

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A NON-ENDOWED FUND

NAME OF NON-ENDOWED FUND

EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

INTRODUCTION

The Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS) has been providing teaching assistants (TAs) with the training needed to improve the quality of their teaching support. In 2011, there was a drive to make the training mandatory for all TAs and, in so doing, contribute positively to the student experience. This pilot project, done in partnership with the Faculty of Social Sciences and the School of Human Kinetics (Faculty of Health Sciences), was a huge success and has allowed the TLSS to convince other faculties to make their TA training mandatory.

In addition, a variety of resources have been developed to help teaching assistants in the various tasks they must perform. Teaching guides on various topics (e.g., facilitating discussion groups, evaluating student work, and managing lab sessions) are available on the TLSS website. These guides are also accompanied by formative assessment tools that allow teaching assistants to improve their skills in specific aspects of their work.

In conjunction with this TA training and the available resources, the TLSS would like to recognize the achievement of exceptional TAs by offering excellence awards annually in the form of a \$100 to \$500 prize money (amount will vary depending on collected funds). This type of recognition would satisfy many objectives, including those of the 2012 Campus Campaign (now the Employee Giving Campaign), which the philanthropic nature and spirit also allow employees to contribute financially to the Excellence Award for Teaching Assistant Fund. Specifically, it would:

- Emphasize the importance that the TLSS places on teaching excellence and the improvement of the students' academic experience;
- Value the role played by TAs by improving the interactions with students; and
- Give students who chose to become TAs an opportunity for a financial boost and an additional accomplishment to distinguish their resumes.

PURPOSE OF FUND

To enhance the student experience both by improving the quality of the teaching support that they receive from fellow students and by recognizing the TA's that are truly exceptional.

AWARD DETAILS

Eligibility Criteria

The applicant must:

1. be a teaching assistant at the University of Ottawa;
2. have accumulated at least 250 hours of teaching assistantships before the nomination deadline;
3. still be enrolled at the University of Ottawa at the time of the award presentation; and
4. submit, in a timely fashion, the documents associated with the nomination process.

Note: a TA can be nominated more than once over the years.

Amount of the award:	\$100 to \$500
Number of awards:	Three (and special mentions if applicable)
Frequency of the award:	Annual
Level and program of study:	Undergraduate and graduate
Application contact:	Manager, Educational Development (currently Nancy Vézina)
Application deadline:	March 15 (or according to the date chosen)

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The nomination form must be completed by a University of Ottawa instructional staff (full or part-time professor, coordinator, etc.) or a Dean and be accompanied by two additional signatures of students who can attest to the assistant's work.

The assistant, for whom a nomination form will have been completed by a professor, must also complete a form describing their experiences as a teaching assistant and any TA related training they may have participated in.

Completed nominations, including the nomination form and the description form, must be submitted to the TLSS office no later than March 15 of every year (or according to the date chosen).

----- END OF PROMOTIONAL SECTION -----

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee will be comprised of three to five people (TLSS employees, professors **or** past recipients of the award).

Evaluation of the completed nominations by the selection committee will occur during at the end of March. The selection criteria will include:

- having completed the requested number of hours as a TA (minimum of 250 hours before the nomination deadline);
- having demonstrated a strong interest in professional development in the area of teaching and learning;
- having had an impact on the student experience in the context of their role as a teaching assistant; and
- possessing communication skills needed to represent, within the University community, the important role played by teaching assistants.

Once the nominations have been reviewed, the committee will conduct short interviews with the finalists to confirm their selection. Interviews will assess, in particular, the criterion related to communication skills.

RECOGNITION

The TLSS will present the awards during a special event held at the end of April of each year. Recipients will have the opportunity to make a brief presentation (5 to 10 minutes each) on their work as teaching assistants and how this work plays an important role in student learning. If they wish, the recipients will also be invited to participate in the Teaching Assistant Orientation Day held by the TLSS in September and January of each year. Participation may take different forms

(facilitator or co-facilitator of a workshop, a panelist, a guest speaker, etc.) depending on the interests of the individual.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. All funds should be sent to the Development Office for credit to the appropriate account. All cheques must be made payable to the University of Ottawa.
2. The financial year of the fund is from May 1 to April 30.
3. Monies will be used to finance awards annually (\$100 to \$500 prize money; amount will vary depending on collected funds) and to defray the cost of the program's promotion and an official awards reception for an additional \$1,000 maximum per year.

GENERAL

If future circumstances make it impossible or impractical for the University of Ottawa to continue using the fund for the stated purposes, the University will endeavor to contact the TLSS' Director General to explore other purposes for the fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

Teaching and Learning Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs
Support Service: c/o Director General, (TLSS)
1001 - 136 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Tel: 613-562-5800, ext. 5300

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