



L-R: Sophie Meller, Carl Luke, William Gray, David Nichol, Chris Counihan, Graham Wynn, Jane Davies, Kirstin Mulholland and Helen Woodley. Arlene Anderson and Sue Taylor were also part of the team but are not pictured.

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Teaching excellence recognised with two national awards

Northumbria University academics have scooped two coveted national awards for teaching excellence.

Two teams won Advance HE [Collaborative Awards for Teaching Excellence](#) for their work to improve teaching and support for students.

The awards, known as CATE, recognise and celebrate collaborative teamwork

that has had a demonstrable impact on teaching and learning at either an institutional or discipline level.

Innovative work to support student teachers entering the teaching workforce led to an award for a team in the Department of [Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing](#).

Currently, almost one third of teachers in England leave the profession within five years of qualification and numerous studies suggest that feelings of preparedness can impact on teacher effectiveness and retention.

A group of 11 academics working in Initial Teacher Education came together as the [Research and Innovation in Teacher Education team](#) to better understand the challenges faced by students and ensure they are well equipped for employment and ultimately reduce rates of attrition in the education workforce.

Working with more than 300 students and school partners in Newcastle and the Caribbean, they came up with a number of innovations to better prepare student teachers for the demanding situations they may face when entering the profession, such as safeguarding issues and managing conflict.

The team developed new ways to mentor students and newly qualified teachers to increase their confidence, including simulation-based experiential learning and new action learning methods that guide their practice.

Meanwhile, the [Playful Learning Association](#), a cross-institutional collaboration co-founded by Professor Nic Whitton in Northumbria's [Department of Computer and Information Sciences](#), was recognised for its work to inspire change in higher education.



Professor Nic Whitton, second left, with some of the members of the Playful Learning Association.

The association champions playful approaches to learning, teaching, assessment, research and all other forms of academic practice to create transformative learning experiences that improve inclusivity and make a real difference to students across the country.

The project involved researchers and practitioners from Sussex University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Imperial College London, Teesside University, and Anglia Ruskin University.

[Professor Graham Wynn](#), Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education at Northumbria University, said: “This recognition from Advance HE is a clear sign of the excellent work underway at Northumbria to continually improve the student experience.

“The awards reflect Northumbria’s commitment to collaborations that combine research excellence with educational innovation and are exemplars of the very best innovations and collaborations in the higher education sector. I congratulate the many colleagues and partners involved in both projects.”

[Dr Kirstin Mulholland](#), Assistant Professor of Education in Northumbria’s [Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing](#), co-led the Research and Innovation in Teacher Education team. She said: “We are very proud to have been recognised by Advance HE for our team’s work to develop

new and creative approaches to teacher education.

“We hope this award will help us continue to extend the reach and impact of our work to ensure that future teachers feel better prepared to meet the realities of classroom practice and Higher Education learning.”

[Nic Whitton](#), Professor of Digital Learning and Play in Northumbria’s [Department of Computer and Information Sciences](#), said: “For over fifteen years, the Playful Learning Association has worked nationally and internationally to promote and study playful approaches to teaching and learning.

“I am really proud to have been a part of this growing movement and to be recognised for our work with a CATE award.”

Alison Johns, Advance HE Chief Executive, said: “Advance HE has the privilege of running these prestigious awards on behalf of the sector and we are extremely proud of the way these teams and individuals enhance the quality of teaching in higher education.

“We know that higher education has the power to transform lives but this doesn’t happen by default. Outstanding teaching is the result of knowledge, commitment, passion, energy and creativity. All of these 2024 winners demonstrate these attributes and put them into practice with excellent results.

“It is vital for student success that we invest in higher education and promote the value of excellence.”

The awards further cement Northumbria’s reputation for excellence and innovation in experiential learning. The University has committed to provide transformative experiential learning opportunities for every on-campus undergraduate student to build their skills, social capital and enhance their post-university prospects.

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

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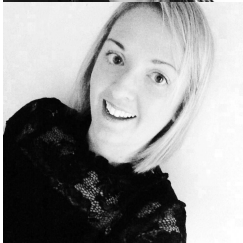


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