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Parent Policy: [Awards for Teaching Excellence Policy](#)

## Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Procedure

<b>Office of Administrative Responsibility:</b>	University Governance
<b>Approver:</b>	Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
<b>Scope:</b>	Compliance with University procedure extends to all members of the University community.

### Overview

The Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching was instituted at the University of Alberta in 1982.

### Purpose

To recognize publicly teaching excellence by **full-time continuing** academic staff (regardless of seniority), to publicize such excellence to the University and the wider community, to encourage the pursuit of such excellence, and to promote informed discussion of teaching and its improvement at the University of Alberta.

## **PROCEDURE**

### 1. ELIGIBILITY

Any individual who has completed a minimum of five years of teaching at the University of Alberta as a full-time continuing member of the academic teaching staff (Category A1.1 or A1.6) is eligible. Five years is defined as five full years of teaching exclusive of leaves and duties which constitute absence from teaching. (Note: The University of Alberta Academic Year is counted from July 1 to June 30). Nominees must have been teaching within the last 24 months of the date of nomination. If an eligible individual takes on a new position that places him/her in a different staff category, that individual will remain eligible for nomination for 24 months after his/her reclassification. However, individuals may apply for only one of either the Rutherford or William Hardy Alexander Awards in a given year.

Augustana faculty members are eligible to apply for University of Alberta teaching awards, and, for the purposes of eligibility for these awards, years of service at Augustana University College shall be considered equivalent to years of service at the University of Alberta.

Staff or students of any Faculty that teaches undergraduate students are encouraged to submit nominations to their Department Chair or Dean, as appropriate. The GFC University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC) suggests that this be done through an appropriate Faculty committee. The resubmission of nominations in subsequent years is welcomed.

The number of permissible annual nominations per Faculty is dependent upon the number of full-time continuing teaching staff as follows:

Up to 60 staff	1 nomination
61 to 120 staff	2 nominations
121 to 180 staff	3 nominations

181 to 240 staff	4 nominations
241 to 300 staff	5 nominations
301 to 360 staff	6 nominations
	and so on (1 per 60)

Eligibility issues arising prior to adjudication of the award by GFC UTAC will be resolved by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the UTAC Chair.

## 2. NOMINATION

The documentation accompanying a nomination should provide specific supporting information addressing each of the criteria set out below (under the heading "Criteria for the Award"). In particular

- a. Student assessments are necessary for evaluation of adjudication criteria 3. c, d, e, f, i and j. Student assessments should provide information about the quality of teaching over a period of years and over the range of undergraduate courses taught and should demonstrate the nominee's teaching compared with other members of the Department or Faculty.

Letters from alumni are also important and provide information on the long-term effect of the nominee's teaching.

- b. **External peer** evaluations must be included with the nomination (see criterion 3.b). A minimum of one is required; however GFC UTAC would prefer that two or three be submitted. Only the Dean, Department Chair or Chair of the Faculty Committee may solicit external evaluations. At least one such evaluation must come from a peer in a related field at another academic institution. Letters to external evaluators must advise such evaluators that their assessments will be confidential and that only the Dean, Department Chair or Chair of the Faculty committee, and the GFC UTAC will be privy to the information provided.

The external peer evaluations should be submitted in the original and must be current; they must not be excerpted or abridged. All documentation submitted to GFC UTAC must be in English. If material has been translated, please include the original document(s) as appendices. (These appendices will not be included in the total page count.)

GFC UTAC feels that assessments by external evaluators are limited only by the amount of teaching-related information submitted to them. Nominators are encouraged, therefore, to compile comprehensive teaching materials for their candidates (eg, course outlines, samples of handouts, examinations, assignments) so that external evaluators have adequate information to assess the nominee.

- c. Letters from colleagues regarding teaching, course materials, range of courses and activities related to teaching, are valuable for evaluation of adjudication criteria 3. a, g, h and j.
- d. A statement of the nominee's teaching philosophy. When preparing the teaching philosophy, nominees are encouraged to describe not only the 'what' and 'how' of their teaching, but also the 'why'.
- e. Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) scores for the two most general categories – 'Overall, the quality of the course content was excellent[.]' and 'Overall, this instructor was excellent[.]' – and an additional category at the discretion of the instructor must be submitted for each course taught in the past five years, if applicable, per the table below. For those Faculties which might not use USRI scores, a comparable measure is expected to be submitted for the courses taught.

Nomination packages must not include extensive course outlines, bibliographies, examinations, papers, etc. This is an undergraduate teaching award, so detailed information about graduate teaching and research publication is not relevant; however, a very brief curriculum vitae is invited to be included within the 20-page limit. The package must include a brief executive summary prepared by the nominator that outlines (preferably in point form) the key points upon which the nomination is based; this summary is a self-standing document and it is included, as well, within the 20-page limit.

The nomination, including documentation, must not exceed 20 pages. The pages GFC UTAC will consider must be consecutive and numbered 1 through 20 in the bottom right-hand corner; the Rutherford Award Nominator's checklist must be included with the nomination as an unnumbered first page to each of the twelve (12) copies submitted. A title page and a table of contents must be submitted as unnumbered pages to each of the twelve (12) copies submitted. Nominations and all supporting documentation must be in a 12-point font. (NOTE: Anything more than 20 pages will be removed prior to distribution to GFC UTAC members. Any page where 2 pages have been reduced to 1 page will be counted as 2 pages.) Back-to-back copying of material is encouraged. The nominee's name must appear on the first page of the nomination. Nomination packages must be stapled in the top left-hand corner. Do not use cerlox binding, binders, or report covers.

Supporting documentation submitted to GFC UTAC must be in English. Letters must be signed. Electronic signatures are acceptable. If material has been translated, please include the original document(s) as appendices. (These appendices will not be included in the total page count.)

**Twelve (12) copies of each nomination package must be submitted. The deadline for receipt of complete nomination packages is 4:00 pm on the last Friday of February. There will be no discretion to extend the deadline.** (Note: Individual Faculties may have their own earlier deadlines for teaching award competitions and for deciding upon nominations for the Rutherford Award competition.) Please submit nominations to GFC UTAC, c/o Strategic Initiatives Manager, Centre for Teaching and Learning, 5-02 Cameron Library.

GFC UTAC recognizes that nominations from different Faculties might vary considerably and takes this into account during its deliberations. Nominators requiring assistance and advice to prepare their nominations should consult the Strategic Initiatives Manager, Centre for Teaching and Learning.

### 3. CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD

The adjudication criteria for the Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching are set out below (not necessarily in order of importance) and nominations and documents should address these criteria as much as possible:

- a. Exhibits a consistently superior command of the subject matter.
- b. Demonstrates excellent planning and organization in course outlines and objectives, reading and laboratory assignments, handouts, projects, grading schemes, examinations and all other material associated with undergraduate courses.\*
- c. Instills vital interest in and enthusiasm for the subject on the part of students.
- d. Strongly encourages and fosters independent study.
- e. Generates a desire for continued learning.
- f. Strongly encourages students to be critical, to think independently and to solve problems.
- g. Presents the subject matter at an appropriate level of rigor.
- h. Demands that students have a comprehensive, coherent understanding of the subject matter.
- i. Consistently demonstrates a concern for student progress and is available and approachable for out-of-classroom consultation.
- j. Is a valuable resource for both students and colleagues.
- k. Contribution to curriculum development for the program.
- l. Promotes and contributes to excellence in teaching by collaborating with others within the University and/or with communities at large.

It is suggested that all nominees ensure all the material submitted, to support their application, is current and pertains to the award the nominee is seeking.

\*External peer evaluations of criterion b are to be submitted with the nomination.

#### 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE AWARD

The GFC University Teaching Award Committee (UTAC) will adjudicate the award. Each year up to five (5) Rutherford Awards will be funded; at least one award will be given annually. In any given year when there is more than one award, they will not normally be made to individuals in the same department. No one individual is to receive a Rutherford award more than once.

Each year, funds for one additional award will also be made available to GFC UTAC. The Committee may, at its discretion, choose to grant this additional award as either: an additional Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, an additional William Hardy Alexander Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching or an additional Provost's Early Achievement Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (one award across all three categories). In the event that the Committee chooses not to award these additional funds in a given year, those funds will be carried over to the following year's adjudication, at which time the Committee may award the carried over funds in the manner described above.

Recipients of the additional award are subject to the eligibility criteria and nomination requirements for the Award to which the Committee chooses to designate the additional funds (e.g. the Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching or the William Hardy Alexander Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching).

Following the GFC UTAC adjudication meeting, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) or delegate shall notify recipients by telephone call. Recipients will then receive formal written notification from the Chair of GFC UTAC.

Individual award recipients shall be publicly recognized at a special reception, at Convocation and at the Celebration of Teaching and Learning, and shall receive an appropriate memento. A permanent plaque recognizing their achievement shall be located in the Rutherford Galleria.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [[▲Top](#)]

<b>Full-Time Continuing</b>	Full-time academic staff (Categories A1.1 or A1.6) as defined in <u><a href="#">Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff and Colleagues</a></u> .
<b>External Peer</b>	A peer from an academic institution OTHER than the University of Alberta

### **FORMS**

Should a link fail, please contact [uappol@ualberta.ca](mailto:uappol@ualberta.ca). [[▲Top](#)]

[Rutherford Award Nominator's Checklist](#)

[Undergraduate Teaching Document – USRI Results](#)

### **RELATED LINKS**

Should a link fail, please contact [uappol@ualberta.ca](mailto:uappol@ualberta.ca). [[▲Top](#)]

[Recruitment Policy \(Appendix A\) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff and Colleagues](#)