



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATALTM
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI



4TH INNOVATIONS IN THE SCIENCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING CONFERENCE

THEME:

Teaching for Tomorrow

Nurturing Critical, Creative, and Ethical Thinkers for a Complex World

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS & REGISTRATION

2026



28 - 30 September 2026



Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel, Durban

About the Conference

The landscape of higher education is undergoing a period of profound and accelerating transformation. Technological disruption, shifting labour markets, ecological uncertainty, and persistent social inequalities are redefining what graduates need to know, do, and become. At the same time, rapid advances in artificial intelligence are reshaping how knowledge is produced, accessed, and assessed, confronting institutions with questions that extend well beyond policy and into the ethical and pedagogical core of academic life. In this context, the question of how universities prepare students for an uncertain future is both urgent and morally consequential.

UNESCO's (2025) authoritative report on AI and the future of education cautions that AI systems deployed in educational contexts have a tendency to encode and exacerbate existing inequalities, particularly for historically marginalized students, and that technological adoption without deliberate pedagogical and ethical design risks automating poor practice rather than transforming it. This recognition shapes the intellectual orientation of this conference: technology cannot be taken up uncritically, and its integration into higher education must be guided by a clear commitment to equity, agency, and human flourishing.

Innovations in the Science of Teaching and Learning Conference is dedicated to advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education, with a particular focus on the pedagogical, curricular, and institutional responses required to meet the challenges of our time. The conference brings together academics, educational developers, instructional designers, curriculum specialists, student development practitioners, and institutional leaders to share evidence-informed practice, critical scholarship, and transformative ideas.

The conference is grounded in a conviction that teaching is not a neutral act. The design of curricula, the choice of pedagogies, the languages in which knowledge is transmitted, and the values embedded in assessment all carry ethical weight. The University Teaching and Learning Office invites participants to interrogate these dimensions of academic practice and to reimagine higher education as a site of possibility, justice, and renewal.

Keynote Speakers



FULL NAME

Institution
Country



FULL NAME

Institution
Country



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Who Should Attend?

The conference welcomes contributions and participation from a broad community of higher education practitioners and scholars, including academics engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning; curriculum designers, instructional designers, and educational technologists; academic development and student success professionals; postgraduate students researching higher education; institutional leaders with responsibility for academic quality and transformation; and policy makers and practitioners with an interest in the future of tertiary education.

Participation is not restricted to those presenting formal research. The conference values practitioner knowledge and experiential insight equally alongside empirical scholarship, and the programme is designed to facilitate genuine exchange across these modes of knowing.

IMPORTANT DATES

Abstract Submission: Close	30 April 2026
Notification to authors: Acceptance/Rejection	22 May 2026
Abstract Re-submission: Revise and Resubmit Closes on	29 May 2026
Notification to authors of resubmissions: Acceptance/Rejection	12 June 2026
Early Bird Registration close:	30 June 2026
Registration Closes	31 July 2026

Thematic Tracks

The conference is structured around six thematic tracks, which together address the central intellectual and practical questions facing higher education at present:

Track 1: Curriculum Futures

- Decolonial and multilingual approaches to curriculum design
- Integrating indigenous knowledge systems and local languages into disciplinary curricula
- Curriculum responsiveness to labour market shifts, automation, and emerging industries
- Graduate attributes and competencies for complex, uncertain futures
- Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary curriculum models
- Quality assurance frameworks for future-oriented curricula

Track 2: Pedagogies of Possibility

- Pedagogies that foster creative, critical, and adaptive thinking
- Language-responsive teaching in multilingual classrooms
- Designing instruction for diverse learners across modalities and contexts
- The role of instructional design in enabling innovative pedagogy
- Technology-enhanced and blended learning as pedagogical practice
- Teaching for resilience, hope, and agency in uncertain times

Track 3: Students as Future-Makers

- Student success beyond throughput: flourishing, purpose, and civic contribution
- Academic monitoring, early warning systems, and proactive student support
- Students as partners in curriculum design and institutional change
- Peer mentoring, tutoring, and student-led learning initiatives
- Supporting first-generation, multilingual, and non-traditional students
- Redefining success in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts

Track 4: The University Reimagined

- Institutional quality assurance in a rapidly changing environment
- Academic staff development, mentoring, and career progression
- Assessment reform: authenticity, equity, and future-readiness
- Language policies and multilingualism as institutional strategy
- Instructional design units and their role in institutional transformation
- Data-informed decision-making for academic planning and support

Track 5: Ethics, Values, and Critical Reasoning in a Changing World

- Ethical reasoning across disciplines and professional education
- Academic integrity in the context of AI and digital technologies
- Language, power, and epistemic justice in teaching and learning
- Quality assurance as an ethical practice: whose standards, whose values?
- Embedding social responsibility and civic ethics in the curriculum
- Culturally grounded ethical frameworks, including Ubuntu-informed approaches

Track 6: Critical Thinking in the Age of AI

- Teaching critical evaluation of AI-generated content and sources
- AI literacy as a graduate competency across disciplines
- Instructional design for human-AI learning environments
- Monitoring and assuring the quality of AI-integrated teaching practices
- Language, bias, and representation in AI tools and outputs
- Balancing technological efficiency with deep, independent thinking

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Abstracts, no more than 300 words (do not use paragraphs).
- Abstracts must include a clear and brief indication of the purpose of the paper, methodology, major results/findings, and conclusions/implications.
- The abstract should provide a concise indication of what the audience can expect from the presentation.

Abstracts will be reviewed by a panel, based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the overall conference theme
- Clarity and coherence
- Appeal to a diverse higher education audience
- Contribution to scholarship, innovative practice, critical reflection Evidence-based arguments and findings Sound and appropriate methods

Authors will be notified of the review decision by 22 May 2026. Acceptance of the abstract means that the sole author or at least one author of joint papers will present at the conference.

Submit Abstract Here

REGISTRATION

Please note: Your conference registration will only be finalised after payment of the registration fee is received and validated.

REGISTRATION FEES

	Early bird Registration	Registration	Late Registration
UKZN Staff	R2500	R3000	R3500
UKZN Postgrad Students	R1500	R2000	R2500
External Local delegates	R5500	R6000	R6500
External International delegate	R8500	R10,500	R12,500

PAYMENT METHODS

PAYMENT METHODS	GUIDELINES
IDR	UKZN only - Department Code: 3865 and Cost Centre: MC52-30156
UKZN Campus Cashiers	Please indicate the following cost centre: MC52-30156
Electronic Deposit/Direct Deposit	Bank: Standard Bank of South Africa Account Name: UKZN Main Account Account Type: Business Current Account Account Number: 053080998 Branch: Westville (Code:045426) Payment Reference: MC52-30156 and delegate initials and surname - e.g. MC52-30156 JE Smith

Note: The conference registration fee covers registration, conference items (including a gift bag, name badge, notebook, printed/online conference programme and other paraphernalia), certificate of participation, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There are no refunds, but delegates may send substitutes at no additional cost.

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Internal Delegates



Conference Registration.

REGISTER →



An invoice will be automatically generated during registration and sent to your email.



Make payment using any of the payment methods provided.



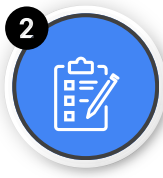
Have your proof of payment in PDF format and send it to ucdp@ukzn.ac.za

External Delegates



Request for Invoice.

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Wait to receive your invoice (this will be sent within 24 hours).



Complete the conference registration (please have your invoice number ready).

REGISTER →



Make payment using any of the payment methods provided.



Have your proof of payment in PDF format and send it to ucdp@ukzn.ac.za

Please note: Your conference registration will only be finalised after payment of the registration fee is received and validated.