



STUDENT LED TEACHING AWARDS

ENGAGING, CHALLENGING AND INSPIRING CHANGE

• REPORT 2014-2015 •

PREFACE

In recent years, and despite respectable NSS scores for overall student satisfaction, students have consistently marked learning and teaching as an area in significant need of improvement for Brunel University London.

With a QAA review scheduled to take place next year, the University will be required to demonstrate active efforts to improve the academic experience, amongst other aspects of the student experience.

A year into the post-TxP era however, and armed with a new Education Strategy, the University has taken some very encouraging steps in the right direction on its mission to develop a consistently outstanding learning and teaching experience for all its students, including the announcement of plans to construct a new building dedicated to developing innovative methods of learning and teaching, like the much touted flipped classroom model.

With students being the key end stakeholders of this ongoing work, the role of the Union of Brunel Students (UBS) in shaping this journey as it unfolds is integral to ensure the decisions made by the University accurately reflect the needs and interests of its students.

In this vein, the 2011/12 academic year saw the UBS introduce the Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTAs), not only to highlight and recognise areas of good practice to the University, but also to provide a platform for students to voice what qualities they value most when it comes to their learning.

This year's SLTAs saw a dramatic increase in the number of nominations submitted by students, which serves as an implicit suggestion that, in light of the mounting costs associated with

getting a University education, students see increasing value in engaging with the scheme in order to maximise its end benefits.

This report aims to take advantage of this increased engagement by shedding light on the findings of this year's SLTAs in order to inform the student submission that the Union will provide as part of the QAA review process next year.



Brunel University London aspires to be a world class creative community that is inspired to work, think and learn together to meet the challenges of the future. The University is therefore committed to providing opportunities for high quality learning and teaching, and to seek excellence in this provision.

Every year the Union acknowledges those lecturers and other members of University Staff that go above and beyond to inspire, challenge and engage their students through the Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTAs). The scheme provides the student population with the opportunity to recognise those exceptional individuals that offer excellent teaching and support.

The Union strongly believes that the highest quality learning experience is essential in extending the creativity and intellect of students, and therefore desires to see outstanding members of staff acknowledged for their work in the University.

The SLTAs provide a raft of benefits for both the Union and the University, including:

- Highlighting the impact of outstanding contributions of Brunel Staff on the student experience.
- Empowering and amplifying the student voice throughout Brunel.
- Supporting the importance of the learning partnership between the students and their lecturers.
- Identifying the student perspective of good practice and student expectation.
- Enhancing the learning and teaching elements of Brunel's strategic plan.
- Contributing to the enhancement plans of the Colleges by highlighting areas of good practice.

This is the 4th year that the Student Led Teaching awards have been running, and we hope to utilise and build upon the success of this year's iteration, as well as those in previous years, to make the scheme as beneficial as possible for University and ultimately the students. In particular, with Brunel undergoing a QAA review this year, the Union plans to take advantage of the findings in this report to inform the Student Submission presented to the reviewers.

Nominations were open from January 12th through to February 20th; and were accessible through the Union's website.

Students were asked to write up to 500 words, explaining how their nominated member of staff met the criteria for the award(s) selected.

All nominations were sorted into awards and reviewed by a Selection Committee comprising of the Senior Representatives and the Vice President (Academic Representation). It is important to clearly point out that the awards were awarded based on the quality, not quantity, of nominations submitted, although large volumes of nominations for individuals or groups were taken into consideration.

The Selection Committee shortlisted each award into 3 Nominees, and each Nominee and nominator were invited to an Award Ceremony on February 20th 2015. The shortlist was publicised from the 26th March on our website.

All information and feedback received in the process of the SLTAs was consolidated and sent to the Colleges.

This year's Student Led Teacher Awards (SLTAs) saw over double the number of nominations from the previous year, clearly demonstrating students' willingness to reward hardworking lecturers, teachers and other academic staff.

448 nominations were received from foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate students across the four Colleges; College of Health and Life Sciences (CHLS), College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences (CBASS), College of Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences, and London Brunel International College (LBIC). As in previous years, the award that received the highest number of nominations was the Inspirational Teaching Award, with almost half of the total. The breakdown of the nominations between the different awards can be seen in the table below.

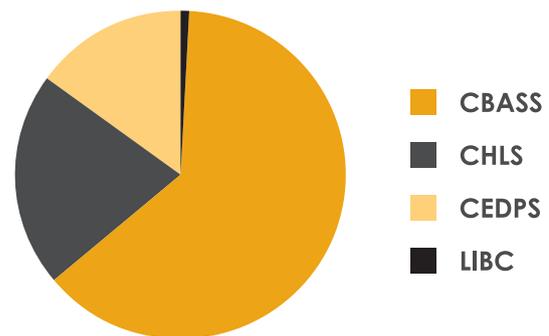
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3	131
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Level 3 students and postgraduates are the two largest groups nominating for the SLTAs, making up more than 50% of the nominations when combined. There can be several contributing factors to this, such as a higher engagement with these groups of students or the timing of the SLTAs, which run in the same time as the NSS survey.

Total number of nominations divided between the four colleges

CBASS	283
CHLS	96
CEDPS	67
LBIC	2



Winners 2014-15

Inspirational Teaching Award
Christopher Parris

Innovative Teaching Award
Emmanouil Karteris

Supervisor of the Year Award
Jill Collis

Postgraduates' Choice Award
Frazer Lee

Exceptional Module Award
Ashley Brown - Socio-Cultural Contexts

Outstanding Admin and Support Award
Emma Sigsworth

Feedback of the Year Award
Wayne Smith

Personal Tutor of the Year Award
Mauro Costantini

Postgraduate who Teaches Award
Michael Scott

INSPIRATIONAL TEACHING AWARD

Definition

The inspirational teaching award will be awarded to a member of academic staff who effectively engages, challenges and inspires their students with the content of the course.

Core Criteria

- Their ethos and ability to make the course interesting and relevant will motivate the students to perform to their full potential.
- A clear passion for good teaching and focus on the learning partnership between the lecturer and the student will be at the heart of all that is done.
- They will actively challenge their students by providing opportunities to think critically and may inspire students with the use of research led teaching.
- The feedback given will support the students to understand and improve their academic skills and knowledge.

Eligibility

A member of academic staff who is engaged in the active delivery of course content.

Shortlisted nominees

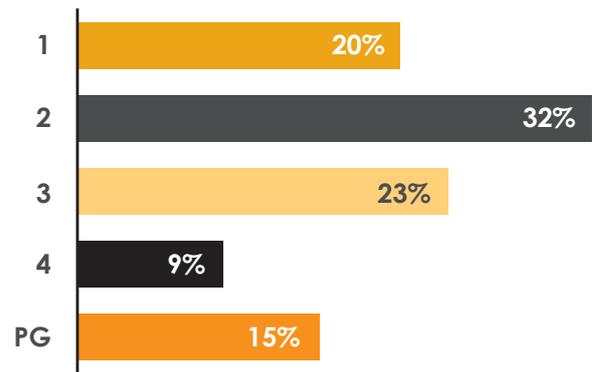
Deborah Chay
Robert Macredie
Christopher Parris

Winner

Christopher Parris

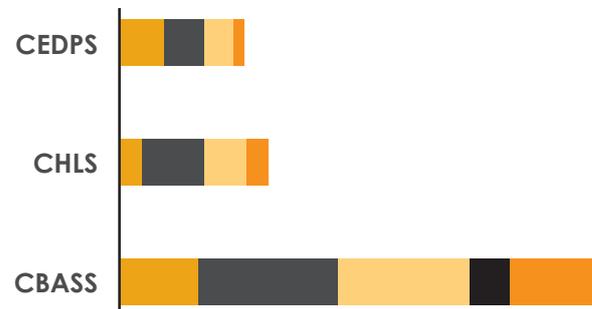
"...Dr P always listens to the student voice and uses the feedback to improve the department. As a result, a range careers lectures have also been arranged to support and guide students into the graduate world, beyond their graduation from the department..."

- Nominated by a 4th year Biomedical Sciences Student



- The College of Health and Life sciences

As is shown in the charts below and above, nominations of this award were predominantly put forward by 2nd year students. In the chart below the distribution of nominations over the levels of study look disproportional for this award. CBASS, being the largest College of the four, had the largest volume of nominations. LBIC is not shown on the chart below as no nominations were received from this College.



In the nominations for this award there is a clear pattern of mentions of enthusiasm in teaching, passion for the subject and an interactive teaching style. Students wish to be inspired by knowledge, experience and innovative ways of presentation.

Many of the nominated lecturers in this category have also been described to have gone "above and beyond" the remit of their role, which students are very grateful for.

Taking the time to explain an issue in depth is another quality that students value when nominating lecturers for this award.

"He is an outstanding lecturer; he balances interesting content with character and (relevant) stories..."

- Nominated by a 3rd year Biomedical Sciences student

INNOVATIVE TEACHING AWARD

Definition

The Innovative Teaching award will be awarded to a member of academic staff who promotes and explores new methods of learning with clear focus on the importance of "study".

Core Criteria

- They may use a holistic combination of learning, teaching and assessment in delivering a course that develops new opportunities to enhance the student experience.
- They will Participate in using new approaches to teaching within or outside the department, which may or may not include the enhancement of the learning experience through the appropriate use of electronic tools, technology and technique
- They will proactively engage students in a diverse way that reflects the range of needs of the student body, this may include the use of new forms of technology that facilitate effective learning or creative delivery to achieve a positive student experience.
- The importance and opportunities for face-to-face interaction will be a key importance to consider in encouraging students to think critically and work differently.

Eligibility

A member of academic staff who is engaged in the active delivery of course content.

Shortlisted nominees

Tony Cole

Emmanouil Karteris

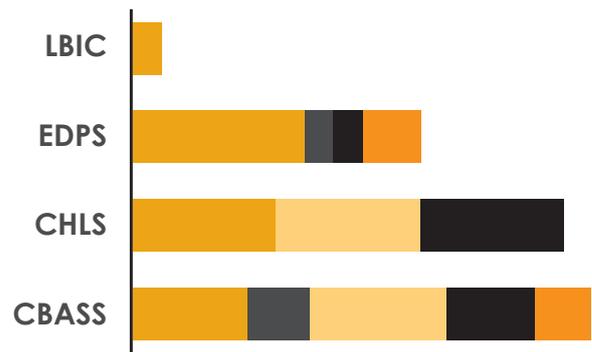
John Stonham

Winner

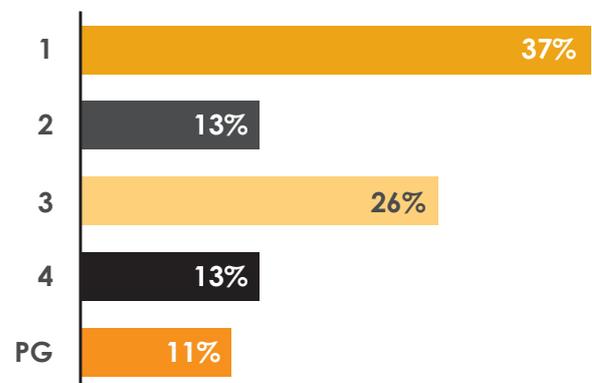
Emmanouil Karteris

"Through the use of available resources this lecturer encourages class participation more than any other on the course by enabling students to answer questions anonymously using their smart phone or tablet"

- Nominated by a Level 3 student



The largest part of the nominations came from CHLS and CBASS, although CBASS had nominations from all levels of study, including Postgraduate students.



The majority of the nominations were submitted by 1st year students and 3rd year students, which makes it possible to draw the conclusion that innovation in teaching is especially recognised and important to 1st and 3rd year students.

"I have yet to see this level of student motivation elsewhere."

- Nominated by a Level 3 student

Amongst the nominations are several statements of the importance of the lecturer's innovative approach to teaching, which the winner Dr Karteris shows example of communicating and answering questions on a app that the students can access on their phones and tablets.

There are also many accounts of how the nominated lecturers manage to effectively make a perceivably "boring" subject more interesting and engaging for students.

SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Definition

The Supervisor of the Year award will be awarded to a member of academic staff who has been a dissertation supervisor, research supervisor or placement supervisor that has gone above and beyond to promote and sustain a quality student experience.

Core Criteria

- They will have demonstrated a clear focus in support and help for students.
- They will have resolved issues that may have been faced effectively and offered an informative and effective partnership between the students and Supervisor.

Eligibility

A member of academic staff who provides supervisory support for students engaged in research, placements and/or dissertations.

Shortlisted nominees

Sarwinder Singh

Jill Collis

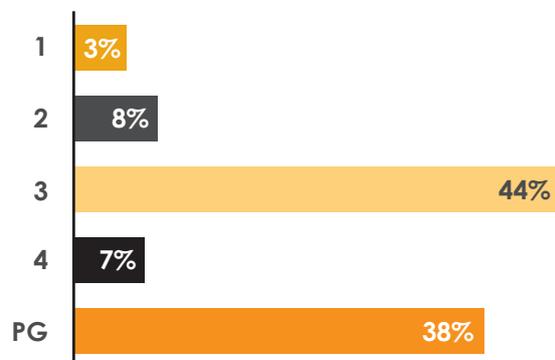
Angela Ayios

Winner

Jill Collis

"Passion, energy and optimism are attributes that radiate from her supervision"

- Nominated by a postgraduate student of Accounting and Finance



As can be seen in the previous chart, nearly all of the nominations for this award came from 3rd year and postgraduate students, which points to the importance of receiving high quality supervision during the end of an Undergraduate Degree and during Postgraduate studies.



CBASS continues the trend of having the largest number of nominations, which is not very strange considering it is the largest College on campus. However, postgraduates in CBASS seem particularly interested in the quality of their supervisors.

Consistent themes in the nominations for the Supervisor of the Year award are the words encouragement, development and structure. Students are nominating supervisors that have encouraged them to grow and develop academically, to take risks and challenge themselves whilst providing a clear structure and timely feedback. Timely feedback is another vital aspect of many students nominations, as many of the students state that timely feedback is an essential factor on their journey towards becoming successful in their academic fields.

"Without this lecturer, I would not have made it through University; she has supported me in a million ways"

- Nominated by a Level 3 student

POSTGRADUATES' CHOICE AWARD

Definition

The Postgraduates' choice award will be awarded to any member of the University Staff that supports, teaches or supervises postgraduate students.

Core Criteria

The award highlights the diversity of the student experience at postgraduate level and will be awarded to an individual that has engaged, challenged or inspired any postgraduate student to achieve their full potential.

Eligibility

Any member of University staff whose work directly contributes to the postgraduate student experience.

Shortlisted nominees

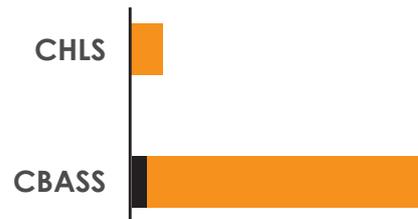
Frazer Lee

Kristian Gustafson

Nicolas Argenti

Winner

Frazer Lee



To increase and maintain postgraduate involvement is a challenging task. This is dependent on a variety of factors, such as their limited time at the University, or because those students tend to be slightly more mature than the Undergraduate students, which influences the activities that would engage them.

During this year's SLTAs, a large part of the nominations came from postgraduate students, taking their time to provide positive feedback and commendation to supervisors, teachers, lecturers or other University staff.

"...always willing to help, cooperate with students and discuss about projects, seminars even outside of the office hours"

- Nominated by a Postgraduate student

"Frazer is really encouraging of group feedback and has utilised the Blackboard system to make student exchange files and provide constructive comments on each other's work. This approach really helps us improve, especially as it is an arts course. Frazer is extremely approachable and clear in his teaching style meaning that I rarely feel confused or out of my depth in his class but still feel challenged by its content. Frazer's teaching clearly shows his love for the craft and his enthusiasm is contagious, meaning I feel like I too could be a screenwriter."

- Nominated by a Postgraduate student

The majority of the nominations came from postgraduate students within CBASS, and a few from CHLS.

Several of the nominations stated the importance of high quality feedback in continuous personal development and work. In connection to this, a quick response time to queries and emails was something that the students valued very highly.

Expertise within the subject area, as well as the experience of completing a PhD or other postgraduate qualification was also mentioned in several of the nominations. Tying into this was the ability to explain and communicate this expertise in an engaging and encouraging way.

EXCEPTIONAL MODULE AWARD

Definition

The Exceptional module award will be awarded to a Module that has demonstrated the clear importance of the learning partnership between lecturer and student.

Core Criteria

- It will offer a high quality of teaching and demonstrate a critical environment to develop and promote the idea of independent "study" for the student.
- Students will be aware of all that is expected of them throughout the module and the module will have specific relevance to the overall course.
- Areas that will be considered in relation to this award will be student satisfaction, lecture delivery, assessment and feedback and access to resources and additional support.

Eligibility

This award will identify a specific (and complete) academic MODULE (at any level).

Shortlisted nominees

Martin Hansen

- **PP2600 Comparative Political Institutions**

Noam Sagiv

- **The Cognitive Neuroscience of Consciousness (PY3604)**

Ashley Brown

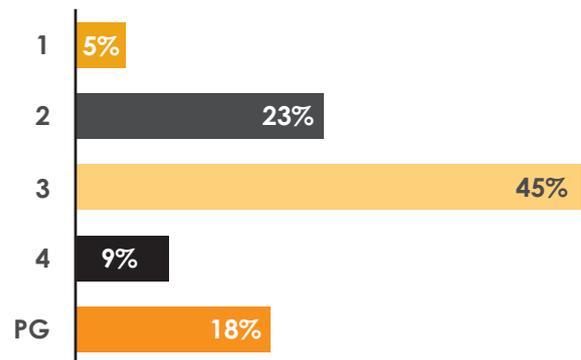
- **Socio-Cultural Contexts**

Winner

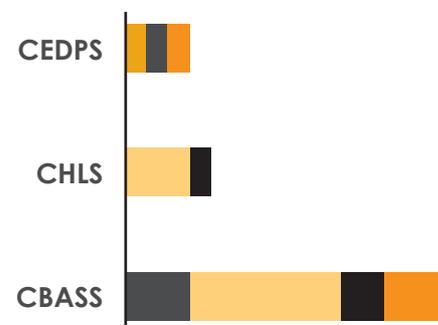
Ashley Brown

"Through enthusiasm, excellent preparation, tutorials and vast knowledge Ashley fostered an environment of intelligent debate and sharing of ideas on a range of concepts which affect the design of games"

- Nominated by a Level 3 student



The nominations submitted by level 3 students make up almost half the nominations for this award.



As shown above, the vast majority of the nominations come from CBASS, both in undergraduate nominations as well as postgraduate.

"...great effort put into constructive feedback and application of thought-provoking material"

- Nominated by a Level 3 student

Judging from the nominations, what makes a module exceptional according to the students is the module leader's ability to prepare thought provoking, engaging lectures as well as providing quick and well put together feedback, and the use of additional resources to further engage the students.

In addition to this, many of the students mention the importance of being challenged by the module leader and the module material.

OUTSTANDING ADMIN AND SUPPORT AWARD

Definition

The Outstanding Admin and Support Award will be awarded to a member or group of non-academic staff that has made a positive influence on the student experience.

Core Criteria

- They may have supported the student body in relation to an assessment, placement, module issue or even an issue with a learning resource.
- The award can be awarded to your School TPO, Placement and Careers Office or even library.
- This award is open to all that have made a difference to the student experience in relation to learning and teaching.

Eligibility

Nominations are open for any NON-ACADEMIC staff.

Shortlisted nominees

Emma Sigsworth

Edward Varney

Susan Moody

Winner

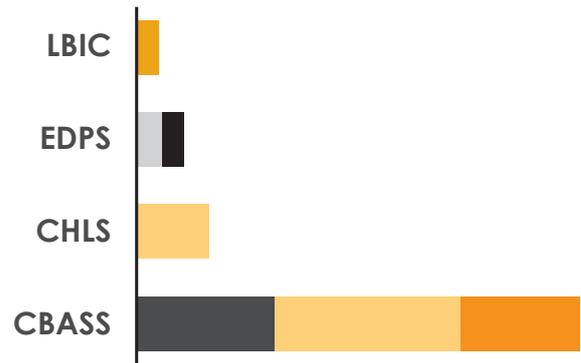
Emma Sigsworth

"...never neglect students demands and she is very good in responding email, preparing viva sessions and providing all facilities and information students need."

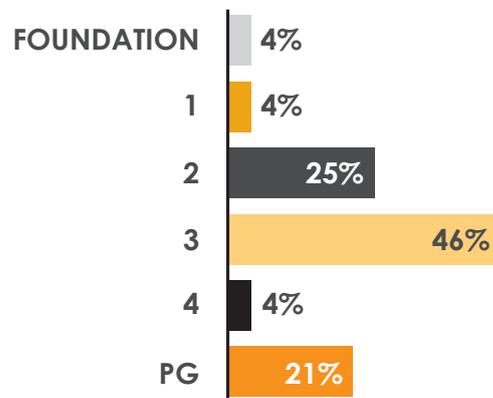
- Nominated by a Postgraduate student

"This {feedback} has taught the class to be reflective and self-critical, all attributes needed to be an outstanding teacher."

- Nominated by a Postgraduate student



The majority of the nominations for this award came from CBASS, the only College which also had the only postgraduate nominations.



Level 3 students submitted nearly half the nominations, with level 2 and postgraduate students sharing the second place.

Valued aspects of the nominees for the Outstanding Admin and Support Award ranged from professional and quick handling of problems and queries, as well as continuous support and advice.

Nominations also vouch of instances where members of staff have gone above and beyond their professional role to offer support and advice, which offers testament to why the SLTAs are so important as an opportunity for the students to show their appreciation to truly outstanding members of staff.

FEEDBACK OF THE YEAR AWARD

Definition

The UBS has advocated in recent campaigns the importance of effective feedback at all levels, this award continues to highlight the investment the UBS feels needs to be put on feedback at Brunel. The Best Feedback Award will be awarded to a member of academic staff that has gone above and beyond in giving constructive, timely and informative feedback.

Core Criteria

- The winner of this award should offer effective and legible feedback to the students.
- The Academic member of staff should promote all avenues of how to receive feedback throughout the course.
- They may offer feedback face to face or even may use innovative feedback tools such as voice recorded feedback.
- The winner of this award will have taken on board the recent UBS campaign on feedback and will be working to enhance effective feedback in relation to student satisfaction.

Eligibility

Nominations are open to any member of Academic staff who in the course of their work provides feedback on students' academic work.

Shortlisted nominees

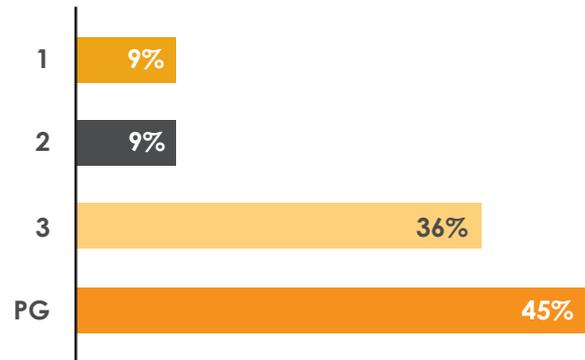
Jacques Furter

Kristian Gustafson

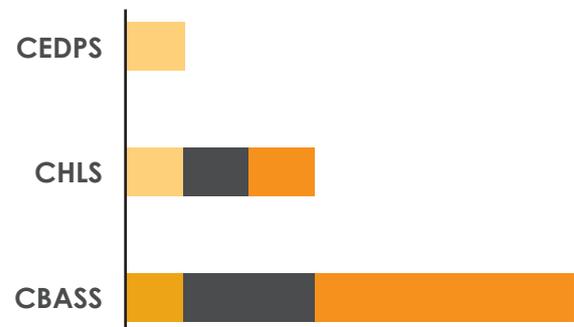
Wayne Smith

Winner

Wayne Smith



As seen in the nominations to previous awards, most of them come from CBASS.



High quality feedback seems to be a particularly important issue to the postgraduate and Level 3 students who submitted almost all of the nominations for this award.

Amongst the nomination a clear theme of praise for lecturers who manages to break down the feedback in to smaller parts to make it more comprehensible, as well as personal and specific feedback. Many students are also appreciating seeing previous year's feedback to better understand what that is expected which aids students in advancing in the coming assignment.

"Always gives personalised feedback on writing which has obviously been carefully thought through on his own time, he often recommends further reading tailored to individual students, and is honest and fair in his evaluation."

- Nominated by a Level 1 student

"...always goes above and beyond for his students and throughout the two years of being at Brunel he has not only helped me with module related work but also motivated me to better myself"

- Nominated by a Level 2 student

PERSONAL TUTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Definition

The UBS has advocated in recent campaigns the importance of that contact with a personal tutor at all levels, this award continues to highlight the investment the UBS feels needs to be put on Personal Tutoring at Brunel. The Personal Tutoring Award will be awarded to a member of academic staff that has gone above and beyond in delivering that essential support.

Core Criteria

- The winner of this award should clearly identify the importance of partnership between tutor and tutee - The communication between Personal Tutor and Tutees should explore all avenues of communication and not just email.
- They have encouraged their tutees to maintain a Personal Development Plan.
- The winner of this award will have taken on board the recent UBS campaign on feedback and will be working to enhance effective feedback in relation to student satisfaction.
- May have used email signatures to utilise the advertising of Tutor office hours

Eligibility

Nominations are open to any member of University staff who provides Personal Tutor support to members of the Student Body.

Shortlisted nominees

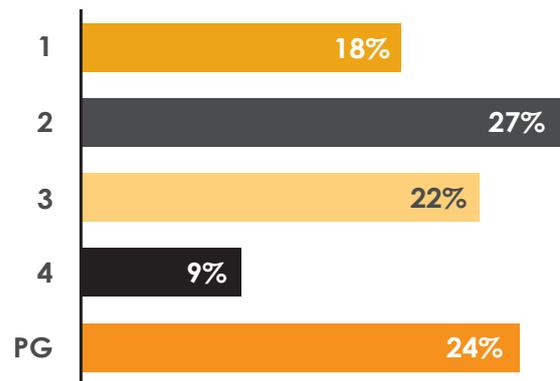
Mauro Costantini
Elizabeth Cassidy
Angela Ayios

Winner

Mauro Costantini

"I know that if a problem comes up, I can always drop him an email, pop in his office, or stop him on the main concourse and talk to him, and he will always come to the rescue."

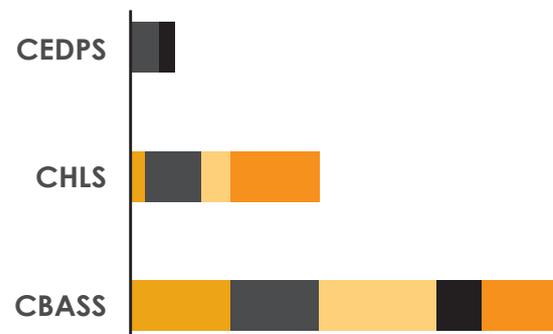
- Nominated by a Level 2 student



Nominations for the Personal Tutor award are quite evenly distributed amongst the different levels of study, with Level 2 students and postgraduates submitting the most amounts of nominations.

"He is an excellent guide, gives insightful advice, and really makes us feel cared for. Our weekly tutor meetings are the best part of the academic week, and we all always leave feeling great."

- Nominated by a Level 1 student



Similarly, most of the nominations come from CBASS; however CEDPS was especially low on nominations for this award.

The word "commitment" is mentioned in a large part of the nominations. Students are very grateful for a personal tutor who shows commitment to them and their work.

Additionally many of the nominations mention personal tutors who make time in their busy schedules to sit down with the student.

POSTGRADUATE WHO TEACHES AWARD

Definition

The Postgraduate Who Teaches Award will be awarded to a member of postgraduate/PHD student academic staff who promotes and explores methods of inspirational teaching, whilst studying themselves.

Core Criteria

- Show the ability to juggle their teaching duties with their own studies.
- Be able to inspire and gain the respect of undergraduate students.
- Show dedication, knowledge and a fresh approach to teaching methods that inspires peers to achieve in their education.
- They will actively challenge their students by providing opportunities to think critically and may inspire students with the use of research led teaching.
- The feedback given will support the students to understand and improve their academic skills and knowledge.

Eligibility

A member of STUDENT academic staff who is engaged in the active delivery of course content.

Shortlisted nominees

Suren Islyayev

Michael Scott

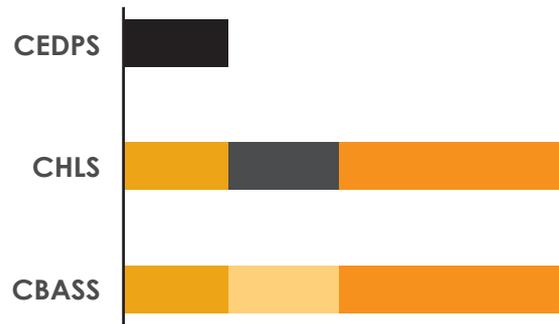
Romany Stott

Winner

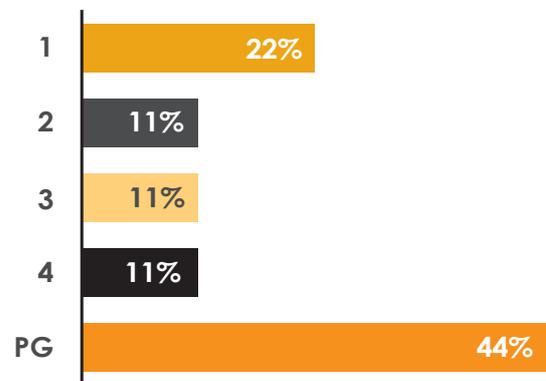
Michael Scott

“Michael always takes a pro-active approach to check the progress of students in his classes and builds a good rapport with his students. Michael provides outstanding support for students who may need additional clarification or help on a particular taught topic. Michael always goes above and beyond his role as a GTA.”

- Nominated by a Level 2 student



The nominations are slightly more even in the postgraduate who Teaches Award than with the previous awards. CHLS and CBASS share the same amount of nominations.



Postgraduate students showed specific interest in this award, submitting almost half of the nominations.

Qualities appreciated in a postgraduate teacher were identified as approachable, patient and devoted. Many of the nominations speak of postgraduate teachers who set up additional workshops or seminars, and are always there to provide extra support and guidance.

“Michael has proven to be an exceptional TA, offering a HUGE and always helpful support to any student, trying to raise the bar of engagement and always with tremendous results. He’s an inspiration to all the other TAs!”

- Nominated by a Postgraduate student

AUTHOR'S OBSERVATIONS

From Schools to Colleges

As part of the University's Transformational Change Project (TxP), the departments which had previously been organised in Schools were now structured in to three Colleges; CBASS, CHLS and CEDPS, as well as the affiliate college on campus LBIC.

The size of these three Colleges and affiliate College varies greatly, with CBASS housing almost half of the student population and LBIC a considerably smaller group.

Therefore the data (when describing the volume of nominations) might give one the impression that students within CBASS are substantially more engaged, when in reality there are just more students in that College. A recommendation for future SLTAs might therefore be to organise students into departments to get a more realistic analysis of engagement.

However, looking at previous reports one can see how the School of Social Sciences, currently housed in CBASS, was the school that were uncontested in the amount of submitted nominations. So to completely brush CBASS's large amount of nominations as having a larger student body would not be right.

Perhaps it might be advised to see what it is that makes CBASS students more likely to submit nominations to the SLTAs, and how other Colleges could learn from it.

The divide between the levels

As seen in the analysis of the data from the SLTAs, Level 3 students and postgraduate students submit the largest amount of nominations on a general level. One can speculate that this might be because Level 3 and postgraduate students go into the academic year knowing they only have

a limited time to complete their work, and therefore might be more prone to utilise help and resources more regularly than Foundation, level 1 and level 2 students.

However the innovative teaching award received most of the nominations from level 1 students, which might indicate that innovation in teaching is something particularly important to these students.

The Inspirational Teaching Award received the most nominations of any award and can therefore be deemed to be what students across Colleges and levels think is the most important aspect of learning. To be inspired to work harder, learn more and develop is arguably essential to all students during their time at University.

The importance of these awards

With almost 450 nominations this year, it's clear that students are grateful for this opportunity to award and praise excellent members of University staff. These awards will push University staff to work harder to be more innovative and inspirational, to be the best personal tutor possible and so on, and it grants the students the opportunity to thank them for all their efforts.