



Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award

2020-2021 Guidelines and Process

Purpose of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award

Graduate student teaching assistants (TAs) play a vital role in enhancing the teaching mission of the University. The Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (OTAA) is designed to encourage and reward excellence in teaching and to recognize the contributions that graduate students make to the teaching and learning mission of Florida State University.

Selection will be based on the quality of teaching documented in a portfolio as well as on a letter of recommendation. OTAA recipients will receive a \$750 cash award and recognition at the annual University-wide *Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence*, details TBD.

Nomination

- Graduate student TAs from all FSU academic units may be nominated
- All FSU faculty/administrators, FSU staff who work closely with TAs, and FSU undergraduate students who are enrolled in classes that have TAs can submit a nomination (self-nominations or peer nominations are not allowed)

Eligibility

- Must be an FSU (OR FAMU-FSU College of Engineering) degree-seeking graduate student in good academic standing
- Must have been a TA at FSU for two completed semesters, at least one of which must have been during Spring 2020, Summer 2020, or Fall 2020
- Previous OTAA recipients and current PIE Teaching Associates are not eligible for an award

Award Criteria

- Facilitates and inspires student learning
- Shows evidence of continued improvement of teaching practice
- Engages in professional growth and leadership
- Provides evidence that they have unique qualities that set them apart as a TA

Stage 1: Nominations

Nominations must be submitted via the online nomination form on the PIE website by **11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, January 20, 2021.**

All nominees will be notified of their nomination and the process for the OTAA via email by approximately **Wednesday, January 27, 2021.**

Stage 2: Nominee Documentation

Once a graduate student TA has been notified of their nomination, in order to be considered for the award, they must submit the electronic documentation packet (portfolio) described below by **11:59p.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2021.** The supporting documentation should be submitted electronically, in a single PDF file, on or before the deadline, through **the OTAA 2020-2021 Canvas site.** We have recently transitioned from Dropbox submission to Canvas submission. The submission instructions are provided in Stage 3.

The committee expects that a real personality will emerge from the portfolio materials. All of the elements should demonstrate how the nominee practices what they do with clear examples which demonstrate that learning occurred. The nominee must make the important links between philosophy, process, and practice. The nominee must submit:

- One letter of recommendation from a department faculty member (**not peers**). If possible, the letter should be written by someone who has observed the nominee's work as an instructor and can speak to what sets them apart as a TA.

*****The recommender must save the letter as a PDF with the nominees' last name_recommender last name and send it to pie-info@fsu.edu as an email attachment.** The subject line of the email should read, "ATTN: FSU Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards Committee".

***Please note: The letter of recommendation is considered as part of the portfolio and should be submitted by the recommender to PIE before 11:59 PM of Tuesday, February 23, 2021. Furthermore the letter of recommendation is NOT the same as the nomination letter. It is a separate document attesting to the TA's work.**

- EIGHT items combined into an electronic portfolio document. Please arrange all documents in the order outlined below. Instructions also available at the OTAA 2020-2021 Canvas site - you may self-enroll via this link: <https://canvas.fsu.edu/enroll/H3DBJ7>

1) Cover page:

- full name
- college/department/degree working toward
- anticipated graduation date
- the number of students you taught in Spring 2020 through Fall 2020
- teaching position (instructor of record, lab instructor, etc.)

*There are two categories to ensure that each nominee is compared with other TAs whose responsibilities are comparable:

Complete Responsibility (A): The TA defines the specific course content and measures of student achievement while following general guidelines, such as course descriptions, broad reading lists, certain required assignments or types of assignments. Even though there is overall supervision by a course supervisor, the TA has very wide latitude and discretion in conducting the class. A TA that serves as a lead/primary instructor for the course is an example.

Partial Responsibility (B): The TA has more limited choices about content and assignments, and supervision is more direct. Teaching discussion sections associated with large lectures or teaching laboratories associated with either large or small enrollment courses are good examples of this category.

- 2) **CV:** Please include an up-to-date curriculum vitae that emphasizes items pertaining to teaching. Identify the professional development and leadership activities that have contributed to your success as a TA (i.e. presenting at conferences, attending workshops, receiving awards, serving on committees, participating in civic organizations, reading/self-directed learning).
- 3) **Teaching Philosophy Statement:** This statement must be no more than one page single spaced, 12-pt., 1-inch margins. It is an introduction to the nominee as an instructor and to their teaching portfolio. It provides an opportunity for the nominee to link all other parts of their portfolio. It serves as the conceptual framework for the nominee's teaching and their portfolio.
- 4) **Diversity Statement:** A one page (single spaced, 12 pt., 1 inch margins) statement explaining how the applicant has, and will, contribute to the development of a diverse and inclusive learning community through teaching, research, and/or service.

5) **Narrative – Course I**

6) **Narrative – Course II**

Arrange these two course narratives as follows:

Course 1: Course Number/Title/#Students

Section one	Teaching Responsibilities
Section two	Approach to Teaching and Learning
Section three	Innovative Teaching Practices
Section four	Outcomes
Section five	Reflective Statement/Plan for Growth

Course 2: Course Number/Title/#Students

Section one	Teaching Responsibilities
Section two	Approach to Teaching and Learning
Section three	Innovative Teaching Practices
Section four	Outcomes
Section five	Reflective Statement/Plan for Growth

The course narratives can be for **any** two courses in which the nominee was a TA at FSU. The two courses can be either two different courses or the same course taught during two different semesters.

Each of the sections below (teaching responsibilities, approach to teaching and learning, etc.) should be 200-500 words. Narratives should demonstrate what makes the nominee's teaching at FSU stand out.

- **Teaching Responsibilities:** A brief description of the course and the nominee's responsibilities for the course.

- **Approach to Teaching and Learning:** Describes what methods the nominee used to facilitate student learning in the course. This should include specific, concrete examples and may include references to appendices if desired.
- **Innovative Teaching Practices:** Artifacts, supplemental items, and/or narrative that the nominee wishes to include as part of his/her overall course narrative. Nominees should include a brief statement for each item of why you included the item and why this item is an accurate representation of you as a teacher. The nominee should include one or two items per course that best reflect the argument they wish to make about why their teaching at FSU stands out from that of other TAs.

- **Outcomes (Part I & II):**

Part I. Provide evidence of faculty/peer/student feedback on your teaching

- If you have SPCI student evaluations then list the course and include a copy of the SPCI report and reflect on the meaning of this type of evaluation.
- If you do not use the university standard SPCI student evaluations, then include any kind of student/peer/faculty evaluation you have (mid-semester evaluations, peer evaluation, faculty evaluations) and reflect on the meaning of this type of evaluation.

Part II. Describe what your students are able to do as a result of your teaching, what strategies you used for assessment, and how you know your students are learning.

- **Reflective Statement/Plan for Growth:** Describe the effectiveness of your teaching approach, what you learned about your teaching approach, what surprised you, what challenges you encountered, and what you would do differently in the future.

7) Appendices: Documents/items intended to support the assertions made in the course narratives. Nominees should include no more than five. The nominee can, if desired, include student written comments scanned from the evaluation instrument or other types of student comments. These comments should be chosen carefully. Quality comments describe WHAT the nominee DOES in the classroom that helps students learn, NOT simply that they are the best TA. Repetitive comments should be avoided.

The committee wants to know why the nominee stands out, and how the nominee exhibits growth as an educator!

8) Eligibility Form : (available at pie.fsu.edu, see the Eligibility Form download at Step 7 of nominee documentation) –print, sign, get someone in your department to verify that you have served as a TA for two courses at FSU and that at least one of those courses was within the following time period (Spring 2020, Summer 2020, or Fall 2020)., and that you are in good academic standing.

Stage 3: Submission of Documentation

The nominee's portfolio must be submitted electronically **to the OTAA 2020-2021 Canvas site on or before 11:59p.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2021.** *Late or incomplete teaching portfolios will NOT be accepted. Also, be sure you have asked whomever will provide your recommendation to email it separately by 2/23/21 to pie-info@fsu.edu (see previous instructions above). Late recommendations will not be accepted.

To submit your portfolio:

1. Self-enroll into the OTAA 2020-2021 Canvas site via this link: <https://canvas.fsu.edu/enroll/H3DBJ7>
2. Read the “Start Here” page for important eligibility reminders and dates.
3. Read all instructions and requirements for portfolio content. **Please note that the recommendation letter is mandatory and separate from your original nomination letter.** Read the instructions for requesting/submitting recommendation letters carefully.
4. Consult additional resources in the site as necessary.
5. When your portfolio is complete, submit it as a PDF via the assignment link titled “OTAA 2020-2021 Portfolio” by **11:59 PM, Tuesday, February 23, 2021.**

Stage 4: Award Selection

Winners will be selected by an interdisciplinary selection committee comprised of faculty and senior graduate student teaching assistants. Awards are approved by the Dean of the Graduate School based upon the recommendations of this committee.

Awards will be announced by approximately **April 1, 2021.**

Award nominees and recipients should plan to attend the *Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence*, details TBD.

Optional Preparatory Workshops, Dates, and Deadlines:

- **How to Create a Teaching Portfolio**

Friday, Feb. 5th, 2021, 10:30a.m. – 12:00p.m. (will be held remotely via Zoom)

Description: Creating a teaching portfolio is an important way to illustrate the strategies and techniques you use to help support and encourage student learning. It also gives you the opportunity to reflect on your teaching and ways to improve for the future. Not only is this a helpful exercise, but may be a requirement when applying for future employment. This workshop will give you examples and time to discuss how to assemble an electronic teaching portfolio. Requirements for the submission of teaching portfolios from nominees of FSU’s Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (OTAA) will also be addressed.

Registration: https://bit.ly/REGIS_0205

- **Creating a Diversity Statement**

Monday, Feb. 8th, 2021, 1:00pm-2:30pm (will be held remotely via Zoom)

Description: It has recently become commonplace for faculty positions (amongst others) to include a Diversity Statement in the required application materials. A Diversity Statement requested by faculty positions expects a description of how the applicant will promote diversity in their teaching and research. In this workshop, we will discuss how to personalize and construct a Diversity Statement that considers teaching, research, and other aspects of one’s experience.

Registration: https://bit.ly/REGIS_0208

*These workshops are NOT REQUIRED. They are OPTIONAL. The purpose is to cover general guidelines for assembling a teaching portfolio, and a diversity statement, and to answer any questions that you may have.

See more workshop information, and registration link here: <http://pie.fsu.edu/coffee-hour-teaching-workshop-series>