

CMU Excellence in Teaching Award for Graduate Assistants

Nominations are being accepted for the 2026 Midwest Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) Excellence in Teaching Award. This competition is very competitive, so we are looking for exceptional CMU Doctoral and Master's students who have demonstrated their outstanding teaching competence in all of the ways listed under eligibility.

- CMU may nominate two students, one each at the master's and doctoral level.

Deadline: Nomination packets are due 5pm, December 1, 2025, to the Office of Graduate Studies via the DocuSign link. Department chairs should submit the nominations as a single pdf file. Eligible students with a complete nomination packet will be evaluated by a panel of faculty from the University. Applications open Oct. 1, 2025.

Eligible students will:

- Have been enrolled at CMU during the 2025 calendar year and have a teaching appointment for at least one semester
- Have evidence of excellence in teaching (including evaluations) and/or a department, college, or other teaching award
- Have an excellent teaching portfolio that includes:
 - evidence of course design for improved student learning (including objectives, course organization, content, learning activities, assessments)
 - evidence of effective mentoring (various levels)
 - evidence of professional development (GTA workshops from CIS, Department workshops, or other)
 - video footage to demonstrate student engagement and learning (see detailed MAGS evaluation criteria in the Teaching Portfolio below).

Each department may nominate one master's and one doctoral student who meets the above criteria. They should work with the nominee to submit the following as a single pdf:

1. A letter of support from the department chair (please include a description of any departmental and institutional honors awarded to this master's/doctoral student for excellence in teaching)
2. A current curriculum vitae for the nominee
3. The nominee's Teaching Portfolio. Please use the following Headings and limit to six double spaced pages (total) using 12-point font and one-inch margins. The point values indicate the weighting placed on each item by the MAGS review panel.
 - a. Teaching Philosophy and Practice [25 points]
 - Share your teaching philosophy by describing your understanding of how people learn, and how that understanding, in turn, informs what you value most as an instructor and the way you approach teaching. This explanation could include your fundamental understanding of the purpose of education, the nature of learning, and/or your role as a teacher in facilitating that learning. Please describe the instructional strategies and evidence-based practices that you utilize to support your teaching philosophy.
 - b. Course Design [25 points]
 - Connecting course design to your teaching philosophy and practices, describe how you have approached instructional design in one of your courses. Focus on the main elements of instructional design (e.g. objectives, course

organization, content and format, learning activities, interaction, assessments) and provide examples from your course along with your rationale for adopting them.

- c. Video clip of "Teaching in Action" (10-minute maximum/electronic link provided) [25 points]
 - YouTube video with embedded link. See [instructions from MAGS](https://mags-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2026_MAGS_Exc_Teach_YouTube_Instr.pdf), chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mags-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/2026_MAGS_Exc_Teach_YouTube_Instr.pdf.
 - The CMU Office of Curriculum and Instructional Support is available to consult on video development. They can help identify tools and approaches but are not available to do the recording itself. Email: TLPro@cmich.edu.
 - Provide a link to a 10-minute video clip from a collegiate-level course that demonstrates your teaching in action along with a one-paragraph description explaining how this video is representative of your teaching philosophy and practices. A variety of teaching settings may be used for the video including but not limited to lecture, facilitated discussion, lab, etc. as appropriate to the course. The focus should be on activities that demonstrate exceptional or innovative instruction or student learning, such as student engagement, personalized learning, project-based learning, etc. For asynchronous online courses, a video presentation by the instructor of key engaged learning activities, or learning environments, would be an example of good evidence.
 - Please note that instructors need to adhere to all campus FERPA policies, including those for sharing class lectures. If your campus does not have a policy in place, instructors should pass around a sheet where all present students give their permission, via signature, for the specific video(s) to be shared.
- d. Evidence of Effective Student/Colleague Mentoring [10 points]
 - Describe your experience with mentoring students outside of the classroom, whether that be related to the courses you teach or in other settings. Additionally, discuss any experience you have with mentoring your peers or colleagues in the context of teaching.
- e. Evidence of Professional Development [15 points]
 - Explain how you have used professional development opportunities to improve your teaching skills. If appropriate, how have you aligned professional development in the feedback you have received on your teaching?

Award Details

CMU may nominate one master's and one doctoral candidate for the award each year. The student ranked highest in each category by the evaluating committee will receive comments and recommendations for any additional improvements to the nomination packet and be forwarded to MAGS as the CMU nominee by January 15, 2026.

- The top-ranked master's student and top-ranked doctoral student will each receive a CMU Outstanding Teaching Award at a Spring event and \$200.

MAGS awardees are honored at the annual meeting each Spring. The 2026 meeting will be at the Kansas City Marriott at Country Club Plaza on March 25-27, 2026.

If a CMU student is selected by MAGS, travel expenses to the 2026 MAGS Annual Meeting will be covered. Each recipient of a MAGS award will receive a \$750 honorarium.