+ This is a critical role in ensuring timely completion of the review, and we are very grateful for their contribution.

3. **Fourth Reviewers**

+ A small pool of experienced reviewers who are called upon to assess claims that receive discrepant scores during the First Review.
+ The Fourth Review period runs from **Thursday 16 April 2026 to 23:59 on Wednesday 6 May 2026**.
+ We ask that they are available and contactable during the full Fourth Review period.

4.2 Training and Keeping Up to Date

Reviewers must participate in a moderation exercise at least every two years to continue supporting the award. This training cycle ensures consistency, supports ongoing development, provides opportunities for new reviewers, and allows experienced reviewers to refresh their skills as capacity permits.

It will therefore be expected that all reviewers are familiar with the CATE nomination requirements and format, the two CATE Award criteria, the 2026 Scoring Rubric (Appendix 1), and the contents of this guidance document. **Reviewers are asked to read the '*[CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams](#)*' in conjunction with this document**.

We aim to provide all eligible reviewers with annual review opportunities. However, allocation depends on the number of CATE claims received and the need for balanced reviewer groups to prevent bias. As a result, some eligible reviewers may not receive claims in a given year but will be prioritised in the next cycle.

4.3   Allocation and access to nominations

As a CATE reviewer, you will be assigned around six nominations to review and score. You will access your assigned nominations via [Survey Monkey Apply](#), and will also submit your scores and feedback using this platform. You will receive a '*SMA 2026 Reviewer Guidance*' document with full instructions.

Nominations are randomly assigned, without consideration for reviewers' discipline or expertise. Each nomination will be independently evaluated by three reviewers, with scores and feedback kept confidential.

4.4 Conflicts of interest

If selected to review, you will receive notification of your provisional nominations between Thursday 12 March and Monday 16 March 2026. Advance HE requests that you notify the Teaching Excellence Awards Team at cate@advance-he.ac.uk of any potential conflicts of interest by return and by 12:00 noon on Monday 16 March 2026, at the latest. Confirmed conflicts will result in reallocation of the affected nomination(s) to another reviewer.

Conflicts of interest may arise if you:
+ are or have been a relative or a personal friend of any of the nominated team.
+ are or have been a member of staff at the team's institution.
+ have worked closely with the team recently.
+ have a vested interest in the institution and/or the team.
+ have previously reviewed the same team.
+ have worked or work closely with a relative or close friend of any member of the team.

If you're unsure about a potential conflict, please contact the Teaching Excellence Awards Team for clarification.

4.5 Monitoring of equality and diversity data

Advance HE is dedicated to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Teaching Excellence Awards. Analysis of Equal Opportunities Monitoring data from nominees and nominated teams in the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) and Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) has revealed underrepresentation of certain staff

groups compared to UK HESA data, including:

+ Professional Services staff who teach or support learning
+ Staff on fractional and part-time contracts
+ Staff from minoritised ethnic groups defined as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) by HESA
+ Staff in Higher Education within Further Education (FE)

To address this underrepresentation, Advance HE is taking steps to encourage engagement from these groups, including inviting them to become reviewers. Data will be collected from reviewers via an **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**, which will be emailed at the start of the review period and should be completed by **23:59 on Wednesday 6 May 2026**.

All personal data submitted will be kept confidential. Advance HE will aggregate and anonymise this data, along with that from nominated teams/nominees, for annual reports on equality, diversity, and inclusion for the Panel, informing future actions. For details on how Advance HE collects, stores, and uses personal information about nominated teams/nominees and reviewers, please refer to our privacy statement.

5. Reviewing Nominations

5.1 Approaching the Claim

As a reviewer, it is key to remember that you are scoring the Claim, not the nominated team themselves. Each nominated team has been recognised as excellent by their institution, but reviewer's focus should be on the evidence of value, reach, and impact provided in their Claim (see Section 5.4).

The CATE is a competitive award, with most nominated teams providing strong evidence that meets the criteria. We ask that reviewers evaluate the quality of this evidence against each criteria and use the full range of scores available to reflect their judgement. Please be mindful of each nominated team's context as outlined in their Context Statement to ensure fairness and inclusivity across the UK HE sector.

Nominated teams may present evidence in various ways; there is no single 'best' method. We ask that reviewers be sensitive to different approaches to demonstrating value, reach, and impact. Recent CATE winners may well encounter Claims that significantly differ from their own team's experiences.

CATE reviewers are encouraged to consider the timeframe of the evidence they find in the Claims they review, treating both older and contemporary practice equally. Reviewers should be aware that evidence of sustainability may vary when assessing CATE claims. CATE teams may come together for a relatively short period of time before dispersing, and this should not affect scoring. Annual reviewer training includes resources on Claim context and criteria, which you may wish to revisit to assist you in your review.

5.1.2 'Projects'

Some CATE teams may present a defined 'project' as an example of their work, while others may not. Evidence of value, reach, and impact will vary based on the team's context. When reviewing and providing feedback, focus on the team's collaborative processes, activities, and impact rather than emphasising any specific 'project' or theme. Some teams may, for example, be established teams working on several initiatives, and they could present an equally valid entry.

5.2 CATE Criteria

All nominated teams will be assessed on the evidence provided in the nominated team Claim (Section B) 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.

Each of the two CATE award criteria above is given equal consideration in the assessment process and weighted equally in the overall score. There are many ways of evidencing the award criteria, as appropriate to the nature of the team's work.

5.3 Evidence in a CATE Claim

You will score against each of the two criteria in turn, allocating a score (0-9) for each criterion; please refer to the CATE 2026 scoring rubric (Appendix 1) and the specific guidance on the use of 9 in Section 6.1.1.

Claims will vary in style and content due to differences in team member roles, professional service areas, academic disciplines, and the position of the team within the wider institution; thus, no specific nomination style is required. Reviewers are therefore encouraged to evaluate examples based on their overall contribution to the relevant criterion.

While nominated teams are expected to carefully align their evidence with the most appropriate criterion, reviewers are encouraged to credit evidence wherever it appears in the Claim. If a nominated team submits evidence under one criterion that better aligns with another, reviewers should consider it. However, they should note that placing evidence under the 'wrong' criterion reduces the team's word count for aligned evidence.

Nominated teams should highlight the currency, sustained elements, and any challenges shaping their evidence base. There are no fixed requirements for how recent the evidence must be; rather, reviewers are asked to assess the value, reach, and impact, which may vary

based on when the practice occurred. The institutional Statement of Support should also be considered.

5.4 Value, Reach and Impact

Reviewers should use these principles to assess nominated teams' evidence:

+ **Value**: Benefits to HE students and staff (which may take different forms), such as enhanced learning experiences and teaching practices. This can include qualitative changes, like shifts in learning approaches. Value also includes the quality of enhanced experiences and, for some nominated teams, positive ethical elements in their work.

+ **Reach**: Scale of influence. 'Geographic' reach (i.e. reach at a national/international scale) isn't necessarily required (though may be illustrated); instead, also consider reach within the nominated team's context, whether departmental, institutional, or among specific student groups or staff. The effect on participants, rather than numbers involved, is key to evaluating the 'reach' of practice described.

+ **Impact**: The difference that has been made to policy, practice and/or student outcomes as the result of an activity or a way of working. 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 teaching or learning support practice, and/or changes to the team's practices.

In the context of CATE, reviewers might consider, for example, *how* working as a team enhances reach. What added value does *this* team bring by working in *this* way? How is the impact amplified by the fact that it is a cohesive team, or because it consists of *these* specific members?

5.5 Cooperative v. Collaborative Team Working

The ethos of CATE recognises team working as a key element of successful HE practice. Nominated teams should capture evidence of their collaborative working under both criteria. Collaboration is a deep state of interdependence, beyond simply cooperating as a team, and successful claims should showcase practices that go beyond describing teamwork with others. Teams should describe their establishment, development, and ongoing efforts to achieve effective impact.

The graphic below (reproduced with John Spencer's permission) highlights key distinctions between cooperation and collaboration. It serves as a useful prompt for teams to gather evidence of collaboration and can assist reviewers in identifying evidence of excellence in collaboration within a team

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 value
- Constant state of interdependence
- Tight culture
- Long-term
- Generation of new ideas as a group
- empowerment

5.6   Evidence towards each CATE award criterion

Each award criterion can be evidenced in different ways, depending on the nominated team's practice. **Table 1** provides indicative guidance illustrating potential evidence types and should not be used as a 'check list'. Reviewers should assess the balance of evidence types, their range, and the value, reach, and impact presented, considering the team's context.

Table 1: Examples of types of evidence against each of the CATE 2026 Award criteria

CATE Criterion 1 Excellence in the team's collaborative approach	CATE Criterion 2 Excellence in the impact of collaborative working
Evidence of excellence in the team's approach to working collaboratively, commensurate with their context and the opportunities afforded by it. Criterion 1 focuses 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, departments/units, or institutions. + being flexible and creative in working to address unanticipated situations or events. + articulating processes in place for measuring the impact or outcomes of collaborative work.	**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 the initial context. To give some illustrative examples, Criterion 2 could be demonstrated by providing evidence of: + the wider value that has resulted from working as a team. + the reach 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.

5.7   Sources of evidence

Reviewers will encounter various evidence sources in the CATE nominations they assess. The reviewer's task is to evaluate the strength of this qualitative and quantitative evidence in relation to the nominated team's work and the award criteria.

Advance HE's '*CATE 2026 Guidance for Institutions and Nominated Teams*' provides illustrative examples of potential evidence sources (see below), but nominated teams are encouraged not to be limited by these. Reviewers should remember that the nominated team's context can influence the available evidence; for instance, professional services staff may lack access to certain program-level data, and some roles may not fit into specific award or funding pathways.

Please note that all the below evidence types <u>must</u> be related to learning and teaching or learning support in HE settings and evidencing transformation of student outcomes. Note that neither evidence of publications, nor external markers of achievements, such as Awards, or other public profile markers, are strong evidence in themselves and must be related directly to the transformation of learning in HE settings. The nominating institution and nominated teams determine what constitutes appropriate evidence of impact.

Table 2: Examples of different potential sources of evidence

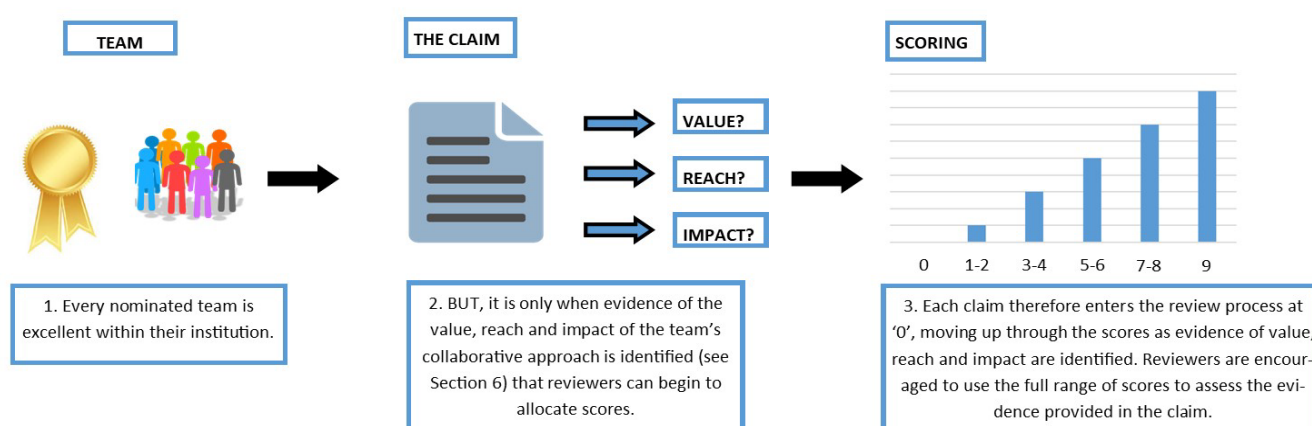| Criterion 1 Excellence in the team's collaborative approach	Criterion 2 Excellence in the impact of collaborative working
Examples of effective team working practices, processes and/or outcomes	Student feedback and evaluations
Evidence of shared goals/purpose	Student data (progression, achievement,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

6. Scoring the Claim

6.1   Allocating Scores to Section B of the Claim

This award uses a best-match approach, scoring each criterion based on the range and quality of evidence within the nominated team's Claim, considering their context.

The scoring diagram (**Figure 1**) shows the best-match approach, starting from 0 and building as evidence of value, reach, and impact is identified in Section B. This method emphasises Claim strengths, recognising the nominated team's need to be selective within the word limit. Reviewers should focus on evaluating the evidence they chose to support their claim.

Figure 1: Scoring Decision Diagram

TEAM	THE CLAIM	SCORING
1. Every nominated team is excellent within their institution.	2. BUT, it is only when evidence of the value, reach and impact of the team's collaborative approach is identified (see Section 6) that reviewers can begin to allocate scores.	3. Each claim therefore enters the review process at '0', moving up through the scores as evidence of value, reach and impact are identified. Reviewers are encouraged to use the full range of scores to assess the evidence provided in the claim.

The 2026 Scoring Rubric in Appendix 1 provides the basis for your allocation of scores against each Award criterion. The 2026 Scoring Rubric in Appendix 1 guides scoring for each CATE Award criterion (0-9 per criterion, maximum 18 per nomination). Use the full range (whole numbers only), ensuring your scores align with your feedback. For most scoring bands, you will use your professional judgement to choose between two possible scores (e.g., 5 or 6), while 0 and 9 represent the absolute minimum and maximum scores.

CATE is a well-established and high-scoring Award, and reviewers are encouraged to use the full range of scores as appropriate. If relevant evidence is lacking, consider scores of 2, 1, or even 0, if the evidence presented is entirely irrelevant to the criterion.

6.1.1 Awarding a score of 9

A score of 9 is exceptional and should be awarded rarely for truly outstanding criterion responses. An excellent criterion response would typically score 7 or 8. If you do award a 9, feedback should specify what makes the particular response exceptional. We do not expect reviewers to routinely see criterion responses which merit a score of 9. If you are unsure about whether to award a 9 for a particular criterion response, please contact the Teaching

Excellence Awards Team for advice.

7. Feedback

Given that scores are not shared, your feedback comments are extremely important to the nominated team. Your comments will be combined with those of two other reviewers and provided as feedback to the team and senior members at their institution, verbatim (wherever possible) and anonymously, to support their future development.

The feedback form can be seen in the '*Reviewer SMA User Guide 2026*', which will be provided to all the trained reviewers allocated Claims for review. The online form will be completed on the SMA platform. We <u>strongly encourage</u> all reviewers to draft their feedback in a Word document and then copy it across to the SMA form; this allows reviewers to consider the appropriateness and clarity of their feedback and to complete a final proofread before uploading it. Please also ensure that you are uploading the correct feedback for the correct nominated team.

We ask you to be considerate in your use of language when giving feedback. The comments you provide do not need to explain your scoring decisions (and scores must not be mentioned), although they should be aligned. If you do wish to explain why you selected a particular score, this can be done via the comments box for the Panel and Advance HE, which will not be seen by the nominated team.

After submitting your review, you will be able to download your feedback comments and scores; the '*Reviewer SMA User Guide 2026*' will include details about how to do this. If you find that you need to make an amendment after submitting your review, please contact cate@advance-he.ac.uk.

7.1 Aligning feedback and scores

We ask that reviewers please complete the written feedback for a Claim <u>before</u> they assign numerical scores to support effective alignment between the two. Key points to remember:

Please bear these points in mind to ensure effective alignment between scores and feedback:

+ A score of 8 reflects an excellent response (and 9 an exceptional one) with very strong evidence of impact. Reviewers would be unlikely to identify developmental points for these scores.

+ A score of 7 reflects 'very good, with some outstanding evidence,' and only minor developmental points should be noted (refer to Appendix 2 for examples). <u>Additional impact evidence should not be requested for a score of 7.</u>

+ Feedback for scores 7 or below should balance strengths and developmental points, with fewer developmental points as the score increases.

+ For lower scores, reviewers should actively acknowledge the Claim's strengths alongside providing detailed, actionable feedback to help nominated teams improve.

Nominated teams receive only written feedback, not scores, so accurate alignment is crucial for their development. Refer to the 2026 Scoring Rubric in *Appendix 1* for further guidance.

7.2 Types of feedback

We ask you, as a reviewer, to provide three different types of feedback which reflect the extent to which the nomination provides evidence of meeting the CATE 2026 award criteria in your judgement.

+ **Criteria Feedback (for Nominated Team) – Up to 150 Words per Criterion**

  This feedback is **required** and will be used verbatim where possible. It should be constructive and developmental, balancing strengths with areas for improvement. Comments should highlight the nomination's strengths, identify supporting evidence, and suggest where additional evidence of **Value**, **Reach**, and/or **Impact** (see 5.4) would be beneficial.

  Ensure feedback aligns with your score, as the CATE scheme aims to provide value to all nominated teams, regardless of selection. Please include as much helpful detail as possible within the word limit.

+ **Overall Feedback (for Nominated Team) – Up to 150 Words**

  This section is **optional** and for overarching comments on the Claim as a whole, such as coherence or connectivity across the nomination. Any feedback provided here will be shared with the team.

  Avoid repeating comments from specific criteria feedback, or offering mentor-like advice or congratulatory remarks.

+ **Feedback for the Panel/Advance HE – Up to 150 Words**

  This confidential feedback is **required** to support the decision-making process and will not be shared with the nominated team. Use this section to explain your scoring, or provide insights that may assist the Panel to address potential discrepancies between reviewers. You may also highlight considerations for future improvements to the scheme.

7.3 Feedback tone and style

We ask that reviewers use a respectful, constructive, and developmental tone in feedback, ensuring it is helpful to the nominated team. Here's a summary of key points to keep in mind when writing feedback:

• Address feedback directly to the team using '**you/your team,**' rather than third-person (i.e. 'the team'), or first person ('I').

• Write in full sentences without subheadings.

• Scores of 7 or below must include specific developmental points.

• Ensure the tone is respectful, constructive, and be mindful that both the nominated team

and their senior team will read it.

- Consider the team's context and avoid assumptions based on personal expectations or knowledge of specific approaches.

- Recognise that the nomination is a snapshot of the team's activity due to word limits. Suggestions should therefore focus on missing evidence rather than critiquing their chosen approach.

- Please do not follow or review hyperlinks if they are included by error, as they are considered additional evidence beyond the word count.

- Use available resources (training materials and example feedback) to guide your feedback.

- Focus on team processes, activities, and impact rather than individual projects - using alternative terms like 'initiative' or 'practice' might help maintain this focus.

- Ensure feedback is uploaded on SMA against the correct claim and is fully proofread before submission.

- Where possible, use positive phrasing instead of negative wording. Some examples of how negative wording could potentially be reframed are found in **Table 3** below:

Table 3: Framing of feedback

Negative phrasing	Positive phrasing
'A weakness is…'	'It would be helpful if…'
'The nomination fails in…'	'It would be useful if…'
'There were no…' or 'There is a lack of evidence..'	'Further details about [add specifics] would strengthen the evidence'.
'The nomination lacks…' or 'the nomination needs…'	'The case would be stronger with more explicit evidence of..'
'Much room for improvement' or 'there is limited evidence of…'	'The team's Claim would benefit from more explicit evidence of…'
'It is especially weak in terms of…'	'Further details could usefully be provided to evidence… [add specifics]' 'This example would be strengthened with further evidence of…'
'Unfortunately…'	'To strengthen your Claim, you might find it helpful to…' 'To further develop your evidence for this criterion, you might wish to…'

- Avoid repeating the guidance, criteria, scoring rubric, or nomination language - focus on specific strengths and development areas in the criterion response.

- Please avoid listing examples from the nomination without further explanation - if they are strengths, please state this explicitly.

- Keep feedback objective and criteria-focused - avoid personal phrases like 'I enjoyed reading...' or 'I think...'.

- Use professional and measured language - avoid hyperbole ('fabulous', 'fantastic') and exclamation marks.

- Ensure clarity and accuracy – please avoid discipline-specific terms, institutional jargon, and acronyms.

- Avoid contradictions - for example, asking for less context in one section but more in another.

- Ensure feedback aligns with scores - for example, if more impact evidence is needed, a score of 7, or above, is likely not appropriate.

- Stay within the award's purpose and criteria – please avoid suggesting broader expectations like more innovation, publication, or extended reach unless the team has presented these as key aspects of their impact.

8. Outcomes

Winners will be publicly announced on **7 August 2026** via Advance HE's website and a press release. Nominated teams will receive their individual feedback by the end of August 2026. Reviewers will receive feedback on their review by the end of September 2026.

Thank you

Advance HE sincerely thanks you for your time and expertise in supporting the 2026 National Teaching Fellowship Scheme as a CATE reviewer.

Appendix 1: CATE 2026 Scoring Rubric

The Scoring Rubric below should be used to 'score' each of the two parts to Section B of the nominated team's Claim against each of the CATE award criteria (i.e., an overall maximum score of 18 from each of the three reviewers). For each Claim, against each criterion, please identify a specific score e.g. 6.

In the majority of the scoring bands within the 2026 Scoring Rubric, there are two possible scores that can be awarded (e.g., 5 or 6). You are asked to use your professional judgement to decide whether the score awarded should be at the higher point of that band (e.g. 6) or at the lower end of that band (e.g. 5). Scores of 9 and 0 are standalone as these represent the absolute maximum and minimum scores. Please see the specific guidance on the use of 9 in Section 6.1.1.

	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.

Appendix 2: Example CATE Feedback Resource

This table contains examples of effective feedback under each of the two CATE criteria for each of the available scores (0-9). These examples have been adapted from feedback received on a range of CATE nominations (both successful and unsuccessful) submitted in the 2021 and 2022 cycles.

We encourage you to consider these pieces of feedback as relevant and helpful examples for you to reflect on, not as perfect 'models', and would advise against adapting or copying elements present here. The content of your feedback will be as individual as the Claims that you review. Here we have only been able to provide one example per criterion and scoring point, and we encourage you to also reflect on the other examples of effective feedback that you will have seen during reviewer training sessions.

We encourage reviewers to reflect on these examples and consider how they demonstrate some of the features of effective feedback for CATE. We would like to highlight the following positive features:

- The feedback is aligned to the criterion it addresses and to the selected score.
- The feedback is addressed directly to the nominated team (using you/your).
- The feedback identifies specific strengths and offers specific suggestions for enhancement that reference the nominated team's context and the evidence they present.
- The balance of strengths and developmental points is aligned to the score (i.e. more developmental points for a 4 than a 6)
- Suggestions for enhancement are positively and respectfully framed.
- The feedback uses the bulk of the 150-word count and is written in full sentences.

Please feel free to email us at CATE@advance-he.ac.uk with any queries around writing feedback and aligning it to the scores - we are more than happy to discuss this further.

Score	Criterion 1 Excellence in the team's collaborative approach	Criterion 2 Excellence in the impact of collaborative working
9	You present a compelling account of collaborative excellence through your unique cross-institutional collaboration: Vision HE. You show how your diverse team integrates the expertise of practitioners, researchers and students in a genuinely interdependent collaboration, which generates extremely creative and valuable pedagogical approaches and resources. It is very clear that students are active team members and you provide powerful examples of the team's student-led approach. The team's values and aims are clearly evidenced through your distributed leadership model, community ethos and testimonials reflecting substantial peer support and development within the team. You provide convincing evidence of how the team works with a wide-ranging international community, resulting in very positive impacts on practice-sharing between team members. The value of this to the wider community is made very clear. Team members clearly challenge each other to push the boundaries of educational practice, disseminate their creative approaches and effect genuine transformation in the sector.	You provide compelling evidence of the significant reach, value and impact of your collaborative approach. Your substantive impact on the development of your peers and the resulting value arising from their ability to offer transformative and diverse student learning experiences across a range of disciplines, educational contexts and institutions is very apparent. Your reach is evident through the organisation of community open courses, physical and virtual events and activities which model creative learning and teaching for the sector. You very effectively use quantitative data to illustrate the reach of your online membership nationally and internationally and demonstrate its expansion over a sustained period. Your co-creation of open educational resources, contributions to the National Teaching Repository (NTR) and the Teaching and Learning Network (TALON) and your connections with other national initiatives (including facilitating numerous creativity-themed #LTHEchats, and TLC webinars) effectively demonstrate your reach, impact and value well beyond your initial context.
8	You provide very powerful evidence of excellence in your collaborative approach, with a clearly articulated shared vision and objectives that are reflected in your Online Learning Framework. You effectively detail how membership of the team has empowered individuals to pool their expertise and collectively generate the Framework and resources which facilitate transformative changes in practice. Your account of how the student membership of the team has evolved reflects your clear commitment to working with students as partners. You include compelling testimonials which reflect the value to students and academics of their involvement in your collaboration. The Framework you describe provides a clear structure for how you are successfully working with stakeholders and embedding your pedagogical approach within and beyond your institution.	You show very effectively that your Inclusion Initiative has had a transformative impact. Within your institution, your impact and reach is well-evidenced through the Inclusion Impact Plan, which informs institutional-level strategic planning through to staff appraisal objectives, and you clearly show that your Inclusion Toolkit is used in all modules. Your testimonials showcase the value of your collaborative approach for students and their impact on programme delivery and institutional strategy. You make it clear that you have enhanced module-level data collection, which facilitates targeted action, enabling you to use this data to demonstrate resulting improvements in BAME student outcomes. Beyond your institution, you show how you have secured external funding and published the outcomes of your work, which have been used as a resource by others.

7	The Student Learning Ambassadors (SLA) initiative provides valuable evidence of your collaborative approach. You clearly articulate your shared objectives, their alignment to university strategy and your underpinning pedagogical principles. SLAs, students are central team members and you show very effectively how their voice is well-integrated within your team. You provide strong evidence of the team's effectiveness over time and willingness to engage with challenging situations, such as addressing differing departmental needs and issues arising from progression of SLAs. SLAs are valuably embedded within programmes cross-institutionally, supporting module teams with curriculum co-creation. Effective evidence here comes through your description of the evolution of Senior SLAs, who support the training of SLAs. Your team is demonstrably contributing to sector priorities such as students as partners and student satisfaction. Including a more focussed account of your self-evaluation strategy to underpin how the team has evolved would further strengthen your account here.	In this criterion, you clearly show how the Digital Learning Enhancement Team are having a significant impact on teaching practice across the institution and beyond. You very effectively evidence your impact using quantitative attendance data, as well as user engagement with your bank of accessible resources, all of which is underpinned by supportive feedback comments. Reach is evident through the dissemination of your work via national conferences and webinars, and through DIGIFest, which is showing increasing engagement from an external audience. The value of your work is well articulated using testimonials, which emphasise the benefits of drawing together a thriving online community of practice and underpinned by quantitative data showing a sustained increase in NSS scores relating to teaching quality. This very good section would be strengthened with more evidence of the impact on students, for example student engagement data and responses to sessions and resources.
6	Your account of your multi-disciplinary collaborative project for Masters students in Engineering effectively evidences your team's collaborative approach. You clearly articulate your aims and how your team membership supports these. Your membership is multi-disciplinary and cross-sector, involving academics from multiple engineering specialisms, industry practioners and students. Your example of how the team collaboratively approaches module design and evaluation provides good evidence of your effective working practices. You could strengthen your claim by providing more detail on how the team overcomes challenges. For example, you touch on the different priorities of academics and industry which could have been explored further. However, integrating industry practice so firmly clearly contributes to sector priorities such as employability and multidisciplinary working, and you effectively use testimonials to illustrate the benefits to students. Expanding upon how your student team members influence your approach would further strengthen your claim.	You have effectively demonstrated the reach, value and impact of your collaborative approach on nursing students through the wider range of placement opportunities your team have made available to them. The value to students is evidenced through testimonials, which demonstrate how students are gaining broader experience by working with different age groups and in different settings. Value is also demonstrated for team members through opportunities to publish, and for placement providers through the skills enhancement of their staff. Your reach is clear within your school, and you have shared practice with other institutions as a result of project funding. You could strengthen your claim by demonstrating the impact and value to those at other institutions who have had the opportunity to share your practice. You could also usefully include quantitative data to reflect the impact of your placements on student employability outcomes, to underpin the student testimonials you include.

5	You provide useful evidence of the effectiveness of the Postgraduate Mentoring Team's collaborative approach. Your shared purpose of supporting PGR students' skills development and professional recognition in teaching roles is made clear in your claim and your involvement of alumni ensures your team ethos is sustained. You show how your diverse and sizeable team integrates staff and PGR students from different disciplinary backgrounds. In some places more clarity on the role individual team members play and how they contribute to the team's aims would benefit the claim. You work effectively with the PGR training team, ensuring alignment of your training with the UKPSF and other frameworks. Testimonials from senior staff and PGRs demonstrate enhanced skills and confidence in PGRs. Expanding upon the team's review and evaluation processes, such as how your approach has evolved in response to student feedback, would provide more insight into the effectiveness of your collaborative approach.	You clearly evidence the impact of your collaborative approach, using both quantitative evidence such as the increase in those achieving Fellowship status, and qualitative evidence such as changes to colleagues' practice (for example the development of support sessions). Your reach is clear within your faculty and is now extending across the institution. Student feedback on teaching activity shows increased satisfaction with the quality and value of feedback on lab assessments. You could strengthen your claim with further evidence of your impact on students, for example using testimonials and quantitative data (such as NSS) in relation to teaching quality. You could also enhance your claim in terms of reach and value by articulating a little more clearly how you address barriers to participation in the scheme from underrepresented groups – this is something you touch upon but which would benefit from further exploration.
4	You provide some useful evidence of an effective collaboration between your team and apprenticeship providers, providing learning opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. A strength of your claim is the working partnerships you have built with industry figures, and you show how, through this, you are able to impact on teaching practice and employability skills development. It is clear that students have an input into your team and feel supported and listened to. However, your claim would be enhanced by providing more explanation about how your team's collaborative processes have enabled your achievements. Details about your shared values, and how your approach differs from simply an effective cooperative partnership, would be of value here. You also refer to differences in working cultures within your team. Articulating how these differences were resolved and how the team learned to trust each other's expertise as part of the collaborative process would be useful.	You provide some effective evidence of the impact of your collaboration, such as the improvements to digital functionality and testimonials from staff and students on the value of the assessment cycle and workshops. You show the beginnings of wider institutional reach through engagement with the assessment tool. Your discussion about your attempts to increase engagement from under-represented groups was useful, but could usefully be underpinned with evidence of reach, value and impact. Overall, your claim could be strengthened by underpinning your examples with more substantive evidence of impact. You could include student attainment and/or feedback data to better evidence the team's impact on students. More detail on the role played by staff who contributed testimonials could usefully contextualise these. Demonstrating how your impact can be traced back in more direct ways to your team's collaborative approach and their various areas of expertise would also enhance your claim.

3	You describe your initiative to enhance access for disadvantaged students and articulate its value through alignment with sector priorities and University strategic aims. However, your focus is primarily on activities undertaken in response to plans determined by university leadership. This does show your engagement with priorities, but your claim would be strengthened by focussing more directly on how the team worked together in a truly collaborative way to achieve more than they could as individuals. Language such as 'worked with' and 'consulted' could be explained further to articulate how team members work together and with stakeholders. Demonstrating how your diverse membership reaches decisions could be a way to evidence your collaborative practice. A strength here is your engagement with students, through consultation and feedback sessions. Showing how the team adapts to facilitate working with students, and including some student testimonials to underpin this, would further enhance your claim.	You outline a valuable array of activities, which reflect your team's strategic commitment to enhancing institutional learning and teaching practice. You include some relevant evaluation discussion, which is primarily against institutional performance indicators and strategic aims. This is helpful, and shows some evidence of impact, but your claim would be strengthened by focussing on how the nature of your collaboration enabled these notable achievements, and by providing more substantive evidence of the team's specific reach, value and impact in this context. You primarily use institutional-level data, which is relevant, but you could consider how other types of evidence might better relate institutional-level trends and outcomes to the activities of your team. Direct evidence from students benefitting from your initiatives (for example, testimonials or feedback surveys) would usefully demonstrate impact. You refer to the professional development of colleagues, which is important, but can you draw out the evidence for this further.
2	You clearly articulate the team's commitment to development of the new assessment strategy and underpin this with relevant pedagogical theory. This gives a useful sense of the team's shared purpose. Your claim would be strengthened by providing more detail about the team members, for example their areas of expertise and roles within team activities. Examples of activity that demonstrate how your team operates as an interdependent collaboration, rather than a network of individuals, would also be of value here. You provide some pertinent evidence of effective working relationships with stakeholders such as academics and professional services. You could expand here by including further detail on the team's relationship with the module leads. You could also say more about how students directly engaged with the team's work, for example in the IPE streams. Testimonials from team members and stakeholders articulating the positive benefits of their involvement would strengthen your claim.	You describe the outputs of your collaborative design initiative and provide useful examples of the design solutions that have been generated. Although the value and impact of your work is implicit, your claim would be strengthened with clearer evidence of these to underpin your examples. Your handbook is used in schools, however demonstrating your reach and impact within schools, and how this in turn impacts on HE-Level learning and teaching, would be useful here. Evidencing the value of your design solutions could be achieved using testimonials from those who have benefitted, or highlighting external awards or funding achieved. Demonstrating your impact on students, for example using testimonials and attainment or outcomes data, as well as elaborating on examples such as the student-led projects with industry, would strengthen your claim. Finally, how have team members and colleagues benefitted from the collaboration – evidence that their practice has been enhanced, or that they have progressed in their careers, would be relevant here.

1	You effectively detail your commitment to embedding employability into the curriculum and articulate the underpinning pedagogical rationale. This highlights the team's shared purpose. However, your claim would be significantly strengthened by focussing on examples that demonstrate your team's collaborative approach to achieving your goal more explicitly. For example, what was the role and area of expertise of each team member, how do they work together, and how has your team developed over time? Demonstrating how your team functions as an interdependent collaboration, with shared values and vision which generates new ideas as a group, would be highly relevant here. Providing clearer evidence of how the team works effectively together, and with stakeholders, would enhance this section. For example, you could expand on your brief reference to the team's hub and spoke approach. Finally, information on the mechanisms for students to have direct input into your team's approach is pertinent here.	You provide a compelling account of the evolution of the Law Clinic project, and state that these have had value and benefit to others. You are clearly committed to bringing about change for students and in the local community as a result of this initiative. However, focussing on providing substantive evidence to demonstrate the reach, value and impact of your team's activity would significantly strengthen your claim. Articulating the benefits to students through their collaborations with external organisations and their opportunity to lead projects would be relevant. This could be achieved using a combination of testimonials and quantitative data to reflect the impact on employability skills and outcomes. The sustained increase in student engagement you mention could usefully be underpinned with quantitative data. It would also enhance this section if you demonstrated the influence of your collaborative model on colleagues' practice, for example through feedback from the workshops you offer.
0	** As claims submitted for CATE will contain *some* evidence, a score of '0' is extremely rare. Should a reviewer need to compose feedback for a score of '0', reviewers might adapt the style of the exemplars for a score of '1'. **	** As claims submitted for CATE will contain *some* evidence, a score of '0' is extremely rare. Should a reviewer need to compose feedback for a score of '0', reviewers might adapt the style of the exemplars for a score of '1'. **

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