



GRADUATE  
STUDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION  
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association  
1030 ES, 844 Campus Place  
NW Calgary, Alberta T2N  
1N4  
Tel (403) 220-5997 Fax (403)282-8992  
www.gsa.ucalgary.ca

## **GSA Excellence Awards**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **2025 – 2026 Academic Year**

Intake Period: February 25 – March 11, 2026

Intake Deadline: **Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 11:59 PM MT**

---

#### [Submit applications online](#)

Applications and/or letter of reference received outside of the intake period will **NOT** be evaluated. Late applications will **NOT** be evaluated. Incomplete applications (unanswered questions or additional information) will **NOT** be evaluated. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure completeness of the application.

This document and application link are available on the GSA's [website](#). Questions regarding this application should be directed to the GSA Awards Committee Chair or Vice Chair at [awards.gsa@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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](mailto: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:

#### **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.

##### **2. 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.

### **3. Excellence in Supervision (ESA):**

This category refers to University of Calgary faculty members who have supervised Master's and Doctoral students.

### **Excellence in Teaching (ETA)**

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

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

#### **5. 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)**

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

Graduate students in research-based programs who have gone above and beyond the expectations of their thesis work. This may include contributions through roles such as mentorship, laboratory management, or other significant forms of research leadership and service. Self-nominations are permitted for this award.

#### **7. 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.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for this award, applicants MUST:

1. Be in **Good Standing** with the GSA;
2. Be affiliated with the University of Calgary; and
3. Have worked in an administrative capacity at some point during the Spring/Summer 2025, Fall 2025, and/or Winter 2026 semesters.

### **Selection Criteria**

The Awards Committee will evaluate all applications based on the nominee's demonstrated excellence in their respective role and their meaningful contribution to enhancing the graduate student experience at the University of Calgary. Applications will be assessed holistically, with particular attention to the following:

1. **Role Mastery and Professional Excellence:** The extent to which the nominee demonstrates competence, enthusiasm, and leadership within their administrative, supervisory, teaching, or research role. This includes evidence of subject matter expertise, sound professional judgment, and commitment to high standards of practice.
2. **Impact on Graduate Students:** Clear and specific evidence that the nominee has positively influenced graduate students' academic success, research development, professional growth, or overall university experience. Strong applications will demonstrate measurable, observable, or sustained impact.
3. **Mentorship, Support, and Engagement:** The nominee's ability to inspire, guide, and support graduate students or colleagues. This may include tailored supervision, thoughtful feedback, academic guidance, professional mentorship, accessibility, and fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment.

4. **Collaboration, Fairness, and Professional Integrity:** Evidence that the nominee collaborates effectively with students and colleagues, maintains fairness in evaluation and decision-making processes, and upholds professionalism, integrity, and respect in all interactions.
5. **Initiative and Contribution Beyond Role Expectations:** Demonstrated examples of going above and beyond standard job responsibilities. This may include innovation, leadership in improving processes or learning environments, mentoring beyond required duties, or contributing to lasting improvements in graduate culture.
6. **Quality and Strength of Supporting Documentation:** The degree to which the personal statement and reference letters provide clear, specific, and credible evidence aligned with the award criteria.

### Documents Required

All nominators must submit a complete application package online during the Intake Period. The application must include:

1. **Nominator's Confirmation of Enrollment (Strictly Adhere)**
  - a. Log into your UofC Student Portal – MyUCalgary (<https://my.ucalgary.ca/>)
  - b. In the white side banner click "Program and Advising Info"
  - c. Screenshot this page including your current program information: your name, year of program, degree stream, area of study, and academic load
  - d. Attach this screenshot as proof of enrollment for the 202526 academic year.
2. **Personal Statement (Maximum One Page)**
  - **Written and signed by the Nominee**
  - **Clearly outlines:**
    - The nominee's role (administrative, supervisory, teaching, or research)
    - The impact of their contributions on graduate students
    - Specific examples of going above and beyond role expectations
    - Demonstrated commitment to fostering a positive graduate student experience
  - **Must not exceed one page**
3. **Two Letters of Support (Maximum Two Pages Each)**
  - Each letter must:
    - Clearly address the award criteria
    - Provide specific, concrete examples of excellence
    - Describe measurable or observable impact on graduate students
    - Highlight contributions beyond standard job expectations
  - Letters may be from:
    - Graduate students
    - Supervisors
    - Managers
    - Faculty members
    - Colleagues
    - Team leads
    - Research affiliates, etc.

### 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.**

### **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 on 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](mailto:awards.gsa@ucalgary.ca); and 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.
  - 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.

**Committee Approval Date:** February 23, 2026

**Elected Council Approval Date:** February 24, 2026

**Revised Date:** February 24, 2026