Graduate Teaching Assistants Award

Deadline for nominations: Friday, May 3, 2024, at 5 p.m.

I.   Information about the Award

Up to three awards are offered per year in this category.

The list of past recipients can be found at https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ctl/utsc-teaching-awards.

II.   Eligibility

This award has been established for Graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs) in CUPE 3902 Unit 1 who have served in a Teaching Assistant (TA) role at UTSC in at least two different terms, including in at least one of the terms of the current academic year (Summer, Fall, Winter). It is possible to nominate a team of TAs who worked together in the same course (maximum of two TAs in a joint nomination).

III.   Limitations and Restrictions

An individual can win this award only once. In the case of a joint nomination, both members of the team would receive an individual certificate and monetary award.

IV.   Criteria

Nominees are assessed on the basis of **outstanding performance in the support and advancement of student learning**. This can be demonstrated in various ways, including (but not limited to) the following:

a.   *Inclusive learning environment*: Fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect that recognizes students' diverse experiences.

b.   *Ability to summarize*: Identifying and highlighting key concepts.

c.   *Clarity of explanations*: Providing additional clarification and new examples to illustrate key concepts.

d. *Approachability*: Enabling students to feel comfortable asking questions and taking intellectual risks in labs/tutorials.

e. *Innovation*: Contributing to the development of original curriculum material to support the instructor's course goals and learning outcomes.

It is important to note that TAs should not be encouraged to overwork; awards are intended for TAs who work effectively within the hours of work they are allocated.

V. Nomination Package

The nomination package should be organized in a single PDF file using the following headings in this order:

a. Nomination Letter (maximum 500 words, double spaced, 12 pt. font, evidence may be listed in point form)

The nomination letter must be written on university letterhead by a member of the UTSC community who is aware of the nominee's work as a TA. TAs cannot self-nominate, but are welcome to initiate a discussion with a potential nominator.

If the nominator is not the course instructor or academic supervisor to whom the nominee reports, then the nomination letter needs to be accompanied by a letter of support from the relevant course instructor or academic supervisor, also on university letterhead.

The nomination letter must include:

- The course code, title, and approximate enrolment number for the course(s) for which the nominee is being nominated.

- An overview of the nominee's key contributions to the course(s), referring specifically to each document in the "Supporting Material" section and describing the nominee's involvement/role in its development.

- A clear and detailed explanation of the reason(s) the nominee should be considered for the award, specifically addressing the award criteria listed in section IV (above).

b. Letters of Support (maximum 250 words each, double spaced, 12 pt. font, evidence may be listed in point form)

The nomination package should include up to three letters from others aware of the nominee's work as a TA, such as former students. Letters from current students will not be considered by the awards committee.

If the nominator is not the course instructor or academic supervisor to whom the nominee reports, one of the letters of support must come from the relevant course instructor or academic supervisor and be presented on university letterhead.

Letters of support should include:

- An explanation of the relationship between the letter writer and the nominee.

- A summary of the reason(s) the nominee should be considered for the award.

- Clear evidence of the nominee's effectiveness as a TA (for example, what specifically does the nominee do to improve the student experience or help students learn more effectively?). Indicating that the nominee is "a great TA" or "the best TA I ever had" may be a sincere assessment but does little to help the committee distinguish between nominations.

c. Supporting Material (not to exceed 15 pages)

The nomination package should include a brief teaching statement (typically a 1-3 page document that provides information about the nominee's approach to teaching) as well as additional material that offers evidence of the nominee's performance as a TA and/or contributions to the course. While many dossiers will take a fully narrative approach, candidates may include artistic, audio or other materials and formats reflective of their pedagogical practice supplemented by a brief narrative. The candidate should make clear how this evidence substantiates the narrative of their teaching contributions presented in their teaching statement.

Examples may include some of the following:

- A lesson plan: This is typically a one- or two-page document that outlines the nominee's organization of a particular class session (including a rationale or goals for the class, teaching methods, learning activities, props needed, sample test or discussion questions, etc.). It should demonstrate an understanding of student learning and indicate the relationship of the lab/tutorial to the instructor's lecture.

- Discussion questions/prompts

- Course handouts

- In-class or Quercus-based quizzes

- Quercus modules, course websites, discussion lists

- Evidence of professional development related to teaching: This may include formal and informal professional development undertaken by the nominee (workshops, sessions, courses, training, mentoring, consultations, or other professional activities to improve teaching skills or course/discussion design) and the application of learning from these activities to enhance the nominee's teaching.

- Course evaluations, if available. (Please ensure course evaluations are positioned at the end of the dossier.)

VI.   Nomination Deadline and Submission Information

The deadline for submission of nominations is **Friday, May 3, 2024, 5 p.m.**

The complete nomination package must be combined into **a single PDF file** and sent as an email attachment to utscteachingawards@utsc.utoronto.ca.

Questions regarding the nomination process should be directed to the Associate Dean/Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Karen McCrindle, at adteaching.utsc@utoronto.ca.