



## University of Toronto President’s Teaching Award

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## 1. About

Founded in 2006, the President's Teaching Award (PTA) is the highest honour for teaching at the University of Toronto. The PTA recognizes sustained and ongoing excellence in three interrelated areas:

- Educational Leadership
- Teaching Excellence
- Educational Innovation

Across all three of these categories, nominees are expected to demonstrate a commitment to principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Winners of the PTA receive an annual professional development allowance of \$10,000 for five years. In addition to this monetary prize, recipients of a President's Teaching Award are also designated by the University as a member of the Teaching Academy for a minimum period of five years. Through their activities and participation within the Teaching Academy community, these educators play a prominent role in increasing the profile of the University's commitment to high quality learning and teaching.

## 2. Expectations

The President’s Teaching Award (PTA) recognizes and celebrates high quality and innovative learning and teaching demonstrated through a sustained commitment to educational leadership, teaching

excellence, and educational innovation, alongside a commitment to principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

PTA winners are appointed to the President's Teaching Academy for an initial five-year term. After this initial five-year term, the University encourages ongoing participation and engagement with the Academy. The goal of the Teaching Academy is to contribute to the advancement of teaching at the University. The Teaching Academy is committed to University-wide advocacy for teaching and learning based on their involvement in a range of yearly initiatives.

As a member of the Teaching Academy community at the University, recipients are expected to:

- Meet regularly to discuss matters relevant to teaching and pedagogy
- Offer advice to the Vice President & Provost and the Director of the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI)
- Participate in activities that promote and model excellent teaching
- Assist in the assessment of teaching when required
- Act as advocates for excellence in teaching internally and externally to U of T

Academy members may be invited to participate in a range of University events, including addressing Convocation, delivering public lectures, participating in conferences and new faculty orientations, or facilitating teaching and learning workshops. The establishment of the Teaching Academy has created a valuable community of educators who provide ongoing leadership, advice and support to division, department, and central initiatives, as well as University administration.

### 3. Eligibility

The PTA is open to any appointed faculty member—tenure stream, teaching stream or clinical faculty—at the University who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to teaching excellence as well as educational leadership at the institutional level or beyond. For this reason, faculty who are pre-promotion are ineligible. Please note this is not an end-of-career award—while nominations of senior faculty are most welcome, this award carries an expectation of active ongoing involvement with the Teaching Academy and is therefore not well-suited to faculty nearing or entering retirement.

*For information on other awards more suitable for early career faculty, such as the Early Career Teaching Award, please see the [Awards and Funding](#) page on the website of the Vice-President & Provost.*

### 4. Criteria

To be considered for the PTA, nominees must demonstrate excellence in three equally weighted categories. It is understood that these categories interconnect, continually animating and informing one another. The Selection Committee is committed to a holistic review of nomination packages and is looking for applicants whose packages tell a story and provide a rich narrative context for their approach to educational excellence.

Across all three categories a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility should be both salient and explicit in the nomination package. Promoting the integration of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility-related considerations in post-secondary education and practices such as the goals identified in the [Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the](#)

[University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#) and the University's [Task Force on Anti-Black Racism](#) is foundational across the PTA criteria.

## 4.1 Educational Leadership

Educational leadership can happen at any level, whether institutional, divisional, disciplinary, or community-based. Leadership involves advocating for and implementing significant transformation in teaching and learning. Examples might include building capacity to better integrate and support community-based learning experiences in curricula, designing and then sharing innovative approaches to engaging students in the practice of disciplinary research, or driving forward improvements for the preparation of students in professional practice. Equally key to leadership is the development and fostering of change leading to a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse post-secondary educational landscape.

## 4.2 Teaching Excellence

Teaching excellence occurs in myriad ways both inside and outside the classroom. Given the necessarily diverse nature of teaching practices across disciplines, we understand teaching excellence as the intentional actions of an instructor to create an exceptional learning environment by taking up pedagogical practices designed to maximize student learning and engagement. This will undoubtedly include a focus on inclusive practices, meaningful and authentic connections to disciplinary research, engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning, and continual and iterative critical reflection on teaching practices.

## 4.3 Educational Innovation

Educational innovation is the novel execution of ideas that contribute to more effective teaching and learning practices. Innovation is also about problem-solving— identifying a need and taking steps to investigate, assess and address that need. Innovation goes hand-in-hand with experimentation and may take the form of demonstrated success using teaching grants to improve teaching and learning, impactful adaptation of a new technology or technological practice, effective cross-disciplinary work such as adapting a practice common in one discipline or professional area to a different discipline or professional area, practices of community-engaged and experiential learning, new approaches to integrating disciplinary research into teaching, and much more. Educational innovation also extends beyond the classroom and may lead to reciprocal benefits for partners beyond the University.

## 5. Adjudication Process

Nominations are solicited through the Deans of divisions who request submissions from within their divisions. The office of the Dean is responsible for the compilation of documentation. Nominations are due early spring each year.

The President's Teaching Award winners are determined by a process of nomination by divisions and selection by a Selection Committee chaired by the Vice-President & Provost. The Selection Committee includes:

- Vice-President & Provost (Chair)

- Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education
- Director, Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation
- Up to 3 current members of the Teaching Academy
- 1 external assessor
- 2 non-voting members: Associate Director, CTSI and Special Projects Officer, DVPP

Once approved by the President, selected winners are usually announced by the beginning of June.

Enquiries regarding the President's Teaching Award and nomination procedures should be directed to [awards.provost@utoronto.ca](mailto:awards.provost@utoronto.ca).

## 6. Preparing a Nomination

Although the Deans of divisions solicit and compile nominations, the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI) is pleased to support interested applicants, providing high-level guidance about preparing the nomination file. CTSI provides the following supports for prospective applicants:

- Feedback to the nominee on personal award file statements (e.g., statement of teaching philosophy, statement on educational leadership)
- General guidance to the preparer of the nominee file
- Overall feedback on the organization of the nominee file
- [A template spreadsheet](#) can be used to organize quantitative course evaluation data collected via the institutional online system. Instructions for the template are available [here](#).

To further support applicants, CTSI hosts an information webinar every year on how to prepare a successful teaching award nomination package. Details are shared via the [CTSI website](#). Nominators intending to put a colleague forward for the PTA are encouraged to participate. CTSI also jointly administers with the Provost's Office a special channel on Microsoft Teams, the U of T Teaching Award Network, which supports a community of staff, instructors and senior leaders who are preparing nomination files for teaching awards. This MS Team also includes files that can support the preparation of a teaching award nomination – e.g. tip sheets on how to write strong letters of support and individual teaching statements as well as tools for summarizing course evaluation data. To be added to the Teaching Award Network Team, please contact [awards.provost@utoronto.ca](mailto:awards.provost@utoronto.ca) or [ctsi.teaching@utoronto.ca](mailto:ctsi.teaching@utoronto.ca). Additionally, nominators seeking feedback on a file or more specific guidance about the PTA are encouraged to book a consultation with CTSI using their [online consultation form](#).

As nominees must demonstrate excellence in educational leadership, teaching excellence, and educational innovation, it is recommended that equal space be dedicated to each of these categories. Areas in which to demonstrate excellence may include: strong evidence of excellence in teaching practice including evidence of impact at the academic unit/program, divisional and institutional levels, teaching recognition (local, national and/or international), significant contributions in educational leadership, and letters of support attesting to the nominee's teaching excellence and outstanding leadership in teaching.

Below is an overview of key components of the nomination package:

- The dossier must not exceed **35 pages** (coversheet and checklist, table of contents, nomination brief, biographical notice, CV, and course evaluation data are *not* included in the page count). Included below are suggested page counts for each component of the dossier; however, these are suggestions and please do compile the dossier in accordance with the nominee’s strengths and experiences.
- All dossier sections listed below are mandatory (unless otherwise stipulated):

<p><b>Section 1:</b> PTA Coversheet and Checklist  <i>Suggested 2 to 3 pages, not included in file page count</i></p>
<p><b>Section 2:</b> Table of Contents  <i>Suggested 1 page, not included in file page count</i></p>
<p><b>Section 3:</b> Introductory Material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Nomination Brief  <i>Suggested 1 page, not included in file page count</i></li> <li>ii. Short Biography of Candidate  <i>Suggested 1 to 2 pages, not included in file page count</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 4:</b> Decanal Letter of Endorsement  <i>Suggested 1 page</i></p>
<p><b>Section 5:</b> Nomination Letter  <i>Suggested 4 to 6 pages</i></p>
<p><b>Section 6:</b> Educational Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Nominee’s Statement on Educational Leadership  <i>Suggested 2 pages</i></li> <li>ii. Evidence of Educational Leadership  <i>Suggested 2 to 5 pages</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 7:</b> Teaching Excellence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Teaching Responsibilities  <i>Suggested 1 to 2 pages</i></li> <li>ii. Nominee’s Statement of Teaching Philosophy  <i>Suggested 2 pages</i></li> <li>iii. Evidence of Teaching Excellence (must include summary of course evaluation data)  <i>Suggested narrative 2 to 5 pages; additional course evaluation data is not included in file page count. Please do not include raw data (e.g., instructor PDF reports).</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 8:</b> Educational Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Evidence of Innovation and Impact of Innovation  <i>Suggested 2 to 4 pages</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 9:</b> Letters of Support  <i>Suggested 1 to 2 pages per letter. Include 2 to 3 letters from students, and 2 to 3 letters from colleagues.</i></p>
<p><b>Section 10:</b> Curriculum Vitae  <i>Not included in file page count</i></p>

- Use a standard 12-point font with one-inch margins; text can be single-spaced
- Each page must be numbered
- The file must be a compiled PDF

## 7. The Nomination Dossier

Below are key considerations of the nomination dossier:

### 1. Table of Contents

### 2. Introductory Material

#### i. Nomination Brief (not included in page count)

The brief should outline the following on **one** page:

- Name of nominee
- University department/faculty or division/school
- Nominee's full University mailing address (with phone number)
- Nominee's education (degrees and experience)
- Recent academic employment history (administrative and/or teaching appointments)
- Name and contact information of department contact to be notified of nomination results (other than the nominee)
- Name(s) and contact information of person(s) who prepared the nomination file (if different from above)

#### ii. Short Biography of Candidate (not included in page count)

500-700 words (suitable for public release): The biography should address the nominee's teaching achievement while also providing a sense of their teaching philosophy and approach to educational leadership.

### 3. Decanal Letter of Endorsement

This letter, addressed to the Vice-President & Provost, should be written by the appropriate Dean indicating support for the nomination. If possible, the Dean should provide a succinct rationale for why this nomination is supported, briefly identifying any impact the nominee has had at the divisional level and speaking to any broader impact within and beyond the University.

### 4. Nomination Letter

Effective nomination letters provide an overview of the whole dossier—similar to an Executive Summary. As the first impression of the nominee, this is one of the most important components of a successful dossier and offers reviewers a roadmap of what to look for and where it can be found. Key to a successful nomination letter is a level of familiarity with both the nominee and

the dossier. The most compelling letter will evoke a holistic, robust, and three-dimensional sense of the nominee as a teacher and leader.

- The nomination letter can be written by a Principal, Dean, Academic Director, or Chair.
- The letter should include a concise explanation of why the nominee should be considered for the award.
- Letters may include a list of bullet points, at the outset of the letter, highlighting the candidate's key contributions. The body of the letter can be used to elaborate more extensively on these items.
- The nomination letter should demonstrate a commitment to teaching excellence, educational innovation, and educational leadership.
- Nominators are also invited to speak to:
  - the candidate's ongoing commitment and contribution to principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
  - the candidate's course evaluation data, nominators may reference any sustained trends or patterns of excellence in the quantitative data over time, but also excerpt a few select comments from the nominee's qualitative data.
- The letter must include at least **4 (four) supporting signatures** from at least **2 (two) departments/divisions** within the University (one can be the nominee's home department/division).

## 5. Teaching Excellence

### i. Teaching Responsibilities

Please include a list (ideally a table) of all the nominee's teaching responsibilities (courses, supervisory roles) for the past 5 years. Where possible, please indicate the course code and name, enrolment numbers, and course level (undergraduate/graduate).

### ii. Nominee's Statement of Teaching Philosophy (2-pages maximum)

The Teaching Philosophy Statement, **written by the nominee**, is a personal document narrating what is most important to the nominee about teaching and learning in their field. This piece of writing should be personal and authentic and should reference a commitment to the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. The best teaching philosophies provide a conceptual framework that explains the values, principles, and goals that underpin the nominee's teaching decisions and actions. It is recommended that nominees highlight a few specific examples of the pedagogical approaches they employ in their teaching to point to how these values and goals are enacted. Furthermore, the statement should consider the rationale for adopting these approaches and should reflect on the effectiveness of these strategies through assessment. Nominees and nominators may wish to review [CTSI's tip sheet on preparing a teaching philosophy statement](#).

### iii. Evidence of Teaching Excellence

Evidence for teaching excellence takes many shapes and should come from several sources such as, course evaluations, peer reviews of teaching, course development

efforts, or course materials. It is key to address how course design and teaching approaches have impacted student learning within the discipline or professional field (or beyond). It is up to the nominee to decide what evidence to put forward in this section, although **student feedback data is required**. Please find suggestions below.

- Teaching practice (instructional methods, course and program design, curriculum development, etc.):
  - highlights of key contributions to the design and delivery of undergraduate / graduate courses, professional practica or clinical teaching, within a broader education context (i.e., signaling impact beyond one's own set of courses)
  - significant and ongoing contributions to curriculum / program development
  - development of educational materials (e.g., textbooks, teaching guides, learning objects, online modules)
  - syllabus for a representative course that showcases course development innovations (can be excerpted to save space)
  - sample assignments and assessment methods (can be excerpted)
  - descriptions of internship programs, mentoring opportunities, or field experiences
  - evidence of the meaningful integration of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility within their teaching
  - examples of the development of community partnerships that inform the design and / or delivery of undergraduate / graduate courses
  - evidence pertaining to the nominee's integration of their own research into teaching practice and / or curriculum
  - examples of successful efforts to involve undergraduate / graduate students in the research process (e.g., co-publishing, presenting at conferences, mentoring/coaching students, etc.)
  - evidence of improved targeting and integration of professional competencies across curricula
- Teaching awards:
  - list of internal and external teaching awards received along with those for which the nominee has been nominated
  - for internal awards, please indicate how many awards are given each year
  - for external awards please include a brief description of the selection criteria/purpose and significance of the award
- Course evaluation data (**required**):
  - **summary of the most recent 5 years** of evaluation data; **do not** include raw data (i.e. instructor reports or departmental summary sheets)
  - quantitative data (scores):
    - for instructors in units using the institutional online course evaluation system, include a [table](#) that lists:
      - courses taught (course code, course section, semester, number of respondents per course, number of students invited to complete the evaluation per course)
      - scores for the core institutional items along with the corresponding qualitative response scales (i.e., questions 1 – 6) and the underlying response scales (i.e., mostly, a great deal, etc.)

- Institutional Composite Mean (the average scores of questions 1-5)
- Instructions for the template are available [here](#).
- for instructors in units not using the online system, similarly, include a table that lists the courses taught (course code, course section, semester), the enrolment data (number of students per course), the items and their relevant scales, and the scored ratings, and the mean rating for the global question for each course if applicable
- comparative departmental / divisional data should be included where available
- qualitative data (comments –optional):
  - if desired, include the student comments from one or two (max.) representative courses taught in the past 5 years
  - comments to be reproduced in full for each course and not be edited or paraphrased
  - to not disadvantage instructors teaching in very large classes, the **pages with student comments are excluded from the total page count**

## 6. Educational Leadership

### i. Nominee’s Statement on Educational Leadership (2-pages maximum)

Nominees **write their own** Statement of Educational Leadership, providing a personal account of what leadership in education means to them.

Like a teaching philosophy, an effective statement on educational leadership is personal and genuine. Key to a statement on educational leadership are personalized beliefs about educational leadership and a nominee’s reasons for engaging in leadership. A few examples of actions or initiatives that demonstrate leadership are also helpful. Leadership occurs at different levels and takes many forms. Some instructors change institutional cultures with the persistent force of their ideas and passion. Others persuade departments to revise their courses and programs or create and offer professional development to colleagues in their home units and across the country because they want to share innovative ideas and enable others to lead change. Some may present and publish on teaching and learning or mentor colleagues to become better teachers.

Excellent guidance on [how to craft an effective personal statement on educational leadership](#) is available through the University of Calgary’s Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning.

### ii. Evidence of Educational Leadership

To demonstrate educational leadership, nominators should highlight specific projects, recognition, and assessments of impact. It is important to document the impact of leadership over time. Nominees are encouraged to document the impact of their

educational leadership at the departmental, faculty, institutional, national, or disciplinary level.

Educational leadership goes beyond assigned duties, transcending the confines of the institution, the discipline, or program. It makes a difference through deep and significant change. Key to this section is explaining why a contribution or activity is important, why and how it makes a difference, and what specifically the nominee did to make that difference.

What constitutes educational leadership will vary depending on the teaching context but regardless of what evidence is provided, it is important to indicate the impact the work has had on others. We also encourage nominees to include evidence of leadership in initiatives related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility across these categories.

Evidence can include:

- Active engagement in the professional development of others (e.g., colleagues, graduate students, trainees, etc.), for example:
  - delivery of workshops, seminars or presentations on teaching and learning
  - acting as a teaching mentor, providing meaningful pedagogical guidance to graduate students/teaching assistants/instructional team members
  - sharing of teaching resources; evidence that teaching resources or professional development materials have been adopted by colleagues at the University of Toronto or at other institutions is particularly powerful
- Engagement with teaching / learning committees, centres, associations, or organizations, for example:
  - Development / delivery of teaching-focused programming (e.g., sessions, conferences)
  - design of educational resources
  - consultation to these groups provided by the nominee
  - editing a pedagogical journal / newsletter
  - serving on executive/steering/advisory committees leading change initiatives
  - contributions pertaining to educational planning or policy development (beyond one's own unit)
- Engagement with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), for example:
  - research on teaching and / or learning conducted– may include formal or informal studies conducted by the nominee that demonstrate a scholarly investigation of a specific teaching issue within a higher education context
  - dissemination of the nominee's pedagogical research (e.g., scholarly articles, conference or workshop presentations, educational resources – a descriptive overview would suffice, or an abstract or two from representative publications / presentations)
  - details on any educational grants to support SoTL activities could also be included here
- Professional development in relation to teaching and evidence of how the professional learning impacted the teaching practice of the nominee or others, for example:

- Impact / outcomes of workshops, sessions, courses, training, mentoring, consultations, or other professional activities to improve teaching skills and develop pedagogical expertise
- links between professional learning related to teaching and key changes and impacts the nominee has played a role in instigating
- Community engagement in relation to teaching:
  - adopt a leadership role in outreach and relationship-building with local communities
  - collaborate with local communities to create inclusive teaching and learning models

## **7. Educational Innovation**

### **i. Evidence of innovation and impact of innovation**

Educational innovation can occur inside the classroom, across the institution, or in the larger community. Key to innovation is highlighting how the nominee's innovation goes beyond their own classroom. Describe how the nominee's practices represent innovation in the field. Equally important in this section is the willingness of a nominee to experiment. While impactful innovation is ultimately the goal, we also understand that innovation requires continual experimentation and exploration, and this section should provide the context for these efforts and highlight the nominee's capacity and initiative to try new things.

This section should include unique examples of educational innovation that have not been used in other sections of the dossier. Examples include:

- adoption of innovation by others
- production or refinement of technological tools or multi-media resources that enrich teaching and learning
- grants and awards won for innovation and / or experimentation
- new techniques and strategies for impacting equity, diversity, inclusion, and access within the classroom or beyond
- development of initiatives or innovations that have had a significant impact on higher education (at the institutional level or beyond)
- data showing impact (performance measures, institutional change, baseline data for comparison purposes, learning impact, learner feedback, outcome evaluations)
- innovative work around effective implementation of instructional design principles for effective teaching and learning experiences and evidence of success
- fostering of ongoing relationships with local communities
- creative work around designing educational development activities for faculty and others and evidence of impact
- development of new educational resources that have been used by others
- external recognition for teaching innovations beyond U of T (e.g., other institutions, disciplinary organizations or societies, industry or professional groups, community partners, etc.)
- course delivery tools resulting from innovations
- resultant scholarship

## 8. Letters of Support

Nominators should carefully select individuals to write letters of support (a mix of internal and external contacts, people who have known the nominee for many years as well as recent contacts who are deeply familiar with one highly impactful project, etc.). The best letters are specific and authentic. Letters should clearly demonstrate the nominee's effectiveness as a teacher, colleague, mentor, and / or educational leader. These should not be letters produced for tenure or promotion files or any other purpose and should speak directly to the criteria of the award. No more than **2 or 3 letters from colleagues** and **2 or 3 letters from students** should be included. Letters written by a group of colleagues or students are acceptable. If a colleague is both signing the nomination letter and providing a separate letter of support, the colleague should ideally offer evidence and / or describe specific contributions that have not already been addressed in the nomination letter.

In the case of letters from colleagues, please include a brief note on **why each of these individuals was selected** to speak to the nominee's teaching effectiveness. For student letters, it is recommended to not ask for letters from current students. Power dynamics indicate the student is in a vulnerable position, even if they express a strong, unprompted desire to play an active role in supporting the nomination.

## 9. Curriculum Vitae (NOT INCLUDED IN PAGE ALLOWANCE)