University of Calgary Graduate Students’ Association

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## GSA Excellence Awards Terms of Reference 2023-2024 Academic Year

**Intake Period: January 29 – February 9, 2024**

Intake Deadline: Tuesday, February 9, 20244:00 PM MT

Submit applications [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/)

Applications and/ or letters of reference received outside of the intake period will **NOT** be evaluated. Late applications will **NOT** be evaluated. Incomplete applications will **NOT** be evaluated this includes missing information, extra information/documents and incorrectly filled out applications. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure completeness of the application package. *Failure to comply with the Terms of Reference will result in disqualification for the award.*

This document and the application form are available on the GSA’s [website](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/).

Questions regarding this application should be directed to the GSA Awards Committee Chair or Vice Chairs at awards.gsa@ucalgary.ca.

*This information is collected following the standards set by the Personal Information and Privacy Act (PIPA). It is required to determine your eligibility for the award and may be used for research and statistical analysis. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, please contact the Awards Committee Chair at* awards.gsa@ucalgary.ca.



# Purpose

The Graduate Students’ Association (GSA) Excellence Awards recognize administration staff, supervisors, research assistants, and teaching assistants who have gone above and beyond their job descriptions to help and support graduate students at the University of Calgary. Only the Excellence in Teaching (Graduate Student) and Excellence in Research (Graduate Student) are monetized.

# Award Categories

Excellence Awards are divided into seven (7) categories: A.1, A.2, B, C.1, C.2, D.1, and D.2.

## Excellence in Administrative Support (EAA)

* 1. *Support Staff:*

Staff serving graduate students in administrative support positions such as staff in the Faculty of Graduate Students (FGS), the GSA, and departmental graduate offices.

* 1. *Senior Administrator:*

Senior administrators who have contributed directly to improving the experience of graduate students such as department heads, graduate program directors, Deans, Provosts, and Vice-Provosts.

## Excellence in Supervision (ESA):

1. This category refers to University of Calgary faculty members who have

supervised Master’s and Doctoral students.

## Excellence in Teaching (ETA)

1. *Graduate Students (Value: One (1) $500 CDN award):*

Graduate students serving in different teaching positions such as sessional instructor, teaching assistant, lab instructor, and grader.

1. *Senior Instructors:*

University staff serving in teaching positions such as university professors, full time/part time instructors, and technicians in teaching positions.

**Excellence in Research (ERA)**

1. *Graduate Students (Value: One (1) $500 CDN award):*

Graduate students serving in different research positions such as mentoring other graduate students, undergraduate students, interns, or excellence as a research assistant. Contribution must be beyond the graduate student thesis.

1. *Research affiliates:*

Research affiliates working full- or part-time at the University of Calgary who assist graduate students in their research such as Postdoctoral Fellows, research associates, lab technicians, and core facilities staff serving in research positions.

# Additional Regulations

1. The Excellence Awards are evaluated by the Awards Committee under the supervision of the GSA VP Academic;
2. All applications will be prescreened for completeness before being forwarded for review. Not all applicants will move onto to the reviewing process;
3. Questions about the application process must be directed to the GSA Awards Committee Chair or Vice Chairs at awards.gsa@ucalgary.ca; and
	1. The GSA Awards Committee aims to respond to all emails in a timely manner but cannot guarantee a response within the 72-hour window prior to the Intake Deadline.
4. Individual award winners and honorable mentions are not eligible for consideration in the category they were recognized in for a period of two (2) years.
5. Excellence awards decisions will be made 10 – 12 weeks from the intake deadline and application feedback will not be provided. These awards will only be announced at the Awards Gala in April.

## A.1 & A.2 Excellence in Administrative Support (EAA): Support Staff & Senior Administrator

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for this award, applicants MUST:

* + - Be in **Good Standing** with the GSA;
		- Be affiliated with the University of Calgary; and
		- Have worked in an administrative capacity at some point during the Spring/Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and/or Winter 2024 semesters.

**Documents Required**

Nominators MUST **submit** [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) **application** that includes:

1. The complete application
2. **Two letters of support** with a one page limit for each letter. Letters must outline why the nominee meets the criteria for this award as well as provide any information thought to be important for the committee to consider during adjudication; and
3. At least one signature from a nominator (supporting letters can be signed by several nominators).

# Submission Requirements

When applying for this award, the following process must be followed:

1. Completed applications MUST be submitted online during the Intake Period;
2. Applications MUST be written and signed in English;
3. Applications MUST be submitted with a University of Calgary email address; and
4. **Incomplete applications (missing information, extra information/documents and incorrectly filled out) or applications received after the intake deadline will NOT be considered.**

**Selection Criteria**

The Awards Committee will evaluate applications based on how well the nominees have demonstrated excellence in support of graduate students (as evidenced in the support letters) and have contributed to fostering a positive environment for learning and research. Examples of ways in which nominees demonstrate excellence may include, but not limited to:

* + - Inspiring and supporting students to think creatively and execute ideas effectively;
		- Demonstrating rapport with students (being approachable, likeable, and engaging);
		- Demonstrating reliability and availability;
		- Offering academic guidance and professional support;
		- Going above and beyond the call of duty to provide support to graduate students; and
		- A clear commitment to improving the graduate student experience.

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## B. Excellence in Supervision (ESA):

# Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, applicants MUST:

* + - Be in **Good Standing** with the GSA;
		- Be affiliated with the University of Calgary; and
		- Have worked in a supervisory capacity at some point during the Spring/Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and/or Winter 2024 semesters.

**Documents Required**

Nominators MUST **submit** [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) **application** that includes:

1. The complete application
2. **Two letters of support** with a one page limit for each letter. Letters must outline why the nominee meets the criteria for this award as well as provide any information thought to be important for the committee to consider during adjudication; and
3. Supporting letters can be signed by several nominators.

# Submission Requirements

When applying for this award, the following process must be followed:

1. Completed applications MUST be submitted [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) during the Intake Period;
2. Applications MUST be written and signed in English;
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4. **Incomplete applications (missing information, extra information/documents and incorrectly filled out) or applications received after the intake deadline will NOT be considered.**

# Selection Criteria

The Awards Committee will evaluate applications based on how well the nominees have demonstrated excellence in support of graduate students (as evidenced in the support letters) and have contributed to fostering a positive environment for learning and research. Examples of ways in which nominees demonstrate excellence may include, but not limited to:

* + - Displaying mastery of, and enthusiasm for, their subject area;
		- Inspiring and supporting students to think creatively and execute ideas effectively;
		- Demonstrating creativity in supervision and a willingness to tailor their approach to meet the needs of their students;
		- Demonstrating rapport with students (being approachable, likeable, and engaging);
		- Demonstrating reliability and availability;
		- Exhibiting fairness in all aspects of supervision (testing, grading, interacting with students, etc.);
		- Providing timely and constructive feedback to students, peers, and colleagues;
		- Offering academic guidance and professional support;
		- Going above and beyond the call of duty to provide support to graduate students; and
		- A clear commitment to improving the graduate student experience

## C.1 Excellence in Teaching (ETA): Graduate Students

# Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, applicants MUST:

* + - Be in **Good Standing** with the GSA;
		- Be affiliated with the University of Calgary; and
		- Have worked in a teaching position at some point during the Spring/Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and/or Winter 2024 semesters.

# Documents Required

Nominator MUST **submit an** [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) **application** that includes:

1. The complete application
2. A personal statement as to why you believe that you deserve this award. The statement should focus on your role (i.e. sessional instructor, teaching assistant, lab instructor or grader) and the impact your role has had on students and/or the department. *The statement must not exceed 500 words.*
3. **Two letters of reference** and with a one page limit for each reference.
* Letters must outline why the nominee meets the criteria for this award as well as provide any information thought to be important for the committee to consider during adjudication.
* Reference can be from Graduate Supervisor/Volunteer Supervisor/Manager/Team lead, etc.
* Application deadline is inclusive of receipt of references.

# Submission Requirements

When applying for this award, the following process must be followed:

1. Completed applications MUST be submitted [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) during the Intake Period;
2. Applications MUST be written and signed in English;
3. Applications MUST be submitted with a University of Calgary email address;
4. **Incomplete applications (missing information, extra information/documents and incorrectly filled out) or applications received after the intake deadline will NOT be considered.**

# Selection Criteria

# The Awards Committee will evaluate applications based on how well the nominees have demonstrated excellence as a graduate student (as evidenced in the reference letters) and have contributed to fostering a positive environment for learning and research. Examples of ways in which nominees demonstrate excellence may include, but not limited to:

* + - Displaying mastery of, and enthusiasm for, their subject area;
		- Inspiring and supporting students and colleagues to think creatively and execute ideas effectively;
		- Demonstrating creativity in teaching and supervision and a willingness to tailor their approach to meet the needs of their students;
		- Demonstrating rapport with students, colleagues, and superiors (being approachable, likeable and engaging);
		- Demonstrating reliability and availability;
		- Exhibiting fairness in all aspects of teaching and supervision (testing, grading, interacting with students, etc.);
		- Providing timely and constructive feedback to students and colleagues;

## C.2 Excellence in Teaching (ETA): Senior Instructors

# Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, applicants MUST:

* + - Be in **Good Standing** with the GSA;
		- Be affiliated with the University of Calgary; and
		- Have worked in a teaching position at some point during the Spring/Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and/or Winter 2024 semesters.

# Documents Required

Nominators MUST **submit** [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) **application** that includes:

1. The complete application
2. **Two letters of support** with a one page limit for each letter. Letters must outline why the nominee meets the criteria for this award as well as provide any information thought to be important for the committee to consider during adjudication; and
3. Supporting letters can be signed by several nominators.

# Submission Requirements

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# Selection Criteria

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* + - Displaying mastery of, and enthusiasm for, their subject area;
		- Inspiring and supporting students and colleagues to think creatively and execute ideas effectively;
		- Demonstrating creativity in teaching and supervision and a willingness to tailor their approach to meet the needs of their students;
		- Demonstrating rapport with students, colleagues, and superiors (being approachable, likeable and engaging);
		- Demonstrating reliability and availability;
		- Exhibiting fairness in all aspects of teaching and supervision (testing, grading, interacting with students, etc.);
		- Providing timely and constructive feedback to students and colleagues;

**D.1 Excellence in Research (ERA): Graduate Students**

# Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, applicants MUST:

* + - Be in **Good Standing** with the GSA;
		- Be affiliated with the University of Calgary; and
		- Have worked in a research position at some point during the Spring/Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and/or Winter 2024 semesters.

# Documents Required

Nominators MUST **submit an** [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) **application** that includes:

1. The complete application
2. A personal statement as to why you believe that you deserve this award. The statement should focus on your role in different research positions such as mentoring other graduate students, undergraduate students, interns, or excellence as a research assistant. Contribution must be beyond the graduate student thesis. *The statement must not exceed 500 words.*
3. **Two letters of reference** and with a one page limit for each reference.
* Letters must outline why the nominee meets the criteria for this award as well as provide any information thought to be important for the committee to consider during adjudication.
* Reference can be from Graduate Supervisor/Volunteer Supervisor/Manager/Team lead, etc.
* Application deadline is inclusive of receipt of references.

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4. **Incomplete applications (missing information, extra information/documents and incorrectly filled out) or applications received after the intake deadline will NOT be considered.**

# Selection Criteria

# The Awards Committee will evaluate applications based on how well the nominees have demonstrated excellence as a graduate student (as evidenced in the reference letters) and have contributed to fostering a positive environment for learning and research. Examples of ways in which nominees demonstrate excellence may include, but not limited to:

* + - Displaying mastery of, and enthusiasm for, their subject area;
		- Inspiring and supporting students and colleagues to think creatively and execute ideas effectively;
		- Demonstrating rapport with students, colleagues, and superiors (being approachable, likeable and engaging);
		- Demonstrating reliability and availability;
		- Demonstrates the ability to collaborate with colleagues in a professional and supportive manner.

**D.2 Excellence in Research (ERA): Research Affiliate**

# Eligibility

To be eligible for this award, applicants MUST:

* + - Be in **Good Standing** with the GSA;
		- Be affiliated with the University of Calgary; and
		- Have worked in a research position at some point during the Spring/Summer 2023, Fall 2023, and/or Winter 2024 semesters.

# Documents Required

Nominators MUST **submit an** [online](https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/awards/) **application** that includes:

1. The complete application
2. **Two letters of support** with a one page limit for each letter. Letters must outline why the nominee meets the criteria for this award as well as provide any information thought to be important for the committee to consider during adjudication; and
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* + - Displaying mastery of, and enthusiasm for, their subject area;
		- Inspiring and supporting students and colleagues to think creatively and execute ideas effectively;
		- Demonstrating creativity in teaching and supervision and a willingness to tailor their approach to meet the needs of their students;
		- Demonstrating rapport with students, colleagues, and superiors (being approachable, likeable and engaging);
		- Demonstrating reliability and availability;
		- Demonstrates the ability to collaborate with colleagues in a professional and supportive manner.
		- Exhibiting fairness in all aspects of supervision;
		- Providing timely and constructive feedback to students and colleagues.