



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

**CHED**  
CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT



2026

**Postgraduate Diploma  
and Master's in Higher  
Education Studies (HES)**



# The Higher Education Studies Programmes



Are you looking to build on your understanding of teaching and learning in higher education, given the challenges of transformation and decolonisation of the curriculum in current times? Are you feeling challenged by the changes you feel you have to make but not sure how to go about it? Do you want to engage more deeply in the theory and practice of teaching, conducting research or advancing your own knowledge of educational practice in higher education?

You may want to consider one of the Higher Education Studies (HES) programmes at the University of Cape Town. The Higher Education Studies (HES) suite of courses has as its aim the professionalising of teaching and learning practice in higher education. These courses are seen as an important contribution to the professional development of academics who seek the opportunity to critically examine their practice in the context of transition and change.

We offer a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip by coursework only) and a Masters by coursework and/or dissertation only. Classes take place in the afternoon once a week per course to accommodate working students.

The programmes will be offered in online mode in 2026.



## POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION: SPECIALISING IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES

The Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Studies (PGDip HES) aims to support lecturers in higher education in professionalising their teaching practice. Courses are offered to equip academics to improve as educators in a rapidly changing higher education environment.

Applicants are required to have experience teaching in a higher education context and should preferably be teaching while undertaking the programme. Because of this workload, students are advised to take the PGDip HES over two years. The programme is made up of three core courses and one elective course. Students are recommended to take EDN4504F (Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) and EDN4505S (Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education) in Year 1; and EDN4510F (Higher Education Curriculum and Course Design) and an elective in Year 2.

### PGDIP CORE COURSES:

The core courses can also be taken as individual stand-alone courses - as an occasional student - and can later accrue towards the PGDip Higher Education Studies.

- ◎ **EDN4504F** Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE)
- ◎ **EDN4505S** Higher Education Assessment and Evaluation Practice (AEHE)
- ◎ **EDN4510F** Higher Education Curriculum and Course Design (HECCD)
- ◎ **PGDip Electives:** please see [handbook for choices in 2025](#).

You need to choose 1 more course to complete the PG Dip:  
30 NQF credits at HEQSF level 8

Application deadline:  
**30 September 2025**

For more information or to apply please contact:

PGDip convenor: Dr Tabisa Mayisela: [tabisa.mayisela@uct.ac.za](mailto:tabisa.mayisela@uct.ac.za) or  
HES administrator: Mrs Avrill Dawson: [avrill.dawson@uct.ac.za](mailto:avrill.dawson@uct.ac.za)



## Course Outline for the PGDip HES core courses



### ALL COURSES:

- 30 NQF credits at HEQSF level 8.
- Course entry requires acceptance for the PGDip
- **DP requirements:** 80% attendance at contact sessions and completed submission of assessment tasks
- Assessment: Coursework (100%)
- All applicants are required to complete the UCT Online Application for Admission.
- **Applications deadline: 30 September 2025**

**“** In relation to higher education teaching, another site of decolonization is the university classroom. We cannot keep teaching the way we have always taught... in an age that more than ever valorises different forms of intelligence, the student-teacher relationship has to change.

– Mbembe, 2016 **”**

## LEARNING AND TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION (LTHE) (EDN4504F)

Transforming pedagogies to enhance mindfulness, critical reflection and responsible action as teachers in the university classroom.

LTHE is a compulsory and core course in the HES PGDip/ Master's offering. As an induction course into higher education studies (HES), the LTHE supports the development of self-reflective and critical knowledge generation through a strong socio-cultural theory and learning component embedded in critically reflective practice. It is complemented by a pedagogical approach commensurate with the need for epistemological access and success, linked to the context of transformation and decolonisation. Epistemologically, the theoretical spine engages with sociological theory to induct university teachers into their roles as critical agents of change in their classrooms and other pedagogical spaces. The LTHE has a strong focus on participatory learning and action through a diverse range of disciplinary experts who share diverse insights, perspectives and experiences. Pedagogically, the LTHE places strong emphasis on the Critically Reflective Practitioner Model of professional/academic development. It is designed to enable lecturers to explore their own contexts of teaching practice by engaging in critical reflexivity.

**i**  
The LTHE runs in the first semester in 2026 (12-14 weeks) every Tuesday from 16h00 – 18h30 in online mode.

**i**  
There are 5 assignments, including 1 x oral presentation.

For more information:

LTHE convenor: Assoc. Prof Kasturi Behari-Leak: [kasturi.behari-leak@uct.ac.za](mailto:kasturi.behari-leak@uct.ac.za)



## Course Outline for the PGDip HES core courses

### HIGHER EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION PRACTICE (EDN4505S)

Are you looking for ways to think about and improve how you assess and evaluate students' work? The Higher Education (HE) Assessment and Evaluation Practice course, which is a key component of the Postgraduate Diploma in HE Studies, is open as a stand-alone course to all UCT academics. If you are keen to discover and think about new and dynamic approaches to assessment or re-think standard written and oral examination assessments, you are invited to enroll for this opportunity to engage with others on formative and summative assessment approaches.

This course will help you to examine whether your current assessment methods are aligned to what you are doing and will also help to address challenges of taking assessment and evaluation practices online. In addition, the course looks at evaluation practices in higher education contexts. Where assessment practices are focused on the student, evaluation practices are focused on the course or programme level. You are introduced to a range of frameworks against which to design an evaluation. You are encouraged to reflect on your own evaluation practice and consider all stakeholders involved in an evaluation in terms of what they contribute and in what ways they limit the conclusions that can be drawn. You will design your own evaluation framework and be introduced to a meta-analytic lens through which to evaluate your own evaluation framework.

### HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND COURSE DESIGN (EDN4510F)

This course offers academic practitioners an opportunity to start designing or redesigning curricula and courses which are based on sound educational principles and respond to the contextual issues underlying curriculum and course design within the South African higher education system.

Participants engage with teaching and learning concepts and guidelines that help them design/redesign their curricula and courses. Participants also get the chance to explore a range of modes of delivery in their curriculum or course design, including the appropriate use of blended learning or online provision. The course introduces participants to a variety of curriculum models (e.g., outcomes-based, problem-based learning). It includes an exploration of the core concepts from learning theory which can be applied to the process of curriculum and course design. Participants may use the selected set of conceptual tools introduced in the course to think about curriculum and course design, including learning design, technology affordances and assessment.

Academics from a diverse range of disciplines are invited into the seminar space to share their expertise, experiences and insights in curriculum and course development. These are academics who have redesigned their course or participated in redesigning a degree programme, that is responsive to the contemporary South African higher education landscape. This is an endeavour to expose the course participants to a wealth of cases within their context as they work on their three assignments. These include constructing a situational analysis in anticipation of curriculum change in their respective courses; articulating and substantiating their pedagogical approaches and modes of delivery based on contextual aspects; and developing a proposal for the design or redesign of their courses drawing on the design principles learned in the HECCD course.

#### SESSION DETAILS

Wednesday afternoons  
between 16h00 and 18h30  
– Semester 2 in online mode.

**Convener:**  
Ms Sanet Steyn  
✉ [sanet.steyn@uct.ac.za](mailto:sanet.steyn@uct.ac.za)



#### SESSION DETAILS

HECCD runs in the first semester  
and the sessions are held on  
Wednesday afternoons between  
16h00 and 18h30 in online mode.

**Convener:**  
Dr Tabisa Mayisela  
✉ [tabisa.mayisela@uct.ac.za](mailto:tabisa.mayisela@uct.ac.za)





# MASTER'S IN EDUCATION: SPECIALISING IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES



Like the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Studies, the Master's is an opportunity to take your understanding of teaching and learning in Higher Education to an advanced level. The courses in the Master's are designed to offer an in-depth perspective on issues that constitute academic practices – for example, disciplinary knowledge, curriculum, assessment, or academic literacies. These issues are approached from a range of theoretical perspectives borrowed from the sociology of education. In addition to theory, the other focus of the coursework is to introduce you to methodological considerations for doing research in higher education studies. Through these courses, you will be prepared to do systematic research at a Master's level in the form of a minor dissertation. The programme requires an engagement with teaching and learning practices, your own or others, through discussion and the assignments, which necessitates previous teaching experience in higher education.

## YEAR 1

### **Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (EDN4504F) or any other 30-credit elective (offered in Semester 1) as per handbook**

The Learning and Teaching in Higher Education course is the foundation and core course for both the PGDIP and Masters programmes. It is compulsory for participants from non-cognate disciplines. If you have an education degree or have done a similar course, you can choose any 30-credit elective from the School of Education on NQF level 8 or 9 if approved by the programme convenor.

See more information on page 3.

### **Knowledge and Curriculum in Higher Education (EDN5514S)**

The course Knowledge and Curriculum in Higher Education invites students to engage critically with the shifting terrain of curriculum theory and practice in contemporary higher education. The focus is on renewed scrutiny of what/whose knowledge is taught, how it is taught, and who is included or excluded in these processes. It also foregrounds the curriculum as a contested space that is deeply embedded in broader struggles over identity, legitimacy, recognition, and justice. Framed around three interrelated orientations namely, curriculum-as-epistemic-practice, curriculum-as-social-practice, and curriculum-as-decolonial-practice, the course provides students with theoretical and methodological tools to critically analyse curriculum and advocate for epistemic and social justice. It emphasises the role of the curriculum in shaping who students can become, how they relate to knowledge, and how they engage with the world around them.

**The course runs in the second semester of 2026 every Wednesday from 16.00-18.30 in online mode. Course convenor: Assoc. Prof Kasturi Behari-Leak: [kasturi.behari-leak@uct.ac.za](mailto:kasturi.behari-leak@uct.ac.za)**

## YEAR 2

### **Researching Higher Education (EDN5511F)**

Researching Higher Education introduces students to the field of higher education studies as a site of research. The course aims to enable students who wish to conduct applied educational or social science research in their 'home' disciplines to acquire, develop and critique higher education research theory, methodology and methods of analysis.

The course further enables students to consider the field of higher education research in relation to their own intended educational or social science research interests and foci. Students will be introduced to and grapple with key current themes in higher education research and engage with philosophical, conceptual, methodological and ethical issues related to this research. Students will also be introduced to various guest speakers from the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) and beyond, who will share their current research areas and interests. This will allow students to meet potential supervisors for their mini-dissertation and match their research interests with those of supervisors.



**The work done in this course will feed directly into the research proposal developed with a supervisor in the EDN5501S Advanced Research Design course.**

**The course runs in the first semester of 2026 every Wednesday from 16.00-18.30 in online mode. Course convenor: Assoc. Prof Daniela Gachago [daniela.gachago@uct.ac.za](mailto:daniela.gachago@uct.ac.za)**

### **Advanced Research Design (EDN5501S)**

This course aims to consider some of the initial stages involved in producing a dissertation at the master's level. Producing a research proposal is an important first step, and the course will take students through different stages in addressing this—formulating a question, conducting a literature review, developing a research design, and some preliminary engagement with data collection and analysis. The focus is on establishing coherence between the different facets of the research design.

**The course runs in the second semester of 2026 every Wednesday from 16.00-19.00 in online mode. Course convenor: Assoc. Prof Lesley Powell [lesley.powell@uct.ac.za](mailto:lesley.powell@uct.ac.za)**

### **Minor Dissertation (EDN5500W)**

After completing the course work, students will embark on a minor dissertation on a research topic of their choice, supervised by colleagues in the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED).

**For more information:**

Masters convenor: Assoc Prof Daniela Gachago: [daniela.gachago@uct.ac.za](mailto:daniela.gachago@uct.ac.za)  
HES administrator: Mrs Avrill Dawson: [avrill.dawson@uct.ac.za](mailto:avrill.dawson@uct.ac.za)

## **HOW TO APPLY**

### **Application process for the HES programme/courses:**

**STEP  
1**

UCT has introduced well-coordinated procedures for assessing applications as efficiently as possible, to meet strong demand for places in the University's six faculties. Applicants are asked to note carefully the procedures and deadlines involved.

**STEP  
2**

**Click here for UCT's admission application form. You will need the following important information when completing your application form:**

#### **Section B: Programme of study for which you are applying**

- If you are applying as an occasional student (for non-degree purposes) the programme code is HZ002 and the plan code is HZ002-DOH01.
- If you are applying for the PGDip the programme code is HG023 and the plan code is HG023-EDN03.
- If you are applying for the Masters the programme code is HM042 and the plan code is HM042-EDN03
- If you are applying for the PhD, the programme code is HD001 and the plan code is HD001-EDN01

**STEP  
3**

For application queries and more information on each of the above courses, contact our administrator,  
**Mrs Avrill Dawson [avrill.dawson@uct.ac.za](mailto:avrill.dawson@uct.ac.za)**

**Applications deadline: 30 September 2025**

