

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

April 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors and Chairpersons

FROM: Teresa Mastin, Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff

SUBJECT: Affairs
Excellence-In-Teaching Citations 2025-2026

Each year, Excellence-in-Teaching Citations nominations are solicited. Up to six Excellence-In-Teaching Citations are awarded, each with a stipend of \$1,000. The Excellence-in-Teaching Citation recipients will be recognized in spring 2026.

Nomination forms and instructions are attached. See attachments for details about the selection criteria and materials required to submit nominations. Colleges are encouraged to submit the maximum number of nominations. Please see page below *Maximum Number of College Nominations* (or page 3) for your college's maximum number of nominations. Maximums are based on the number of graduate teaching assistants assigned to colleges in April 2025.

Colleges and departments should include an advisory (or awards) committee in their selection process. Students should participate in the selection process. Selection committees should represent a cross-section of disciplines and perspectives. Comprehensive outreach to identify qualified nominees should be encouraged and supported.

Nominators may contact me at honorifics@msu.edu for feedback if the nominee is not selected for the award. A nominee not selected for an Excellence-in-Teaching Citation may be resubmitted for consideration in the subsequent award cycle and must be resubmitted through the college. A resubmission will count against the college's maximum number of nominations. It is important to consider feedback when collecting and resubmitting a candidate's nomination materials. Contact Katie Rundblad at honorifics@msu.edu to review model nomination packets based on the support materials submitted on behalf of past recipients of the Excellence-In-Teaching Citation.

Confirm college deadlines prior to gathering and preparing nominee support materials. Colleges should forward nominations **to the Provost Office, via the [Excellence-in-Teaching Citation Nomination Form](#) by 5:00 pm Wednesday, December 3, 2025**. It is strongly recommended that colleges establish nomination and review procedures now and that an announcement calling for nominations is issued immediately.

Please do not hesitate to contact me Katie at honorifics@msu.edu with questions.

This memorandum and the attachments are at the [All-University Awards website](#).

Attachments

MSU Excellence-In-Teaching Citations from the “Faculty Handbook”

MSU Excellence-In-Teaching Citations are made to six graduate teaching assistants who have distinguished themselves by the care they have given and the skill they have shown in meeting their classroom responsibilities. The essential purpose of the citation is to bring University-wide recognition to the best of the graduate teaching assistants and by so doing to underline the qualitative contribution which they are making to the undergraduate program.

Nominations must be endorsed by the chairperson of the department/director of the school in which the teaching assistant's instructional responsibilities have been discharged. When this is not the department/school in which the nominee is a candidate for a degree, the chairperson/director of the degree department/school must endorse the nomination. **In every instance the nomination must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the faculty member who has supervisory responsibility for the graduate teaching assistant.** Individual departments/schools will ordinarily make a single nomination each year, but the larger departments/schools may make as many as three. "At large" nominations are also invited from an appropriate student organization. All nominations are reviewed by a college screening committee, which may forward the number of nominations as indicated in the table below:

Number of Teaching Assistants in College	Maximum Number of Excellence-in-Teaching Nominations forwarded by the College
Less than 100	2
100-199	3
200-299	4
300-399	5
More than 399	7

To be nominated for an MSU Excellence-In-Teaching Citation, the teaching assistant must have held at least a quarter-time graduate teaching assistantship for a minimum of one semester at the time of nomination. In addition the nominee must have assumed a significant measure of responsibility for the conduct of undergraduate courses, whether in lecture, recitation or laboratory sections. Special tutorial or seminar teaching will also be recognized by the citations committee.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF COLLEGE NOMINATIONS

Up to Seven Nominations (Units with 400 or more graduate teaching assistants)

None

Up to Five Nominations (Units with 300-399 graduate teaching assistants)

College of Natural Science

Up to Four Nominations (Units with 200-299 graduate teaching assistants)

None

Up to Three Nominations (Units with 100-199 graduate teaching assistants)

College of Arts and Letters

College of Education

College of Engineering

College of Social Science

Up to Two Nominations (Units with 99 or fewer graduate teaching assistants)

College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Residential College in the Arts and Humanities

Eli Broad College of Business

College of Communication Arts and Sciences

College of Human Medicine

James Madison College

Lyman Briggs College

College of Music

College of Nursing

College of Osteopathic Medicine

College of Veterinary Medicine

Excellence-In-Teaching Citation 2025-2026

Up to six Excellence-In-Teaching Citations are awarded annually to outstanding graduate teaching assistants who have distinguished themselves by the dedication and skill they show in meeting their classroom responsibilities. Award recipients receive a stipend of \$1,000.ⁱ

At the time of nomination, the nominee must be a graduate assistant who has been assigned instructional responsibility for at least one semester; **they must be assigned an assistantship in summer 2025 or in the 2025-26 academic year (including summer 2026)**. In addition, they must have assumed significant responsibility for the conduct of undergraduate courses, whether in lecture, recitation, or laboratory sections. The All-University Awards Committee also recognizes special tutorial or seminar teaching. The nominee must be enrolled as a student in academic year 2025-2026.

A faculty member, faculty organization, student or student organization can submit nominations to the college—i.e., college screening committee—in which the nominee discharged instructional responsibilities. Be sure to confirm college deadline dates. The college screening committee, designated by the dean and in consultation with the college advisory committee, should consist of five members: three faculty (at least one assistant professor or instructor) and two students (undergraduate or graduate). **Each college screening committee is encouraged to submit the maximum number of nominations. Forward nominations to the All-University Awards Committee, via the [Excellence-in-Teaching Citation Nomination Form](#) by 5:00 pm Wednesday, December 3, 2025. NOMINEE DOSSIERS SUBMITTED WITHOUT ALL OF THE REQUIRED MATERIALS WILL BE RETURNED.**

All-University Awards nominations, including those for the Excellence-in-Teaching Citations, will be reviewed for misconduct and violations of University policy to ensure alignment with the [University's Mission and Values](#) prior to being advanced for committee review.

CRITERIA

The following criteria, listed in general order of importance, are to be addressed:

1. **Instructional effectiveness; impact on the student.** In providing evidence of the candidate's excellence and success in instruction, consider the following: SIRS/SPLS forms, peer evaluation, evaluations by affected groups; teaching portfolios, including course syllabi, examinations; websites, etc.; publications and presentations related to pedagogy; guest lectures; grants received in support of instruction; and instructional awards or other forms of professional or alumni recognition.
2. Use of **innovative techniques and/or approaches** in teaching. **Explain how these are innovative** in the department and/or discipline. Note that some technologies used regularly in classrooms are not considered as innovative as when they were introduced.
3. **Scholarly promise.** The nature of scholarship and creative activity varies across disciplines and areas. Excellence can be demonstrated in many ways: publications, presentations, poster sessions, websites, etc.; performances and exhibits; scores, showings, recordings, and curatorial activities; citations of one's work by others; evaluations by peers and affected groups including comments by outside evaluators, journal editors, referees,

etc.; grants received in support of research; and research awards or other forms of professional or alumni recognition.

4. Other significant involvements and/or activities.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE-IN-TEACHING CITATION

1. **DATA FORM (to be completed via [Qualtrics survey](#))**
2. **NOMINATOR STATEMENT.** See page 4 above or heading Criteria and nominator instructions on page 8 below or heading Instructions to Nominator.
3. **LETTERS OF SUPPORT.** Include **at least TWO but not more than two** letters from **FACULTY**, and **at least THREE but not more than three** letters from **STUDENTS** with whom the nominee has interacted. Also, students should be encouraged to address how the design and challenge of course(s) stood out for them. Support letters should not be repetitive. Ask for more letters than required so that the selected letters are complementary in addressing criteria. Letter writers should be specific and provide examples. Address the following **criteria** (see Criteria above or page 4), listed in general order of importance, in constructing letters of endorsement:
 - a. **Instructional effectiveness; impact on student.**
 - b. Use of **innovative techniques and/or approaches in teaching**. Explain how these are innovative in the department and/or discipline. Note that some technologies used currently in classrooms are not considered as innovative as when they were introduced.
 - c. **Scholarly promise.**
 - d. Other significant involvements and/or activities.
4. **CURRENT CURRICULUM VITAE.** In the case of multiple authors, indicate how the primary or lead author is identified and/or that all authors have made an approximately equal contribution.
5. **TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT** (one page only). Candidate provides this.
 - a. Candidate's teaching philosophy.
 - b. Describe implementation.
 - c. How do you determine effectiveness?
 - d. If not effective, how do you make modifications? Describe modifications?
6. **TEACHING SCHEDULE AT MSU** (on separate sheet).
 - a. Indicate courses in which nominee assumed responsibility for lecture, laboratory, or recitation sections.
 - b. If the nominee has not been responsible for lecture, recitation, or laboratory section of a course, please describe the nature of their assistantship responsibilities and duties related to teaching.
7. **TEACHING TABLE TO PROVIDE COURSE DETAILS AND STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IN SUMMARIZED FORM.** Complete Table on page 9 for classes taught.
 - **STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL RATING SYSTEM (SIRS) COMPOSITE PROFILE FACTORS.** The five composite profile factors are on the summary reports provided by the Scoring Office; the composite profile factors are provided on the attached table.
 - When **UNIT-SPECIFIC/DESIGNED STUDENT EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS** are used rather than SIRS, fill in the table as completely as possible for classes taught and, if necessary, modify the table according to the categories your unit uses in its evaluation instrument or address in summary form teaching effectiveness on a separate sheet and place in Section 7 with the Table.
 - If your unit's student evaluation instrument does not fit into categories comparable to the Composite Profile Factors, you are still required to provide evidence in summary form that student evaluation of the nominee's teaching indicates that they are an effective and exemplary instructor. Place this summary in Section 7 with the Teaching Table.
8. **DRAFT CITATION.** Approximately 300 words to appear in the awards brochure if the nominee is selected as an award winner. (See page 10 or Heading Draft Citations and page 11 or Heading Sample Citations.) Please be sure to list nominee's name as they wishes it to appear in the awards brochure and on the award certificate, and list nominee's degree department/college.
9. **INCLUDE ONE AND ONLY ONE DOCUMENT USED BY CANDIDATE IN TEACHING.** For example, course syllabus, course outline, student assignment, student quiz or examination. No books, journals, offprints, or journal articles, and the like.

INSTRUCTIONS TO NOMINATOR

Excellence-In-Teaching Citations 2025-2026

The nominator statement addresses the criteria and the points below regarding instruction and scholarship (based on the nature of the nominee's assignments, comments may not be applicable to all topics). Comments on other topics may be included. See also Criteria above (or on page 4).

CRITERIA

1. Instructional effectiveness; impact on student.
2. Use of innovative techniques and/or approaches in teaching. It is important to explain how these are innovative in your department and/or discipline.
3. Scholarly promise.
4. Other significant involvements and/or activities.

INSTRUCTION

In providing evidence of the candidate's excellence and success in instruction, consider the following: SIRS/ SPLS forms, peer evaluation, evaluations by affected groups; teaching portfolios, including course syllabi, examinations; websites, etc.; publications and presentations related to pedagogy; guest lectures; grants received in support of instruction; and instructional awards or other forms of professional or alumni recognition.

The Quality of Instruction

1. If the nominee has been asked to lecture in a course, please comment on the quality of their presentation.
2. What strengths and weaknesses has the nominee shown in the conduct of recitation or laboratory sections?
3. How successful has the nominee been in meeting with individual undergraduate students who are having problems with the course?

Contributions to the Instructional Program

(Be as specific as possible.)

1. What creative suggestions for improving/enhancing the content of the course has the nominee made? (Have they taken advantage of opportunities to suggest modifications in the outline of the course?)
2. How has the nominee contributed to the development of instructional techniques, including those designed to evaluate students?

SCHOLARSHIP

The nature of scholarship and creative activity varies across disciplines and areas. Excellence can be demonstrated in many ways: publications, presentations, poster sessions, websites, etc.; performances and exhibits; scores, showings, recordings, and curatorial activities; citations of one's work by others; evaluations by peers and affected groups including comments by outside evaluators, journal editors, referees, etc.; grants received in support of research; and research awards or other forms of professional or alumni recognition.

Demonstration of Scholarship

1. Indicate the nominee's scholarly interests and comment on the significance.
2. To what extent has the nominee contributed to scholarship either by sharing in the publication of research results or by participating in state, regional, or national meetings? What has the individual done that demonstrates their promise for scholarly distinction and creativity?

SUMMARY

1. Provide a summary statement on the general quality of the nominee's contributions and their promise as a teacher-scholar. Evaluate the nominee in comparison with their peers.

DRAFT CITATIONS

If you would like to review sample citations, please contact Katie Rundblad at honorifics@msu.edu.

(Use this outline as applicable to the award)

IMPORTANT:

Please print name as it should appear on the award certificate and in the award brochure.

The citation will be printed in the program booklet. The citation should be an accurate statement of the person's achievements, but it should also be:

- **Distinctive.** The citations should reflect an honoree's distinction: a relevant tidbit about the person (as opposed to the person's achievements) is helpful: e.g., "An adviser who is also broadly versed in music, literature, and the fine arts".
- **Creative.** Search for unusual and descriptive adjectives, varying cadences and turns of phrase.
- **Easily understood by a lay audience.**

A student (or a colleague) quotation adds human interest to the citation. Such quotations should be specific rather than general. "One of the most important thing they communicates is their conviction that service in a University can be the heart of an honorable way of life." This is preferable to "They were the best adviser I've ever had." Don't overlook humorous quotations.

Although following this outline slavishly is not necessary (especially if you are feeling particularly creative), the citations usually take the form below. Keep in mind that each item should be several sentences long at most.

1. Statements of the person's area of expertise and of the overall significance of the person's contributions/achievements to the world/the University, especially across disciplines. How far does their influence reach? State? National? International? Public/private sector? What constituent groups?
2. Specific ways in which their excellence has been evidenced. Undergraduate, graduate, or both. Extension. Increasing access to an MSU degree. Textbooks and curriculum development. Student advising and mentorships. Where do their students go after MSU? Support of funding for equipment or scholarships.
3. Specific evidence of scholarship and contributions to other areas of the University's mission such as research. Avoid citing numbers of things unless they are really phenomenal. Instead, cite capstone examples. Use layperson's terms where possible, and cite the usefulness or results of the person's work in their largest context. Grants, professional societies, and awards are appropriate here, but only the most significant.
4. Other—Professional affiliations, consulting, service/outreach. MSU committee service. Again, use only the most significant examples.
5. Summary sentence of the person's worthiness for the award.

CHECKLIST

Excellence-In-Teaching Citations 2025-2026

ONE COPY. (The copy provided must be readable when scanned for committee review). NOMINEE DOSSIERS SUBMITTED WITHOUT ALL OF THE REQUIRED MATERIALS WILL BE RETURNED. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS. Please arrange materials in the following order:

1. **Completed DATA FORM** (to be completed via [Qualtrics survey](#))
2. **NOMINATOR STATEMENT.** Address criteria completely. (See CRITERIA above (or on page 4) and INSTRUCTIONS TO NOMINATOR page above (or on page 8)).
3. **LETTERS OF SUPPORT:**
 - a. At least **TWO** but not more than two letters from **FACULTY**.
 - b. At least **THREE** but not more than three letters of recommendation from members of the **STUDENT** body (including student colleagues (no more than one student colleague letter)).
4. **CURRENT CURRICULUM VITAE.** List authors the way they appear. For multiple authors, **indicate how the primary/lead author is identified and/or that all authors have made an approximately equal contribution.**
5. **TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT** (one page only). Candidate provides this.
 - a. Candidate's teaching philosophy.
 - b. Describe implementation.
 - c. How do you determine effectiveness?
 - d. If not effective, how do you make modifications? Describe modifications.
6. **TEACHING SCHEDULE** (include separate page for this).
 - a. Nominee has assigned instructional responsibility for at least one semester.
 - b. At the time of nomination, the nominee has had assigned instructional responsibility for at least one semester, and they must also be assigned an assistantship in summer 2025 or in the 2025-26 academic year (including summer 2026). Nominee must be enrolled as a student in the 2025-26 academic year.
 - c. Nominee has significant responsibility for the conduct of undergraduate courses.
 - d. Nominee's primary involvement is undergraduate teaching.
7. **TEACHING TABLE.** Provide detailed information on courses taught and results from SIRS/SPLS Composite Profile Factors. In cases where the unit administers student evaluation forms other than SIRS, fill in the form as completely as possible (see Section 7, Teaching Table above (or on page 9)) for details and additional instruction). You **MUST** provide a summary of student evaluation of nominee's teaching in this section. **If other than SIRS/SPLS, limit summary to 1-2 pages.**
8. **CITATION.** Please enclose a citation of approximately 300 words to appear in the awards brochure if the nominee is selected. Be sure to list nominee's name as they wish it to appear in the awards brochure and be sure to list degree(s) department(s)/college(s).
9. **INCLUDE ONE AND ONLY ONE TEACHING DOCUMENT USED BY CANDIDATE.** For example, course syllabus, course outline, student assignment, student quiz or examination. NO books, journals, offprints, or journal articles, and the like.

ⁱ The Tax Reform Act (1986) eliminated the general exclusion of awards made in recognition of educational or scientific achievement. As a result, all Michigan State University recognition awards are considered taxable income. As such, monetary awards may affect scholarship awards and/or financial aid. Please confer with the offices of Scholarships and/or Financial Aid.