WHAT DOES GOOD TEACHING LOOK LIKE TO STUDENTS?

An analysis of Teaching Awards nomination data
Teaching Awards Background

• Our Teaching Awards are the longest-running in the UK, now in their 9th year

• We normally receive 2,000 – 3,000 open-ended nomination comments from students

• There are eight award categories, including:
  o Best Overall Teacher
  o Best Feedback
  o Best Personal Tutor
  o Best Student Who Tutors
  o Best Research or Dissertation Supervisor
  o Best Support Staff
  o Best Course
  o Innovative Assessment
Teaching Awards Research

• Funded by a Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) small grant

• Research carried out by a Research Assistant (Kieran Bunting, Masters student) from Feb to Aug 2016
  o In consultation with the VPAA (Imogen Wilson for 2015-16, Patrick Garratt for 2016-17) and Academic Engagement Coordinator (Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka)

• Analysing themes across all 2,296 nominations from 2015-16 using NVivo
  o The vast majority of student nominations fell into the Best Overall Teacher category
Teaching Award Nominations Distributed Across All Colleges

- This is roughly in line with the student populations of each College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Nominations</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAHSS</td>
<td>1,865</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMVM</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender Breakdown of Nominations

- Women staff are less likely to be nominated than male staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL NOMINATIONS</th>
<th>SHORTLISTED</th>
<th>WINNERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unknown</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,162</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2014-15

2015-16
Four Key Themes in Student Perceptions of Teaching Excellence

1. Concerted, Visible Effort
2. Charisma, Personality & Engaging Teaching
3. Breaking Down Student-Teacher Barriers and Fostering Student Engagement
4. Consistency, Predictability and Stability of Support
Teaching Theme 1: Concerted, Visible Effort

• This theme had strong overlaps with all other themes, and especially the sub-theme of approachability.

• This theme highlighted visible staff effort in areas such as:
  o improving the course material or teaching to improve student engagement, and
  o acting on student feedback to improve the learning community.

• Students understood that teachers are very busy, which justified their appreciation of excellent teachers’ choice to prioritise students.

"She routinely gives over a page long of feedback, explaining strengths, weaknesses, and ways of improving. She gives students additional opportunities for feedback with formative assessments... Her feedback has helped me achieve the highest grades I’ve ever received and helped me get the most out of this course."

Student nomination comment for Lynne Copson, winner of the 2014-15 Best Feedback Award
Examples of Related Good Practice for Concerted, Visible Effort

- **Replying to all queries promptly** and with adequate attention and effort

- **Being organised and prepared** for teaching with transparent goals and showing how each lecture fits into a **holistic view of the course** as a whole

- When not having a response to an issue or question, taking the time to **find the appropriate information** for the student

- Including adding **accessible, helpful material and links on LEARN**

- Providing **opportunities for ‘feedforward’** (e.g., mock practice tests, review sessions, feedback on essay drafts)

- Promptly delivering **written and/or oral feedback** while maintaining a focus on both **quality and quantity**
Teaching Theme 2: Charisma, Personality and Engaging Teaching

• Students highlighted the importance and impact of highly engaging, exciting and energetic academic experiences.

• Through their charisma and personality, excellent teachers in students’ eyes demonstrate care for students, a passion for teaching and up-to-date knowledge of their subject.
  o These teachers are approachable and student-focused, enjoy teaching, put students at ease and enjoy classtime.
  o They stimulate students’ further interest in academic subjects and inspire students to pursue a new research project, secondary degree, or career in the lecturer’s field of expertise.

"The exercises she had us do in class were fresh and thought provoking. I really enjoyed how she makes a point to talk to the students and to encourage further learning. Her welcoming personality made me feel comfortable in class... It's very obvious that she's very invested in teaching and cares a lot about her students."

Student nomination comment for Amy Chandler, runner up for the 2014-15 Kendall Award for Teaching in Medicine
Examples of Related Good Practice for Charisma, Personality and Engaging Teaching

• Bringing **energy and passion** to every lecture, no matter the time or class size

• Showing students they **enthusiastically care** about the topic by **demonstrating research-led, up-to-date teaching**
  - Including examples from the teacher’s own research or perspectives on exciting developments in the field
  - Embedding new information and practical, real life examples into course material to develop students’ connection to the topic

• Creating an **engaging, student-centred lecture** method and style to facilitate engagement
  - Facilitating ‘interactive’ lectures including groupwork and problem-solving
  - Creating an environment where students feel more comfortable participating

• Delivering **innovative methods of assessment and feedback**
  - Facilitating a podcast as a method of assessment, or creating an audio file for feedback since students found literally hearing positive encouragement motivating
Teaching Theme 3: Breaking Down Student-Teacher Barriers and Fostering Student Engagement

- Students highlighted the importance of teachers developing a **strong academic community** by getting to know their students as individuals and by showing each student care and respect.

- Students praised excellent teachers who provide **personalised feedback** and **support** to help everyone in the learning community.

- **Working in partnership with students** is a strong aspect of fostering student engagement, showing that staff listen to feedback, work with student representatives and possibly co-create elements of the curriculum together.

"I loved how every week was different and you never quite knew what was going to happen... For example we were asked to act as policy makers in a nuclear war simulation and write a 'last order' to be locked on a nuclear submarine... For the feedback session we could give anonymous feedback on the course and Malcolm wrote an informative weekly blog entry in which he reflected about each week’s class."

Student nomination comment for Malcolm Craig’s course The Nuclear Cold War in Policy and in Public (1945-1989), winner of the 2014-15 Best Course Award
Examples of Related Good Practice for Breaking Down Student-Teacher Barriers and Fostering Student Engagement

• Creating a strong academic community with students, and demonstrating care
  o Knowing students’ names and organising informal, extracurricular events
  o Treating all student ideas and comments with validity and respect
  o Ensuring all students feel comfortable engaging and participating in discussions

• Providing personalised support (including personalised feedback)
  o Ensuring feedback contains encouragement and allows for a positive dialogue
  o Identifying students requiring additional help and reaching out to them

• Facilitating student/staff partnerships in learning and teaching
  o Having student-led seminars or frequently including student presentations
  o Allowing students to decide on their own assessment topics
  o Co-creating elements of the curriculum in partnership with students

• Receiving and acting on student feedback to enhance the overall learning experience
  o Working actively with student representatives, having individual meetings with students or receiving anonymous feedback about teaching improvements
Teaching Theme 4: Consistency, Predictability and Stability of Support

• A large number of nominations highlighted how teachers helped students overcome personal struggles and persevere with their studies.

• The trends in comments highlighted the importance of predictability and stability of support from staff; the most frequent word used throughout all nominations was “always”.

• Students frequently discussed the proactive and positive attitude of staff who communicated well with and helped students. In courses, this also aligned with effectively communicating transparent and digestible expectations for student work and assessments.

"He prepared practice exam questions (on top of past exams) and told us to submit the answers for feedback... He will always try to provide us tricks on how to approach complicated concepts from an intuitive perspective... He has a mid-semester course survey so we can provide anonymous feedback on how the course is going... He would always include a little puzzle related to what we were learning!"

Iain Murray, winner of the 2014-15 Van Heyningen Award for Teaching in Science and Engineering
Examples of Related Good Practice for Consistency, Predictability and Stability of Support

- **Being approachable and proactive** in communications
  - Having an open door policy or clear office hours
  - Proactively providing supplementary material on LEARN, or signposting to subject-related events

- **Being organised**
  - Preparing for meetings and following up after
  - Organising scaffolded lectures with clear themes and content that builds
  - Maintaining an organised LEARN area that is easy for students to navigate

- **Being knowledgeable and up-to-date** on University administrative processes, services and resources share with students

- **Ensuring transparency and consistency**
  - Ensuring all students fully understand the grading criteria and marking scheme
  - Gathering, sharing and working on mid-semester feedback
  - Summarising assessment feedback for the whole class for complete understanding
Best Personal Tutors

• For students, the best Personal Tutors demonstrate consistent support with a caring, compassionate attitude:
  o They help students feel comfortable reaching out to them.
  o They are a reliable source of support to help students overcome academic and/or personal struggles affecting their studies, and gain support from other University services.

• Top tutors understand each individual student to take note of issues and personalise their advice:
  • They understand students’ individual strengths, weaknesses, goals and ambitions.
  • They help students persevere with their studies when facing challenges.
  • They encourage students’ development through transferrable skills or academic opportunities.

"She has taken the time to understand me and how she can best support my education and experience here at Edinburgh. She is very supportive when I have problems... Alison has confidence in me and it’s motivating me to study hard for exams. To be honest, I’d probably be in a bad place without her... It’s incredible to feel like someone has your back here at university and I know that she will always do her absolute best to help whatever situation I find myself in!"

Student nomination comment for Alison Koslowski, winner of the 2014-15 Best Personal Tutor Award
Best Research and Dissertation Supervisors

- They (like PTs) provide **consistent support**, and they focus on building an **excellent working relationship** which underpins students’ strong research or dissertation project:
  - They are passionate about the student’s research
  - They communicate effectively (face-to-face and online)
  - They prepare well for supervision meetings
  - They provide numerous suggestions or ideas about the student’s research

- Excellent supervisors foster students’ advancement of their research, as well as their **professional and academic development**:
  - They suggest ideas for workshops, events, conferences and publishing as well as professional connections.

"Dr. Adams is an exceptional dissertation supervisor for several reasons. First, he reads my work with a sharp critical eye, offering incisive suggestions that help me understand what it will take to produce truly great scholarship. He combines this with the ability to provide meaningful and specific encouragement... I am immensely proud to be associated with Dr. Adams."

Student nomination comment for Nicolas Adams, winner of the 2014-15 Best Research or Dissertation Supervisor Award
Best Support Staff

- The nominations analysed in this category are incredibly diverse, covering a wide range of positions for what students considered to support their educational experience from Careers Service staff to Student Disability Service staff to lab managers to course secretaries to Students’ Association staff.

- They encourage student wellbeing by creating a healthy, safe and supportive learning community to benefit all students, and especially struggling students:
  - They create extracurricular opportunities including career events or speakers.
  - They facilitate the provision of effective student Peer Learning and Support groups.

"Yvonne has been a constant companion throughout my university journey. She has helped me work through very difficult times, sometimes arising from my own health obstacles as a disabled student... She has also been there to celebrate achievements!"

Student nomination comment for Yvonne Hodgson, winner of the 2014-15 Supporting Students’ Learning Award
Best Students who Tutor

- Students who tutor (including postgraduate tutors and demonstrators as well as undergraduate peer support leaders) go above and beyond to simplify, condense, explain and foster discussion about course material:
  - They create additional course materials
  - They find related, real life and practical examples beyond what has been offered in the course to enhance student engagement
  - They hold revision sessions before exams
  - They work with struggling students to clarify specific issues

- These excellent tutors maintain a clear and consistent structure of sessions that both push students’ learning further and reinforce the main messages of lectures.

"He took so much time to write guides on how to approach the tutorial questions and teach us the best practice, emailed us these and was always willing to reply to any further queries. He was keen to participate in a revision session organised by the Class Reps and was always willing to give us the broader picture — not just how to do a question but what it implies in real life. I personally consider that as an engineer it is very important to see the bigger picture in order to understand and prevent failures, and this is something I learned from him."

Student nomination comment for Ahmad Al-Remas, winner of the 2014-15 Best Student Who Tutors Award
Students’ Association Recommendations

A. Continue to work to develop a strong sense of academic community within each subject area
B. Include students more actively in pedagogical discussions to increase transparency, accessibility and inclusion by showing students that they are partners in learning and teaching.
C. Make time for students within working hours.
D. Engage with the University’s Athena SWAN Institutional and School Self-Assessment Teams to identify ways to integrate the Teaching Awards into wider discussions around recognition and reward for women staff. The University should also consider how the Teaching Awards data may be used in the future to look at the extent of racial equality in the institution.
E. Place greater emphasis on the Best Support Staff Award to increase nominations and recognition of the University’s professional and support staff, and especially women staff members.
F. Continue to support postgrad tutors and work to ensure consistency of roles across each College, and pay tutors adequately.
G. Continue to provide regular training and support to personal tutors and research supervisors, particularly relating to supporting students with mental health issues.
This Year’s Teaching Awards

• This year’s Teaching Awards are now open until 23 March, 2017

• Please encourage students to nominate staff in your school – including nominations of support staff and students who tutor!

• All nominees receive a congratulatory letter and badge, and are listed at https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/nominees/

• A student judging panel assesses all nominations based on the quality of teaching and student support shown in students’ comments, not the quantity of nominations.

• All shortlisted nominees and student nominators will be invited to the ceremony.
University of Edinburgh CPD Framework

University of Edinburgh Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching

Associate Fellow
- Introduction to Academic Practice
- PG Cert in Academic Practice

Fellow
- Clinical Educator Programme
- PG Cert in Clinical Education

Senior Fellow
- PG Cert in Digital Education

Principal Fellow
- Edinburgh Teaching Award L1
- Edinburgh Teaching Award L2

Direct application to HEA
- Individual application
- Individual application
- Individual application

iad.cpdframework@ed.ac.uk
What is the Edinburgh Teaching Award?

A supported path for development in learning and teaching that enables participants to:

• think and write about learning and teaching
• focus on their development
• critically reflect on their own practice
• refer to relevant literature and research
• work towards one of the 4 levels of HEA Fellowship

It takes from six months to two years to complete a level of the award.
What is the UK Professional Standards Framework?

Dimensions:

• Areas of activity: What they do
• Core knowledge: What they know
• Professional values: What really matters

Descriptors:

I  Associate Fellow
II  Fellow
III Senior Fellow
IV Principal Fellow
TEACHING MATTERS

www.ed.ac.uk/teaching-matters

A website to show how important teaching is to the University, and to create a community of interest around learning and teaching.

Social media

@UoE_Teaching

Teaching and learning resources

Inspired by our features and video highlights? Browse our list of useful resources for more ideas and information.

Events

April
May
June
Future events
Past Events

School highlights

School of Dentistry

School of Chemistry

Blogs

Videos

Teaching with Wikipedia

Teaching Matters blog

AllPaws: Vet students at work in the community

Teaching Matters blog

Teaching matters for all: teaching, learning and assessing teaching at the university of Edinburgh
Thank you!

The full report is available via www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/teachingawards on the Teaching Awards Research tab. Please have a look, and spread the word to your colleagues!

Please encourage students to nominate staff in this year’s Teaching Awards. We hope to see many of you at the ceremony in April.