DEAC OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD

Purpose: Recognizes an exceptional faculty member who exemplifies excellence and contributes meaningfully to academic quality in distance education. Celebrates faculty who go above and beyond in delivering instruction that is rigorous, accessible, inclusive, and student-centered—helping learners achieve their goals and grow intellectually and professionally.

Who can be nominated? Faculty members at DEAC-accredited institutions.

Who can nominate? Institutional administrators, fellow faculty members, students, and DEAC evaluators.

Criteria: Nominees should meet most or all of the following criteria:

- **Exemplary teaching:** Demonstrates consistently high-quality online instruction informed by best practices in pedagogy, assessment, and student engagement.
- **Deep student engagement:** Provides responsive, personalized, and inclusive support to distance learners.
- **Contribution to student success and institutional quality:** Evidenced by positive learning outcomes, student feedback, or innovative practices.
- **Professional commitment:** Serves as a role model for professional integrity and lifelong learning.

EXCELLENCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION AWARDS GUIDE

DEAC INNOVATION AWARD

Purpose: Recognizes individuals and teams who bring fresh ideas to life in distance education. Celebrates novel practices, technologies, and pedagogical approaches that significantly and positively impact the student learning experience, enhancing quality, effectiveness, and creativity in distance education delivery.

Who can be nominated? Individuals or teams affiliated with DEAC-accredited institutions.

Who can nominate? Institutional leaders, faculty, staff, and DEAC evaluators.

Criteria: Nominees should meet most or all of the following criteria:

- **Successful implementation:** Develops and implements a new or significantly reimagined approach to distance education (e.g., curriculum design, instructional delivery, learner support, assessment, or technology).
- **Measurable impact:** Shows evidence of improved student learning, engagement, satisfaction, or achievement.
- **Creativity:** Goes beyond routine practices with original approaches.
- **Mission alignment:** Aligns with DEAC's commitment to educational quality, access, and continuous improvement.
- **Model potential:** Can serve as a model for other DEAC-accredited institutions.

DEAC GLOBAL IMPACT AWARD

Purpose: Recognizes institutions and individuals whose vision, leadership, and innovation have made a profound, measurable impact on students around the world. Celebrates those who use distance education to expand access, increase opportunity, and enhance the quality of learning for globally diverse learners, bridging geographic, economic, and cultural barriers as a force for equity and transformation.

Who can be nominated? DEAC-accredited institutions and individuals affiliated with DEAC-accredited organizations.

Who can nominate? Institutional leaders, faculty, staff, and DEAC evaluators.

Criteria: Nominees should meet most or all of the following criteria:

- **Global reach:** Develops or expands programs that serve globally diverse learners through innovative distance education models aligned with institutional mission.
- **Best practice modeling:** Fosters innovations with measurable global reach and outcomes (e.g., student success, employability, cultural understanding, collaboration, access, affordability, or academic progression across countries).
- **Mission in action:** Connects learners worldwide, demonstrating DEAC's mission in action and its enduring commitment to quality, integrity, and continuous improvement in global education.

DEAC RISING STAR AWARD

Purpose: Recognizes an emerging leader whose promise, initiative, and forward-thinking leadership are already advancing distance education. Celebrates professionals early in their engagement with DEAC who make significant contributions to quality, innovation, and student success and show potential to become future leaders in distance education and accreditation.

Who can be nominated? Emerging leaders at DEAC-accredited institutions who are early in their engagement with DEAC.

Who can nominate? Institutional leaders, supervisors, colleagues, and DEAC staff.

Criteria: Nominees should meet most or all of the following criteria:

- **Professional growth:** Demonstrates a strong track record of performance and growth within a DEAC-accredited institution.
- **Meaningful contribution:** Contributes to projects, initiatives, or innovations that enhance quality in distance learning.
- **Initiative:** Shows initiative, adaptability, and a student-centered approach.
- **Leadership potential:** Exhibits leadership through collaboration, mentorship, or contributions to institutional or sector-wide improvement.
- **Mission alignment:** Aligns with DEAC's mission of promoting access, accountability, and academic excellence in distance education.

DEAC EXCELLENCE IN PEER EVALUATION AWARD

Purpose: Honors an exceptional volunteer evaluator whose leadership, integrity, and excellence advance quality assurance and continuous improvement. Celebrates evaluators who apply accreditation standards with thoughtfulness, fairness, and deep understanding, serving as trusted partners in institutional quality.

Who can be nominated? DEAC volunteer evaluators.

Who can nominate? Fellow evaluators, institutional representatives, and DEAC staff.

Criteria: Nominees should meet most or all of the following criteria:

- **Leadership:** Demonstrates exceptional leadership and professionalism in evaluation visits and team collaboration.
- **Application of standards:** Applies DEAC standards with clarity, consistency, and contextual sensitivity.
- **Actionable feedback:** Provides insightful, actionable feedback that supports institutional growth and continuous improvement.
- **Integrity:** Exhibits the highest standards of integrity, objectivity, and service.
- **Sustained contribution:** Participates in multiple site visits or other sustained contribution to DEAC's mission as an evaluator.

DEAC DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Purpose: Recognizes extraordinary, sustained service, leadership, and commitment that significantly advances DEAC's mission, values, and work in assuring quality in distance education. Celebrates exceptional dedication to peer review, governance, standards development, or advocacy.

Who can be nominated? DEAC volunteers, Commissioners, institutional representatives, and contributors.

Who can nominate? DEAC staff, Commissioners, peer evaluators, and institutional representatives.

Criteria: Nominees should meet most or all of the following criteria:

- **Sustained service:** Demonstrates a record of meaningful service to DEAC (e.g., site visits, committee work, training, or Commission leadership).
- **Mission advancement:** Advances DEAC's mission of assuring quality and continuous improvement in distance education.
- **Process improvement:** Contributes to the development or improvement of DEAC processes, standards, or initiatives.
- **Professional integrity:** Models integrity, collaboration, and professionalism in all interactions with DEAC and peer institutions.
- **Ambassadorship:** Serves as a trusted advocate for DEAC in the broader higher education or accreditation community.

DEAC PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

Purpose: One of DEAC's highest individual honors, established in 1961 and recognizing outstanding leaders whose vision, service, scholarship, and contributions have made a significant and lasting impact on distance education and educational quality through accreditation. Celebrates exceptional leadership in advancing innovation, access, and excellence in distance learning.

Who can be nominated? Institutional leaders, educators, researchers, policymakers, accrediting volunteers, or other distinguished professionals whose work has had a meaningful and lasting impact on the field of distance education

Who can nominate? DEAC staff, Commissioners, peer evaluators, and institutional representatives.

Criteria: Nominees should meet most or all of the following criteria:

- **Exceptional leadership:** Advances distance education and educational innovation.
- **Sustained contribution:** Makes significant and sustained contributions to educational quality, effectiveness, and student success.
- **Accreditation impact:** Has a meaningful impact on accreditation, quality assurance, or institutional improvement.
- **Distinguished service:** Serves the distance education community through volunteerism, mentorship, governance, or professional engagement.
- **Thought leadership:** Contributes to scholarship, research, policy, or thought leadership that has influenced the field.
- **Access and opportunity:** Demonstrates commitment to expanding access, opportunity, and excellence in education.
- **Peer recognition:** Known as a respected leader whose work exemplifies the values and mission of quality distance education.