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# Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence



## NOMINATION GUIDELINES 2015

OPENTEXT™



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Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence  
Industry Canada  
Jean Edmonds Tower North  
300 Slater Street, 20th Floor  
Ottawa, ON Canada  
K1A 0C8  
Telephone: 613-991-4255  
Fax: 613-998-0943  
Email: [pmate-pmace@ic.gc.ca](mailto:pmate-pmace@ic.gc.ca)

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Email: [info@ic.gc.ca](mailto:info@ic.gc.ca)

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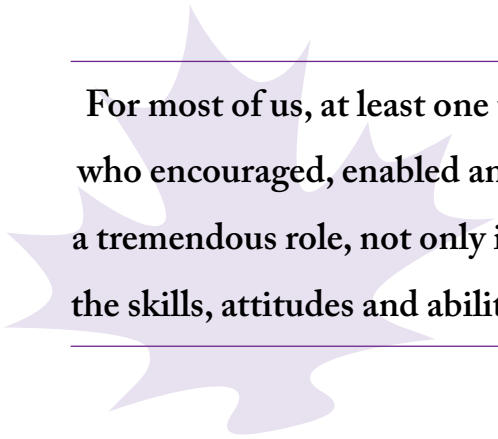
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**For most of us, at least one teacher stands out in our memories – someone who encouraged, enabled and inspired us to do our very best. Teachers play a tremendous role, not only in the academic achievement of students, but in the skills, attitudes and abilities they carry with them beyond the classroom.**

The Prime Minister's Awards (PMA) for Teaching Excellence honour outstanding and innovative elementary and secondary school teachers in all disciplines who instil in their students a love of learning and who utilize information and communications technologies (ICT) to better equip their students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in a 21st century society and economy.

## Awards

- Up to 10 Certificates of Excellence (national level), each including a financial award of \$5,000.
- Up to 25 Certificates of Achievement (regional level), each including a financial award of \$1,000.

Certificates of Excellence are awarded to the 10 top-ranked nominees. Up to 25 of the next top-ranked nominees each receive a Certificate of Achievement, with at least one award (Excellence or Achievement) designated for each of the following regions, provided standards of excellence are met: British Columbia; the Prairies; the North (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut); Ontario; Quebec; and Atlantic Canada. In addition, at least one Certificate of Excellence and one Certificate of Achievement are awarded to top-ranked Aboriginal teachers, provided standards of excellence are met.

Financial awards for the Certificates of Excellence are to be shared equally between the recipient and their school or teaching institution (as identified on the nomination form) and **spent under the recipient's direction**. If a winning teacher changes schools, financial awards (school portion) go to the school at which the recipient was teaching at the time of nomination. Financial awards for the Certificates of Achievement are sent directly to recipients.

Award funds may be used for professional development, equipment, resource materials or other tools to improve teaching and student learning related to the teacher's work. For recipients of the Certificate of Excellence, a portion of the school's award funds (up to 25%) may be used to cover teacher replacement costs should the recipient be asked to attend a national awards ceremony.



## Recognition

All winning teachers receive a certificate, a PMA pin and a congratulatory letter signed by the Prime Minister.

Certificate of Excellence recipients may also be invited to participate in best practice sessions and attend a national awards ceremony with the Prime Minister, or his designate, traditionally held in Ottawa. Costs for the Certificate of Excellence recipients to attend the national awards ceremony are covered by the PMA program.

Certificate of Achievement recipients are honoured at local school or community events involving principals, peers, students and local Members of Parliament or local leaders, as appropriate.

Each recipient's school also receives a certificate signed by the Prime Minister to recognize its support and contribution to the recipient's achievement

All PMA recipients are expected to conform to the program's Code of Conduct found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

## Promotion

The achievements of all recipients are promoted both nationally and in the teachers' home communities. Certificate of Excellence recipients are profiled, with their permission, and their chosen best practice shared in the annual Prime Minister's Awards *Exemplary Practices* publication.

***I think it's the 'Nobel Prize of Teaching' - a major highlight of my teaching career. Professionally, it gives me a chance to make a bigger difference.***

***Past PMA recipient***

## *Nomination Deadline: April 30, 2015*

### Eligibility

**At the time of nomination**, all nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Nominees must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
- Nominees must be certified to teach in a public or private school in a Canadian province/territory. A copy of the nominee's original teaching certificate must be provided.
- A nominee's teaching certification must be in good standing with their provincial/territorial governing body. Evidence of teaching certification status is required, such as a letter from their province/territory or College of Teachers.
- Nominees must teach full-time in a Canadian school at the elementary or secondary level. Part-time teachers or administrators may be nominated, provided they teach the equivalent of 2.5 days a week in a classroom setting, or as defined by provincial/territorial guidelines.
- Nominees must have taught in a Canadian school for at least three years and still be employed at the time of nomination. A confirmation letter from the school principal is required.

**Note:** If the certification to teach is withdrawn between the time of nomination and the award presentation, the PMA program office reserves the right to withdraw the candidacy. If eligibility status of a nomination is compromised or changes (e.g. due to loss of certification as a result of professional misconduct), the nominator and/or nominee has the responsibility to inform the PMA program office of a change in status in writing.

Posthumous nominations are not accepted.

Teachers of young children who are not eligible for this award may be eligible for the [Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education](#).



## Team Nominations

The PMAs are designed to honour the overall accomplishments of an individual or team of up to three teachers. The program is not intended to recognize the achievements of an entire school or teaching staff. Cash awards are to be shared equally among the team members. When team members teach in different schools, cash awards are to be shared equally among the institutions.

Successful team nominations address the overall accomplishments of a team of up to three teachers. Each member of a team must meet the eligibility requirements described above. A team nomination should reflect a true collaboration, not simply a collection of individual accomplishments. The nomination text should describe how the team worked together to meet each of the selection criteria.

Letters of support (refer to page 7) should endorse the accomplishments of all team members.

**Note:** Page restrictions for the nomination text and letters of support are the same for team and individual nominations. Only submit one (1) nomination package for a team nomination. However, please provide a separate nomination form for each nominee, along with a copy of each nominee's teaching certification, evidence that each nominee's teaching certification is in good standing, and evidence of each nominee's experience.

## Nominators

Nominators may be any person or group with direct knowledge of the nominee's contribution (e.g. parent, school principal, supervisor, fellow teacher, etc.). **Self-nominations or nominations received from a nominee's direct family member will not be accepted.**

## Re-nomination

Recipients of a Certificate of Achievement may be re-nominated for a Certificate of Excellence in a subsequent year, but are ineligible for a second Achievement award. Unsuccessful nominees may be re-nominated in a subsequent year. In all cases, **complete and updated nomination packages must be submitted, including letters of support written during the current nomination period.**

Previous recipients of a Certificate of Excellence are not eligible.

## Nomination Form

Please complete one nomination form for each nominee, found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

## Selection Process

After an initial screening for basic eligibility, copies of the nomination text and letters of support are sent to our selection committee members for review. Selection committee members include representatives of major education stakeholders from across Canada. See the current

list of organizations represented on the selection committee at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

Nomination packages are evaluated and ranked by selection committee members based on how well the nominee meets the selection criteria. A final list of top-ranked educators is then provided to the Prime Minister for recognition.

## Selection Criteria

Award recipients are selected based on the excellence and innovation of their teaching practices, their ability to achieve outstanding results with students, to inspire them to learn and continue learning and to equip them with the knowledge, attitudes and skills they will need to succeed in a 21st century society and economy. While a specific exemplary project or practice may form part of a nomination, **nominees are judged on their overall and ongoing merits as teachers.**

In selecting award recipients, the committee looks for clear evidence that nominees have excelled in all of the following **five areas**:

### *1. Innovative and Exemplary Teaching Practices*

The nomination text must describe and provide concrete examples of the teaching practices that best show the teacher's contribution to his or her students' learning, such as:

- creating a particularly stimulating and innovative learning environment;
- creatively integrating a subject with, and across, other disciplines;
- integrating hands-on strategies and problem-solving activities into daily teaching practices;

- using ICT in the classroom in innovative ways to improve student learning and outcomes;
- implementing provincial or territorial policies and curricula in an exceptional fashion to meet the specific needs of his or her students;
- involving parents in student learning;
- developing community or business-education partnerships;
- demonstrating the relevance of a subject to society; and,
- providing constructive feedback to students.

### *2. Digital Literacy and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in the Classroom*

The nomination text must clearly describe and provide concrete examples of teaching practices such as:

- innovative and effective use of ICT in the classroom;
- integrating ICT into the curriculum and across disciplines;
- incorporating best practices related to ICT into lesson plans;
- developing collaborative computer or Internet-based projects, learning materials and resources, or showing leadership in the use of these resources;
- educating students about media awareness, cyber bullying and the safe and ethical use of the Internet—in turn, helping them become good “cyber citizens”;
- using assistive devices (such as speech readers, etc.) to support children with special needs;
- providing opportunities for students to be actively engaged in hands-on learning, using a variety of multimedia technologies; and,
- helping students in remote communities access quality learning materials and providing them with equal opportunities for success through the use of ICT.



### 3. Student Skills Development

The nomination text must describe and provide concrete examples of evidence of student skills development such as students' ability to do the following<sup>1</sup>:

- listen, understand and communicate effectively;
- demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours;
- be creative and innovative;
- be flexible and adaptable;
- work independently or collaboratively with others as a team;
- think critically and act logically;
- identify problems and implement solutions;
- show leadership and take initiative;
- use tools, technology and information systems effectively;
- find, organize and apply knowledge and information from various fields;
- set goals and manage time effectively;
- be responsible for actions taken;
- work safely; and,
- learn continuously.

### 4. Student Achievement and Participation

The nomination text must describe and provide concrete examples of the teachers' role in fostering student achievement and participation with individual students, groups, classes, or the community. Evidence may include the following:

- fostering high attendance rates;
- receipt of individual awards or scholarships;
- outstanding engagement of students regardless of their level or abilities;
- superior student participation in extracurricular activities, educational partnerships, and co-op or apprenticeship programs, beyond course requirements;
- superior student participation in collaborative online learning;

- superior voluntary participation of students in Advanced Placement courses;
- superior student tutoring or mentoring activities;
- superior in-class assessment, district, or school board examination results;
- high achievement in provincial, territorial, national and international contests or exams; and,
- positive testimonials, such as letters from parents, students, administrators, businesses, and education partners.

### 5. Teacher Commitment and Leadership

The nomination text must describe and provide concrete examples of evidence of teacher commitment and leadership, such as:

- demonstrating a passion for teaching;
- organizing or delivering professional development courses, workshops or other in-service activities;
- organizing or participating in extracurricular activities for students and/or the school as a whole;
- developing and disseminating curricula and learning materials;
- preparing articles or newsletters that contribute to the teaching profession;
- developing subject matter and teaching expertise through professional development;
- doing volunteer work; and,
- mentoring new teachers in all aspects of the profession and acting as a role model.

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<sup>1</sup> Skills are drawn from The Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+. For more information, go to The Conference Board of Canada: Education and Learning.

## Letters of Support

Letters of support should provide evidence of the nominee's excellence and achievements under any or all of the five (5) selection criteria. Letters **should not exceed two pages each** and must be signed by the author. To reduce repetition, please ask writers to focus on one (1) or two (2) specific things about the educator that make them exceptional. Letters may come from anyone with direct knowledge for the nominee's accomplishments; however, letters from parents, students, peers and professional associations are often particularly effective in demonstrating a nominee's impact. **One support letter should come from the school principal/director.** If the school principal is nominated or wrote, and therefore fully supports, the nomination, then the vice principal or another qualified individual representing the school can write the letter. Letters of support must be dated and issued no earlier than six (6) months prior to the nomination deadline, and must include contact information for the author (mailing address and telephone number).

## How to Apply

Once you have identified one outstanding teacher or a team of teachers, develop a nomination package using the nomination guidelines and checklist found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

- Each nomination package must include a completed copy of the nomination form.
- When there is more than one nominee, please complete a separate form for each nominee.
- Nomination forms must be signed by the nominee and the nominator, as well as by the nominee's principal or supervisor.

- When more than one nomination package is received for the same teacher, nominators will be asked to combine their packages.

## Assembling a Nomination Package

**LENGTH:** Your nomination package (**nomination text and letters of support**) must **not exceed 21 pages**, excluding teacher certification, letter of good standing, proof of experience and checklist.

**FORMAT:** All information should be typed in a font no smaller than 10 points and double-spaced on 8½" x 11" paper.

**PACKAGING:** Simple packaging is recommended. Creative packaging can certainly make a nomination package stand out. Unfortunately, selection committee members do not get the opportunity to see it.

**BINDING:** For ease of reproduction, please do not bind your nomination package.

**COPIES:** Please send only one original copy by mail. Completed packages must be **postmarked** by the deadline date.

## Helpful Hints in Preparing a Nomination Text

An effective nomination package should illustrate the outstanding achievements of the nominee and clearly explain why the individual should receive one of Canada's highest honours in teaching. As a nominator, you are "painting a picture" of a nominee's achievements for a selection committee that reviews hundreds of applications, so the package should be compelling.

Although self-nominations are not accepted, nominators are encouraged to seek advice from the nominee while developing a nomination text.

Provide concrete examples and details to demonstrate how the nominee has met the selection criteria and explain the potential impact of the nominee's efforts on teaching. Describe any special projects, philosophies, unique learning environments, extracurricular activities, student reactions, prominent outcomes or special achievements that make this nominee excel.

Focus on the nominee's overall achievements. Show that the nominee is well rounded and meets all **five criteria** in his or her overall work, not simply in one particular project. Include other activities the nominee participates in for his or her students, fellow educators or school, such as extracurricular activities, volunteer work, or professional development.

Nominators may also consider embedding any relevant photo or quotation directly within their text to support the ideas and concepts that are outlined in their submission. If you chose to incorporate this approach, please ensure that the maximum allowed number of pages is not exceeded.

Please refer to the checklist (refer to page 9) to ensure you have included all necessary information in your nomination package. To facilitate the preparation of the nomination package and its review by the PMA program office, a copy of the completed checklist is required for each submission.

## Nomination Text Template

The nomination text template provides formatting guidelines and suggestions on how to structure your nomination text. Follow the criteria set out in the nomination guidelines and provide adequate detail for each of the five (5) selection criteria. Organize your text using each criterion as a separate heading. The nomination text template can be found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

## Nomination Deadline

Nomination packages must be submitted to the PMA program office no later than **April 30, 2015**. Submissions must be sent by mail and **postmarked** by the deadline date to be considered for the 2015 award. Late entries will not be considered.

## Address

Please send nomination packages to the following address:

Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence  
Industry Canada  
Jean Edmonds Tower North  
300 Slater Street, 20th floor  
Ottawa Ontario K1A 0C8

For more information, please contact the PMA program office at [pmate-ppmee@ic.gc.ca](mailto:pmate-ppmee@ic.gc.ca) or 613-991-4255, or visit [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

## Nomination Checklist

Please print and complete one checklist for each nomination package, found at [www.pma.gc.ca](http://www.pma.gc.ca).

## Acknowledgments

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