

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

June 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors, and Chairpersons

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

SUBJECT: Excellence-In-Teaching Citations 2026-2027

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. Recipients will be recognized in spring 2027.

Nomination forms and instructions are attached. See the 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 the page below, “Maximum Number of College Nominations,” for your college’s maximum number of nominations. Maximums are based on the number of graduate teaching assistants assigned to colleges in April 2027.

Colleges and departments should include an advisory (or awards) committee in their selection process. Students should participate in the selection process. Women and minorities should be included on nomination and screening committees. Efforts to submit a diverse and inclusive set of nominees should be encouraged and supported.



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Nominators may contact 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 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 Office of the Provost via the [Excellence-In-Teaching Nomination Form](#) by Monday, November 9, 2026.** It is strongly recommended that colleges establish nomination and review procedures now and that an announcement calling for nominations be issued immediately.

Please do not hesitate to contact honorifics@msu.edu with questions. This memorandum and the attachments are on the [All-University Awards website](#).

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE-IN-TEACHING CITATIONS 2026-27

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

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)

No College in this range

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)

No Colleges in this range

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
(School of Residential Community-Engaged 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

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 2026 or in the 2026-27 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 the academic year 2026-27.

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 Nomination Form](#) by Monday, November 9, 2026. 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](#) before 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: 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 CITATIONS 2026-27**

- I. DATA FORM**
- II. NOMINATOR STATEMENT.** See the criteria or the heading Instructions to Nominator.
- III. 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 the 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 the criteria. Letter writers should be specific and provide examples. Address the following **criteria** (see criteria above), 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.
- IV. 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.
- V. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT** (one page only). The 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?
- VI. TEACHING SCHEDULE AT MSU** (on separate sheet).
 - a. Indicate courses in which the nominee assumed responsibility for lecture, laboratory, or recitation sections.
 - b. If the nominee has not been responsible for a lecture, recitation, or laboratory section of a course, please describe the nature of their assistantship responsibilities and duties related to teaching.
- VII. TEACHING TABLE TO PROVIDE COURSE DETAILS AND STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IN SUMMARIZED FORM.** Complete the table for classes taught.
 - **STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING SURVEY (SPLS) SUMMARIES.**
 - When **UNIT-SPECIFIC/DESIGNED STUDENT EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS** are used rather than SPLS, 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 SPLS outputs, 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.
- VIII. DRAFT CITATION.** Approximately 300 words to appear in the awards brochure if the nominee is selected as an award winner. See Tips for Writing Draft Citations. Please be sure to list the nominee's name as they wish it to appear in the awards brochure and on the award certificate, and list the nominee's degree department/college.
- IX. INCLUDE ONE AND ONLY ONE DOCUMENT USED BY THE 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

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 apply to all topics). Comments on other topics may be included. See also the criteria above.

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: student evaluation 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 their 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.

SECTION VIII

TIPS FOR WRITING DRAFT CITATIONS

(Use this outline as applicable to the award)

IMPORTANT:

Please print the name as it should appear in the awards brochure. Draft citations should be approximately 325 words. *If you wish to see examples of draft citations, please reach out to honorifics@msu.edu.*

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 advisor who is also broadly versed in music, literature, and the fine arts, Ms. X.")

Creative. Search for unusual and descriptive adjectives, varying cadences and turns of phrase.

Easily understood by a lay audience.

Citations should include such items as:

- A quotation from a student (or a colleague) from the material submitted adds human interest to the citation. Such quotations should be specific rather than general. "One of the most important things Ms. X communicates is her conviction that service in a university can be the heart of an honorable way of life." is preferable to "She was the best advisor I've ever had." Don't overlook humorous quotations.
- Statements of the person's area of expertise and 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?
- Specific ways in which her/his excellence has been evidenced. Undergraduate, graduate, or both. Extension. Advancing diversity. Textbooks and curriculum development. Student advising and mentorship. Where do students go after MSU? Support for funding for equipment or scholarships.
- 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 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.
- Other - Professional affiliations, consulting service/outreach. MSU committee service. Again, use only the most significant examples.
- Summary sentence of the person's worthiness for the award.

CHECKLIST

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:

- I. Completed DATA FORM**
- II. NOMINATOR STATEMENT.** Address the criteria completely. (See CRITERIA above and INSTRUCTIONS TO NOMINATOR page above).
- III. 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)).
- IV. 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.**
- V. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT** (one page only). The 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.
- VI. TEACHING SCHEDULE** (include a separate page for this).
 - a. The nominee has assigned instructional responsibility for at least one semester.
 - b. At the time of nomination, the nominee must have had assigned instructional responsibility for at least one semester, and they must also be assigned an assistantship in summer 2026 or in the 2026-27 academic year (including summer 2026). The nominee must be enrolled as a student in the 2026-2027 academic year.
 - c. The nominee has significant responsibility for the conduct of undergraduate courses.
 - d. Nominee's primary involvement is undergraduate teaching.
- VII. TEACHING TABLE.** Provide detailed information on courses taught and a summary of student appreciation. You **MUST** provide a summary of the student evaluation of the nominee's teaching in this section. **Limit summary to 1-2 pages.**
- VIII. CITATION.** Please enclose a citation of approximately 300 words to appear in the awards brochure if the nominee is selected. Be sure to list the nominee's name as they wish it to appear in the awards brochure, and be sure to list degree(s), department(s)/college(s).
- IX. INCLUDE ONE AND ONLY ONE TEACHING DOCUMENT USED BY THE CANDIDATE.** For example, course syllabus, course outline, student assignment, student quiz, or examination. NO books, journals, offprints, or journal articles, and the like.

¹ 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.