

Title: What does Good Teaching Look Like to Students? An analysis of Edinburgh University Students' Association Teaching Awards nomination data

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Abstract:

Now in their ninth year, the Edinburgh University Students' Association Teaching Awards normally receive 2,000 - 3,000 student nominations annually. In the past, long reports of nominations for each School were sent to Heads of School and Directors of Teaching. This PTAS small grant allowed the Students' Association to fund a fixed-term Research Assistant post for a student member of staff to analyse the key themes in the 2,926 Teaching Awards nominations from the 2014-15 academic year.

These extensive qualitative data were analysed to investigate student perceptions of teaching excellence across all disciplines at the University of Edinburgh. Four key themes were identified: 1) concerted, visible effort; 2) charisma, personality and engaging teaching; 3) breaking down student-teacher barriers and fostering student engagement; 4) consistency, predictability and stability of support. As a result of the PTAS funding, a report was produced (available at <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/research/>) that discusses fully each of the key themes of teaching excellence as well as excellence in roles such as Personal Tutor, Research and Dissertation Supervisor, Support Staff, and Students who Tutor. The report includes practical examples of good teaching and student support, as well as recommendations for the University to consider based on the research findings.

These findings were disseminated at a launch event for the report, Course Organiser Network event with the IAD, and research seminar at Moray House School of Education. It is the aim that the findings will be disseminated further at conferences and in a peer-reviewed journal publication in 2017. As a result of the key themes of student perceptions of teaching excellence, the Students' Association has added an optional question to the 2016-17 Teaching Award nominations in which students can self-code up to three main reasons for submitting their nomination. This will help the Students' Association analyse future trends in student nomination comments and student perceptions of teaching excellence during the subsequent Teaching Awards.