# Award for Experiential Learning

The University of Calgary's *Eyes High* strategy inspires our university community to "enrich the quality and breadth of learning." Acknowledging that outstanding contributions to this vision can take many different forms, the University of Calgary Teaching Awards recognize excellence in diverse learning contexts, by individuals and teams, and through curriculum design and educational leadership. A University of Calgary Teaching Award is a distinguished honour for members of our university community who, through their commitment and expertise, create deep and lasting learning experiences.

## 1.0 Eligibility

The University of Calgary Teaching Award for Experiential Learning recognizes the teaching excellence of **an individual or team of academic staff members on Continuing, Contingent, Limited-Term or Sessional appointments who have taught two or more courses that integrate experiential learning**. Instructors who have taught the same course on two or more separate occasions are eligible for this award.

In the context of these awards, experiential learning is defined as intentionally designed and assessed opportunities for students to apply their learning in a practical context and to reflect on their experience, thereby empowering them to use their knowledge in new settings. Experiential learning opportunities emphasize learning by doing and enhance individual and collaborative skills, help individuals develop higher order thinking to challenge and advance their perspective through critical reflection, and give students tools and skills to take on roles of active citizens in a complex world. To qualify for consideration for this award, the nominee's integration of experiential learning assignments should show an emphasis on quality and well integrated EL, as well as account for a substantial component of the course. The range of eligible initiatives is wide, including but not limited to community-engaged learning, curriculum-integrated and research-based experiential learning opportunities in the University of Calgary or in the wider community. **For the purposes of this award, experiential learning does not include elements of programs required for accreditation, such as clinical or other professional practica.**

No individual may receive the University of Calgary Teaching Award for Experiential Learning Initiatives more than once. This award may not be conferred each year, depending on whether qualifying nominations are received.

## 2.0 Award Criteria

Teaching excellence at the University of Calgary is exemplified by characteristics of scholarly teaching that cross teaching and learning contexts. Although there will be specific ways in which individual

teachers demonstrate these qualities in facilitating experiential learning, nominations will be assessed based on evidence of the nominee's demonstrated ability to:

- Use a real-world experience of applying or creating knowledge to motivate students' interest and learning, and establish relevance of subject matter.
- Set clear goals and expectations for integrating real-world learning experiences in courses and individual learning activities.
- Design meaningful experiential learning activities that actively engage students, and encourage collaboration between students, instructors and often community partners.
- Design strategies for students to practice meaningful and ongoing reflection to connect their learning with other experiences, disciplinary knowledge, and/or career aspirations.
- Challenge learners to develop their critical thinking and independent learning abilities through experiential learning.
- Design student assessment strategies that enhance learning, and are appropriately aligned with overall course learning outcomes and intended experiential learning in a course.
- Design strategies to facilitate feedback (e.g. instructor, self, and/or peer) on students' learning to motivate and support progressive learning and growth, and the application of knowledge in students' life activities.
- Exhibit respect for students, which includes showing interest in students' inquiries and ideas, and support for their learning throughout the sometimes unpredictable experiential learning process.
- Collect feedback, engage in professional learning activities, and reflect on teaching, in order to strengthen their teaching practices and improve experiential learning.

## 3.0 Nomination Package

The nomination should be coordinated between the nominator(s) and the nominee. Nominations may be submitted by up to three nominators, who may include any combination of former students, faculty and/or instructor colleagues or academic administrators, and ideally across groups.

The nomination package should include:

- A brief nomination letter (2-page maximum) outlining how the nominee meets the award criteria. Contributed by an individual nominator, or co-written by nominators;
- A nomination dossier (10-page maximum, excluding letters of support); and
- A cover page verifying that the nominee meets all eligibility requirements and that all recommended nomination components have been included in the submission.

### 3.1 Nomination Letter
A nomination letter outlining how the nominee meets (or exceeds) the award criteria may be contributed by an individual nominator, or be co-written by 2-3 nominators. A well-crafted co-written

nomination will in no way disadvantage a nominee. Nomination letters are not included in the dossier page count; the letter should be a maximum of two pages.

"Well-crafted" nomination letters address the award criteria and provide examples to support the claims made. Guidance on writing effective nomination letters is available through the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning website.

**3.2 Nomination Dossier**
Teaching excellence is a multidimensional and complex task that required multiple sources of evidence that can be triangulated to produce a robust assessment. While the quality of evidence is a critical aspect of a strong nomination, so is the alignment across data sources. Support for creating a nomination package is available through the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning.

Your nomination dossier should be a **maximum of 10 pages** (excluding letters of support):

- **Teaching philosophy statement (1-page)**
  The teaching philosophy statement explains the rationale that guides your practice, and provides information about your context, approaches and contributions.

- **Descriptions of specific strategies**
  You should provide description of specific strategies you use in your teaching practice and include some indication of impact on learning.

- **Summary of data from student feedback**
  A summary of data from student feedback and representative samples of student comments received across multiple learning contexts and years. It is recognized that these data may not be available or appropriate, depending upon the learning context (e.g. in small class sizes or in courses with sections taught by multiple instructors).

- **Reflective summary statement**
  A brief reflection and summary of information included in your dossier to put it in context, highlight how they connect to your teaching philosophy and practices, and identify future areas for growth.

- **Letters of support**
  Two signed letters of support that complement and align with claims made in the nomination dossier, and provide further evidence of impact.

## 4.0 Adjudication Process

The selection process for each of the university-level teaching awards will be similar. Administrative processes surrounding communication, nomination and selection processes will be coordinated through the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning.

A committee, chaired by the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning (or delegate) and consisting of two academic staff members, an undergraduate student, a graduate student, and a support (AUPE) staff, management or professional staff (MaPS) or postdoctoral scholar representative, will adjudicate the nomination files. The committee will be guided in its adjudication by the criteria for the award.

## 5.0 Recognition

Recipients will be presented with their awards at a high-profile Celebration of Teaching event. Their successes will be celebrated in a lasting institutional record of teaching excellence on the Wall of Honour in the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning.

Award recipients will be invited (but not required) to join the University of Calgary Teaching Academy, from which honorees can volunteer to share their expertise through mentoring, facilitating educational development activities, or implementing initiatives of their own design.