



news release

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FAO: Newsdesk/Education Correspondents

For immediate release

Student led teaching awards go from strength to strength

- Awards aim to reward teaching quality across Scotland's colleges and universities

Normally it's lecturers and tutors who rate students, but over the next few weeks and months, students across the country will have the chance to reward the staff they really rate in student-led teaching awards being held at universities across Scotland. Awards projects have been welcomed by staff, students and universities alike as a great way to celebrate inspiring teaching, innovative teachers, and dedicated support staff.

Last year, through an initiative from the Higher Education Academy and NUS Scotland, eight students' associations across the country held teaching awards, with thousands of student nominations submitted and hundreds of staff nominated for over 35 different awards – with categories such as 'Innovative Teaching' and 'Fantastic Feedback'. Following on from last year's success, even more students association have come on board this year with thirteen institutions holding awards, and nominations already flooding in.

Nathan Shields, President of the University of the Highlands and Islands Student Association commented:

"Teaching Awards have been a huge success at the University of the Highlands and Islands and really captured the imagination of our students. Everyone has that particular tutor or lecturer whose sessions they really look forward to and it's great for students to be able to give something back by nominating that person for an award. With cuts looming, it's even more important than ever to really highlight the positive impact of our universities and how important the university experience is to our students. It's also great to see how much the staff value receiving these awards from their students."



A previous award winner from Heriot Watt commented, on winning an award;

“Thank you for renewing my faith that what we do is valued and valuable. It means such a lot to know that we’ve made a difference to the students we teach and that they’ve cared enough to take time out to document it.”

Alastair Robertson, Higher Education Academy Head of Policy and Partnerships, Scotland said:

“We are delighted to be continuing to support these projects with NUS Scotland and thrilled to have the majority of Scottish higher education institutions involved this year. The HEA is committed to inspiring teacher excellence and these awards help us to recognise how such excellence can boost quality and raise the profile of teaching.”

“Having spoken to student nominators, award nominees, and university leaders, it is clear that they feel the awards have been a really positive experience and the success of last year’s projects is already making an impact. I am sure that the projects will continue to go from strength to strength and next year the HEA is planning to extend our support to student associations across the UK with student led teaching awards, as a consequence of their success and interest in the sector.”

Commenting on the awards, NUS Scotland Depute President Jennifer Cadiz said,

“With so much uncertainty around the future of Scotland’s higher education, and an increasing focus on the negative stories, it is important that we don’t forget the really positive things that are happening in our universities every day, and the difference that a teacher who is prepared to go the extra mile can make to a student’s experience.

“In an environment of tight budgets, highlighting, sharing, and celebrating best practice in innovative ways like student led awards is not only a great way to boost quality, but also sends a positive and vital message to staff that they are truly valued. It was clear from the response from last year’s winners that receiving a nomination or award from their own students was hugely important to them. My congratulations and thanks go to all awards nominees for their outstanding work.”

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For more information contact Russell Gunson, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at NUS Scotland on 07811 370 623 or Karen O’Rourke, Communications Manager at the Higher Education Academy on 01904 717543.



Notes:

1. Case studies and images of nominated teaching staff, nominating students, students' association officers, university management and awards themselves are available on request.
2. Local award ceremonies will be taking place at all of the participating institutions. The following dates have been confirmed:

Institution	Contacts	Role	Date of Ceremony
Edinburgh Napier University	Kasia Bylinska	Napier Students Association President	24 th March
	Anne Sibbald	Associate Director, Academic Enhancement	
Heriot-Watt University	Murray Hope	Heriot-Watt Students' Association Vice President	tbc
University of Edinburgh	Stevie Wise	Edinburgh University Students' Association Vice President	23 rd March
	Craig Stewart		
University of Strathclyde	Graeme Allen	University of Strathclyde Students' Association President	18 th May
	Kenneth Miller		
University of the West of Scotland	Susan Duncan Caroline Sharp	UWS	15 th April
UHI Millennium Institute	Nathan Shields	UHI Students' Association President	Multiple (across different campuses)
	Melissa Schouten		
University of Abertay, Dundee	David Currie		30 th March
University of Glasgow	Tuula Eriksson		22 nd March



	Jack Aitken		
University of Stirling	Rhianna Humphrey Elena Sarra		tbc
University of Dundee	Natalie Coupar Dr Eric Monaghan		tbc
Robert Gordon University	Ryan McLean James Dunphy		tbc
Glasgow Caledonian University	Kieran Livingston Mike Mannion		12 th May

3. The Higher Education Academy's mission is to support the sector in providing the best possible learning experience for all students. We provide national leadership in developing and disseminating evidence-informed practice about enhancing the student learning experience; operate as an independent broker, enabling expertise to be shared across institutions and subject areas; work at multiple levels, with individual academics, subject communities, departments, faculties and institutions; and work across the four nations, recognising the distinctive policy contexts and priorities of the devolved administrations but also providing opportunities to share expertise among them.

The Academy and the GENIE CETL at the University of Leicester report into the reward and recognition of teaching in higher education can be found at

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/detail/2009/rewardandrecongition2>

