

GAMBIA TEACHERS UNION
GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE BI-ANNUAL BEST
TEACHER AWARD SCHEME

A. INTRODUCTION

In most cases teachers change jobs to other sectors they consider more lucrative both within and outside the country. Therefore, teacher attrition in the Gambia is a cause for concern. Invariably, low morale, little remunerative incentives to a cadre of highly trained individuals in a competitive work force, is the consonant and driving force that produces "RATS" (Run Away Teachers).

Founded on the 9th February 1937, the Gambia Teachers Union was established, among other reasons:

- ✓ To provide means whereby the collective views, opinions and decisions of members affecting the interest of education in general and those of the teaching profession in particular can be expressed;
- ✓ To maintain the democratic character of the Union and to protect it from both internal and external hostile forces and infiltration by subversive and reactionary elements opposed to democratic and free unionism and also to safeguard the autonomy of the Union;
- ✓ To establish, promote and maintain a high standard of professional qualification, loyalty to established principles and unswerving devotion to the proper education of children;

As a national teacher organization, the Union embraces all other education workers and as well seeks to ensuring a highly trained, skilled, qualified, protected and well motivated membership through the promotion of research, dialogue and other advocacy strategies.

As a major stakeholder in education in The Gambia, the GTU is sensitive to the growing concern over the challenging working and living conditions of its members as well as the lowering performance levels of students. The resultant effect of the 'challenging' operating environment in the field of teaching has been and continues to pose a great threat to the retention of teachers, hence the alarming 'occupational' drift the system is currently faced with as indicative of a recent study and tour commissioned by the Union.

The Union has noticed that teacher preparedness and performance as well as effective school curricula management can never be ignored as important inputs into quality delivery. Notwithstanding the above, what is obvious and certain is the fact that little can be achieved in our drive, as a nation, to attaining quality education by 2015 if the conditions of service of teachers and all other education workers remain as they are.

Realizing the need to give recognition to teachers who exert best practices in the classrooms and their communities, the National Executive Committee of the GTU, established the Best Teacher Award Scheme aimed at rewarding excellence, professionalism, patriotism and dedication to the teaching profession and with a view to restoring the respect they deserve and as well raise the profile of the teacher.

B. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

The aims and objectives of the scheme among others are:

- *To recognize the contribution of teachers in national development in general and education in particular;*
- *To encourage teachers and civil society appreciate the nobility of the Teaching Profession;*
- *To create standards and targets for teachers to aspire for;*
- *To promote mutual understanding and cement closer cooperation between teachers and other stakeholders in Education;*
- *To promote and maintain loyalty, commitment and devotion to the established principles of the Teaching Profession;*
- *To promote and maintain the zeal in providing quality and relevant education to children of The Gambia;*
- *To motivate teachers for higher performance;*
- *To motivate and encourage teachers to be creative and develop the spirit of voluntarism;*
- *To boost the image of the teacher and the Teaching Profession;*
- *To recognize and appreciate the services of Retired Teachers;*
- *To identify teachers who have shown initiative, resourcefulness commitment and dedication for effective teaching and learning;*
- *To reduce the teacher attrition rate.*

Cognizant of the above, the National Executive Committee of the GTU wishes to renew its resolve and commitment to the above principles and ideals by exerting every effort that

would preserve the public esteem of its membership, thus ensuring a better profile for teachers. This we believe will contribute immensely in raising the educational standards as well as boosting the teaching profession.

C. CATEGORIES OF AWARD

Basically, there will be ten aggregate categories ranging from regional to national levels:

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| 1. Lower Basic Category (LBC) | - | 12 awards; |
| 2. Upper and Basic Cycle Category (UBCC) | - | 12 awards; |
| 3. Senior Secondary Category (SSC) | - | 6 awards; |
| 4. Tertiary Education Category (TEC) | - | 3 awards; |
| 5. Managerial Category (MC) | - | 12 awards; |
| 6. Retired Teachers Category (RTC) | - | 5 awards; |
| 7. Partners & Friends of GTU Category (PFC) | - | 8 awards; |
| 8. GTU Staff-of-the-year Category (GSC) | - | 1 award; |
| 9. Outstanding Personality Category (OPC) | - | 2 awards; |
| 10. GTU Volunteers Category (GVC) | - | 3 awards. |

i. **LBC, UBCC and SSC:** Outstanding teachers active in the classroom, will be considered but at regional level. There will be thirty regional awards, that is, 2 for LBS and UBCC each and 1 for SSC for each region;

ii. **TEC:** A maximum of three (3) national awards will be dedicated to outstanding graduated teachers from the Gambia College School of Education and/or the University of The Gambia for the 2006 and 2007 academic years. Awards must be given to those still active in the system and shall not be presented to those who have already left the system, no matter what their performances were.

iii. **MC:** Two outstanding 'school managers' will be awarded for each of the groups at the regional level only: head teachers/school managers at the Lower; Upper; Basic Cycle; Senior Secondary; and Regional Directorate Officers. Awardees shall be strictly members only.

iv. **RTC:** Five (5) retired teachers and other education workers, who were members of the Union, shall be considered. This category is open to all retired teachers/education

workers regardless of the period. All others will be honoured with certificates of appreciation for their efforts rendered in education.

v. **PFC:** Eight (8) esteemed partners and 'friends' of GTU shall be considered in this category but considerations will be given to those within the period under review.

vi. **GSC:** One (1) member of staff will be given a national award. However, the criteria must include performance and conduct.

vii. **OPC:** Two (2) honorary titles such as Honorary Membership, etc shall be conferred on individuals who, in one way or another are very supportive to teachers and education system delivery.

viii **GVC:** Six (6) NEC, GTUWW and GTUCCU volunteers shall be awarded under this category. Each segment shall be looked at separately.

D. LEVELS OF AWARD

There are two levels of award: Regional and National

LEVEL	Regional	National
CATEGORY	LBC, UBCC, SSC, MC,	TEC, RTC, PFC, GSC, OPC, GVC
TOTAL	4	6

E. SELECTION PROCESS AND STRUCTURES

There will be three ad hoc committees at national level supported by six regional sub-committees. The national committees shall be; the National Task Force (NTF); National Fundraising Committee (NFC) and a National Steering Committee (NSC). The NTF shall be responsible for monitoring the establishment of the Regional Nominating Committees (RNC), screening of all candidates, developing a budget and programme/itinerary, setting up of criteria and procedures; presenting reports to the NEC through the General Secretary and any other duties and responsibilities assigned to it by the NEC.

The NFC shall be charged with the responsibility of raising the necessary funds as required by the scheme. It shall be responsible for the acquisition, wrapping, labeling and presentation of prizes and as requested by the NTF.

The NSC shall be responsible of the overall organization of the grounds and meeting other logistical requirements of the ceremony as programmed by the NTF.

Regional Selection Committees (RSC) shall comprise of:

- a. GTU/GTUWW/GTUCCU Regional Secretaries/Directors;
- b. Regional Education Director or his/her 'permanent' representative;
- c. Catholic Education Secretary or his 'permanent' representative;
- d. A representative of the Regional PTAs (to be identified by the RED);
- e. An opinion leader (preferably a retired civil servant)

F. CRITERIA FOR APPRAISAL OF CONTESTANTS

The following shall form the basis of the requirements for nomination:

- ✓ Professional conduct and remarkable achievement(s);
- ✓ Whole school performance;
- ✓ Community participation

1. Professional Conduct and Remarkable Achievements:

The Nomination Committee shall look for:-

- a) aspects of the contestant's work that made the teacher stand out as exceptional and which qualify the teacher for nomination and participation in the competition;
 - b) Evidence of the professional mark of the teacher (creativity, innovation and resourcefulness) which is worth emulating by other members of staff in the institution. The committee shall take into account the nature of community set-ups in which some of the institutions are located. In addition, it shall reckon with the fact that some of the teachers lived outside the communities where their schools are located;
 - c) Moral conduct;
 - d) The Teacher's outstanding accomplishment which makes him/her outstanding. E.g. Laurels that the teacher has won for the school and any other indelible marks in the school.
- 2. Whole-School Performance:** The Committee shall consider the impact of the teacher on the development of the school, other than as a classroom teacher; uplifting the image and work of the school; being role model for others; creative and innovative learning/teaching practices worthy of emulation by other schools.
- 3. Community Involvement:** This criterion shall be used to assess the involvement and contribution of the teacher on:-

- a. school community development;
 - b. the development of the wider community in which the school is located
4. **Method to be adopted:** The committee shall use among others, the Observation, Appraisal and Interview Techniques based on the assessment criteria in addition to observing the physical, social and biological environments which constitute the teaching/learning environment in which the contestants operate.
5. **Source Of Information:** In addition, the Committee shall obtain information from the following sources:-
- a) school heads and other teachers;
 - b) opinion leaders in the community
 - c) PTA/members;
 - d) Non-teaching staff in the school;
 - e) Other members of the wider community
 - f) Students/pupils taught by the teachers;
 - g) Projects designed to enhance student/pupil learning;
 - h) Regional Directorate officials

F2: APPRAISAL OF CONDIDATES

Candidates will be assessed on the basis of guidelines agreed upon by the National Task Force of the Education, Professional Development, Planning and Research Sub-Committee of the GTU NEC as suggested below.

The appraisal criteria shall include but not limited to the following:-

1. Member's Contribution to the GTU	
A	Knowledge of the GTU
B	Participation in Union activities
c	Position in GTU

2. Job experience and its impact on solving problems	
A	years of classroom teaching
B	position and responsibilities
C	problem solving accomplishments
D	experience in disadvantaged areas
E	Evidence of output/performance

3. Personality	
A	Appearance (dress code)
B	Comportment

C	Ability to articulate views	
D	Professional conduct/attitude	
E	teacher/pupil relationship	
F	teacher/teacher relationship	
G	teacher/administration relationship	
4	<i>Educational and Professional Background</i>	
5	<i>Evidence of Social and community involvement</i>	
6	<i>Knowledge of Education Policies and issues</i>	
7	<i>Presentation Skills</i>	
8	<i>Subject matter and methodology</i>	
9	<i>Awareness of current affairs and national development issues</i>	