

Outstanding Student Contribution to Education Awards (OSCEAs)

The Outstanding Student Contribution to Education Awards were inaugurated in 2019 by the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning. The purpose of these awards is to recognise the outstanding contributions that students themselves make towards enhancing educational practices across the university.

They are an opportunity to show our appreciation for our students' efforts to improve the learning and teaching experiences of their peers, and to celebrate their contributions to enhancing the excellence of Cambridge education through voluntary or extracurricular activities. We were delighted by the enthusiastic response to the awards last year and the incredible breadth of nominations received, and are pleased to be able to award them again this year.

Timeline

19 th February	Nominations open
12 th April	Nominations close
14 th – 27 th April	Shortlisting and selection panel review of nominations
28 th April	Award winners notified and asked to accept
12 th May	Award winners announced

Categories

There are five categories for which a student(s) can be nominated. Please submit nominations for the category you deem most appropriate, but rest assured that we recognise there may be overlap. The selection panel may re-categorise any nomination if they deem it more appropriate, depending on the content and the numbers received for each category.

1. Representation

Being an elected representative, whether academic, JCR or MCR, allows students to work with their institutions to resolve issues raised by their peers, and work together with CUSU to share good practice or even contribute to larger-scale institutional changes. Students might be nominated for going above and beyond the expectations of their role in representing the student voice on teaching and learning matters.

2. Access & Outreach

Our students play an integral role in the University's efforts to widen access and reach the public through outreach efforts. Students might be nominated for going above and beyond in their voluntary efforts at outreach or access events or mentoring schemes, or for their own initiatives in

these areas. They might contribute to institutional reviews relating to access, or step up to advocate for change.

3. **Inclusive Practice**

In light of the University's commitment to widening access and participation, it is important to acknowledge the outstanding work undertaken by students in giving voice to underrepresented cohorts, and in driving initiatives to improve the educational experience of all. Students might be nominated for their voluntary or extracurricular initiatives, or for stepping up to demonstrate or advocate for particular inclusive teaching and learning practices.

4. **Peer Support**

The transition to university can be challenging, and the voluntary contributions by students in supporting their peers are often unrecognised but of great value to the university community. Students might be nominated for their outstanding voluntary contributions to supporting their peers' learning in small or large ways, for instance in taking the initiative to set up a study group, or in department-wide or College extra-curricular initiatives.

5. **Innovative Practice**

The contributions that students make towards inspiring, informing or founding new approaches to educational practice usually go unrecognised. Students might be nominated for their work assisting Departments, Faculties or Schools with educational review or reform. They might have driven the decision to undertake a curriculum review, or even set up a new practice entirely on their own initiative.

Suggested Priority

The following is a suggested priority order to help those submitting a nomination decide which category to submit their nomination for:

1. Representation; if the basis for the nomination is activity carried out as part of a student's role as an academic or College representative
2. Access & Outreach; if the basis for the nomination is activity that contributes to access or outreach efforts, and does not fall under the above category
3. Inclusive Practice; if the basis for the nomination is activity that contributes to more inclusive practice, and does not fall under either of the above categories
4. Peer Support; if the basis for the nomination is activity that seeks to support the learning of peers, and does not fall under any of the above categories
5. Innovative Practice; the basis for the nomination is activity that contributes to innovate educational practices, and does not fall under any of the above categories

This order is not prescriptive. For example, an initiative spearheaded by a JCR representative which is strongly focused on access may be moved to the Access & Outreach category, at our discretion.

The Awards

The selection panel maintain the right to present more than one award for a particular category if there are a particularly strong set of nominations, or not to present an award for a particular category if none of the nominations are deemed strong enough.

Recognising the above, the selection panel will agree a shortlist and a winner (or winners) for each category of award. Each member of the shortlists will receive a Highly Commended certificate, and be listed on the CCTL website. The winners will receive a certificate and be featured with an extract from their nomination(s) on the CCTL website. We apologise that we cannot offer trophies in the current circumstances.

Submitting a Nomination

Any current student or staff member may nominate a current student at the University of Cambridge. A student nominated in a previous year may be nominated again. A student who was an Award Winner or Highly Commended in a previous year may be nominated again, but not for the same activities that formed the basis of their previous award.

It is important to note that these awards are intended to recognise voluntary efforts undertaken *in the capacity* of a student. A student undertaking compensated work or official teaching duties would thus not be eligible. For example, a PhD student may be nominated for setting up a peer literature club, but would not be eligible for their paid work supervising undergraduate students. There is already an established award for recognising this kind of teaching excellence: the [Student-Led Teaching Awards](#).

[Submit a nomination form here](#).

Groups may be nominated as well as individual students. If nominating a group larger than three members, up to three people must be provided as named individuals to represent the group in the event that they win an award. These people will be the contact points for e.g. confirming acceptance of the award.

Selection Criteria

Winners will be selected based on the breadth and depth of detail provided in the nomination process that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- A positive contribution to the nominated student's educational community that goes above and beyond;
- A key role in stimulating other students' engagement with their learning and teaching experiences;
- A positive impact in representing other students' voices on issues related to learning and teaching;
- Leadership in driving initiatives, projects or events focused on enhancing the educational experience of other students at Cambridge.

Some weight may be given to the number of nominations received for a particular student or group of students, but multiple nominations do not guarantee an award, nor are they necessary to secure an award. Most awards are granted on the basis of one strong nomination. We would discourage nominators from organising mass nominations where many near-identical citations are submitted by separate parties, or the citations are clearly written based on a shared set of prompts.

Self-nominations are allowed but unlikely to carry the same weight as a nomination submitted by a third party.

Although a former Award Winner or Highly Commended student may be nominated again on a new basis, they will be given slightly less weight when being compared against other nominations.

Selection Process

CCTL will review the entire set of nominations received before they are presented to the selection panel. A longlist will be curated for each category. Any nominations that are clearly ineligible will be removed (for example if the activity forming the basis of the nomination was compensated work, or part of the normal expected duties of a representative). Nominations may be moved between categories at this stage.

Each longlist will be sent to two or more representatives of the selection panel in advance. They will be asked to curate a shortlist for their assigned category according to the above criteria, individually, and also briefly review nominations for the other categories. These shortlists will be compared and discussed at the selection panel meeting, and a final shortlist and award winner(s) decided by the selection panel at the meeting. Nominations may also be moved between categories at this stage.

Composition of the Selection Panel

The Selection Panel will comprise at least ten members, including two members of the CCTL Steering Group, one undergraduate representative from the Cambridge Students' Union and one postgraduate representative, and at least one member of CCTL.

Showcasing the Winners

In submitting a nomination, please be aware that excerpts of or the whole text written in support of the nomination will be presented on the CCTL website in the event that the nomination is shortlisted. We will ask permission of the winner(s) before publishing the material, but your consent is given in submitting a nomination. If there is content integral to the nomination which you are concerned about being published, please get in touch.

Enquiries

Please contact [Dr Ruth Laing](#), Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning, with any questions or comments.