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William Hardy Alexander Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Procedure

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

Overview

The William Hardy Alexander Award for Excellence in Sessional Teaching was approved by GFC on November 26, 2001. On November 6, 2006, the award was renamed the William Hardy Alexander Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

Purpose

To recognize publicly excellence in undergraduate teaching by **academic staff**, to publicize such excellence to the University and the wider community, to encourage the pursuit of teaching excellence, and to promote informed discussion of teaching and its improvement at the University of Alberta.

PROCEDURE

1. ELIGIBILITY

Faculties may nominate one candidate per 60 academic staff in Categories A2.1 and A2.2, excluding full-time graduate students. Due to the difficulty in determining the number of staff in these categories centrally, each Faculty is asked to determine the number of nominations based on this ratio. Under the 1 per 60 ratio, most Faculties will nominate one candidate, and the Faculties that employ the greatest number of sessional staff will nominate two.

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

Temporary academic staff (Categories A2.1 and A2.2) as well as continuing academic staff in Categories A1.2 (Administrative Professional Officers), A1.3 (Faculty Service Officers), A 1.4 (Librarians), A1.5 (part-time continuing academic staff) and staff in Categories A3.1 and A3.2 (Trust staff), with at least three years teaching experience (and who have taught at least 18 credits) at the University of Alberta are eligible for this award. Three years is defined as contracts in three different academic years. (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. Full-time graduate students are not eligible for this award. If an eligible individual takes on a full-time position (in Category A1.1 or A1.6), that individual will remain eligible for nomination for 24 months after his/her reclassification. However, individuals may apply for only one of either the William Hardy Alexander or Rutherford Awards in a given year

Eligibility issues 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, trainees and other learners 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 two are required. Only the Dean, Department Chair or Chair of the Faculty committee may solicit external evaluations. At least one such evaluation must come from an academic in a related field at another institution; only one such evaluation may be from a former trainee or learner. 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 University Teaching Awards Committee 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, 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 three 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 William Hardy Alexander Nominator's checklist (see link provided under FORMS below) 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 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 William Hardy Alexander 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 William Hardy Alexander 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 in students a vital interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject.
- 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. Requires 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 academic peer (off-campus) 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 two (2) Alexander awards will be funded; at least one award will be given annually.

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 (eg. 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 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](#)]

Academic Staff	Temporary academic staff (Categories A2.1 and A2.2) as well as continuing academic staff in Categories A1.2 (Administrative Professional Officers), A1.3 (Faculty Service Officers), A 1.4 (Librarians), A1.5 (part-time continuing academic staff) and staff in Categories A3.1 and A3.2 (Trust staff), as defined in Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff and Colleagues.
Full-time Position	Full-time academic staff (Categories A1.1 or A1.6) as defined in <u>Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff and Colleagues</u> .
External Peer	A peer from an academic institution OTHER than the University of Alberta.

FORMS

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

[William Hardy Alexander Award Nominator's Checklist](#)

[Undergraduate Teaching Document – USRI Results](#)

RELATED LINKS

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

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