Guidelines for the 2024-25
Excellence in Teaching Award for Graduate Teaching Assistants

The Excellence in Teaching Award for Graduate Teaching Assistants is awarded by the Graduate School, in recognition of exceptional ability in teaching by UB graduate students. Students will be selected based on superb and creative performance in the classroom or laboratory, engagement with mentoring and advisement, and a commitment to the high academic standards and inclusivity in teaching.

I. Eligibility

- The nominee must be a current, full-time UB graduate student.
- The nominee may be nominated a total of two times over the course of their time as a graduate student. Previous Excellence in Teaching Award recipients are no longer eligible.
- The nominee must have been involved in teaching at UB for the equivalent of at least one academic year (does not have to be during consecutive semesters).
- The nominee must be enrolled in the spring 2025 semester.

Teaching assistants who supervise laboratory sections, recitation sections or their own courses are equally eligible.

II. The Nomination Process

Nomination must be submitted through the [online nomination form](#).

Any member of the faculty may initiate a nomination. Self-nominations are strongly discouraged. Nominations must be submitted online by Friday, Feb. 21, 2025, at 5 p.m. Please contact your academic dean's office to coordinate as needed prior to submission.

Questions about the nomination guidelines and process can be directed to Elizabeth Colucci at colucci3@buffalo.edu.

III. The Nomination Form Materials

The following must be provided by the candidate's sponsor:

- Candidate information.
- Candidate's department information.
- Candidate's mentor information.
- Sponsor information and selection criteria.
  The candidate's sponsor should clearly address how the candidate's performance specifically fulfills each of the following award selection criteria:
  - **Teaching skill.** The nominee must perform superbly and creatively in the classroom or laboratory (i.e., show evidence from quantitative assessments of teaching and/or summaries of qualitative evaluations and course materials).
  - **Mentorship/advisement.** The nominee must be concerned with the intellectual growth of individual students, must measurably facilitate their growth and must help students achieve academic excellence (i.e., show evidence of accessibility outside of the classroom, and a description of mentoring/advising activities in the candidate's personal statement).
  - **Academic standards and requirements.** The nominee must set high standards for students (i.e., show evidence from duties and responsibilities, course material presented, and degree of course difficulty).
  - **Commitment to inclusive teaching.** The nominee must be concerned with deliberately cultivating a learning environment where all students are treated equitably, have equal access to learning, and feel valued and supported in their learning.

- Teaching history and observations, to include:
  - Up to five listings of the nominee's teaching history and faculty observations and should include the following for each:
    - Name of course, semester and year taught, and the number of students enrolled.
    - A specific description of the candidate's teaching role and duties in each course/section.
    - An indication of the candidate's responsibilities for grading.
  - Faculty observations (Maximum of 250 words each). First-hand commentary from sponsors and other faculty members who have witnessed a candidate's in-class performance. Place the candidate's work in an appropriate professional, disciplinary and/or pedagogical context.
  - Up to two testimonials from a candidate's own students using the Student Testimonial Form (located at the end of this document) for each. Testimonials that address the selection criteria of teaching skill, mentorship/advisement, and academic standards and requirements are most helpful. Do not include testimonials from fellow graduate students.
- Copy of candidate's current unofficial transcript.

The following must be provided by the candidate:

- Personal statement. The candidate should submit a two-page, double-spaced statement describing the following:
  - Teaching approaches in the classroom or laboratory.
  - Philosophy of mentoring/advising and methods used to mentor/advise individual students.
  - Academic standards and requirements, including methods used to evaluate student performance and why those methods were selected.
  - Commitment to inclusive teaching. Describe how you have cultivated a learning environment where all students are treated equitably, have equal access to learning, and feel valued and supported in their learning.
  - Course information. The candidate should include a syllabus summary for up to two courses or laboratories taught, only if the candidate created the syllabus. Please include the following:
    - A course description, course materials and methods of evaluation and assessment.
    - A description of the candidate's responsibilities (design of experiments, design of case studies, design of PowerPoint or other presentations, etc.) for the course(s).
    - A short description of any innovative or extraordinary aspects of the course(s) adopted to improve students' educational experiences.

University at Buffalo
The Graduate School

Nomination Form Details
Excellence in Teaching Award for Graduate Teaching Assistants

Use this nomination document to collect the required information for the online nomination form.

Nomination must be submitted through the online nomination form by Friday, Feb. 21, 2025 at 5 p.m.

Part 1: Candidate Information

Name: _____
First   Last

Email: _____

Person Number: _____

Part 2: Candidate's Department Information

Department Name: _____ Phone: _____

Dept. Chair Name: _____ Academic Dean Name: _____

Candidate is responsible for: Lab or Recitation Section _____ Full Course _____ Other _____

Part 3: Candidate's Mentor Information

Mentor(s) Name(s): _____

Mentor(s) Decanal Unit(s): _____

Part 4: Sponsor Information and Selection Criteria

Sponsor's Name:_____

Department Name:_____Phone:_____

Please clearly address how the candidate's performance specifically fulfills each of the award selection criteria below. Please see the award guidelines for definitions.

Teaching Skill (Maximum of 250 words):

The nominee must perform superbly and creatively in the classroom or laboratory (i.e., show evidence from quantitative assessments of teaching and/or summaries of qualitative evaluations and course materials).

Mentorship/Advisement (Maximum of 250 words):

The nominee must be concerned with the intellectual growth of individual students, must measurably facilitate their growth, and must help students achieve academic excellence (i.e., show evidence of accessibility outside of the classroom, and a description of mentoring/advising activities in the candidate's personal statement).

Academic Standards and Requirements (Maximum of 250 words):

The nominee must set high standards for students (evidence from duties and responsibilities, course materials presented, degree of course difficulty).

Commitment to Inclusive Teaching (Maximum of 250 words):

The nominee must cultivate a learning environment where all students are treated equitably, have equal access to learning, and feel supported in their learning.

Additional Insight (Maximum of 250 words):

I.e., the teaching culture and normal duties of teaching assistants in the candidate's department, etc.

Part 5: Teaching History and Observations

Please include the following for each course (up to five courses):

- Name of course, semester and year taught, and the number of students enrolled.
- A specific description of the candidate's teaching role and duties in each course/section.
- An indication of the candidate's responsibilities for grading.
- Faculty observations (maximum of 250 words each). First-hand commentary from sponsors and other faculty members who have witnessed a candidate's in-class performance. Place the candidate's work in an appropriate professional, disciplinary and/or pedagogical context. Contact Elizabeth Colucci at colucci3@buffalo.edu if you would like a rubric for observations.

Part 6: Student Testimonials

Use the Student Testimonial Form for each (located at the end of this document).

Part 7: Required Uploads

Candidate's Personal statement and Course information.

Checklist of Materials to be Included in the Online Nomination Form

To be provided by the candidate's sponsor:

- Candidate, Candidate's Department, and Mentor information.
- Sponsor information and Selection Criteria
- Up to two student testimonials from a candidate's own student/s (testimonial form template provided at the end of this document).
- Teaching History and Observations—course information/role and faculty observations for up to five courses.
- Copy of candidate's current unofficial transcript.

To be provided by the candidate:

- Personal statement.
- Course information.

Student Testimonial Form
Excellence in Teaching Award for Graduate Teaching Assistants

Student's Name:_____ Student's Major: _____

TA's Name:_____ TA's Department: _____

Student's Anticipated Conferral Date:_____

Testimonial (Maximum of 250 words):
Please begin your testimonial by stating how long you have known the teaching assistant and under what circumstances.