2026-27 Graduate Student Awards Call for Nominations

Submissions due January 15, 2027 by 12:00 (noon) at
Graduate Student Awards Form

Purpose:
The College of Graduate Studies is pleased to announce a call for graduate student award nominations. The purpose of these awards is to recognize graduate student achievements in three areas: 1) research and creative scholarship, 2) teaching, and 3) engagement and social advocacy.

Some of these areas are further divided into categories. In each category, there will be an Outstanding Achievement award and an Excellent Achievement award. The monetary prize associated with each Outstanding Achievement award is $500 (five hundred dollars), and the monetary prize associated with each Excellent Achievement award is $250 (two hundred fifty dollars).

Eligibility, the nominee must:
- Be a current CSU graduate student or have graduated no earlier than Spring of the last academic year
- Have a GPA of 3.0 or better and be in good academic standing at the time of nomination.
- An eligible graduate student may be nominated and considered for more than one award, No nominee shall receive more than one award.
- A separate application is required for the second nomination.
- Award winners are not eligible to apply for the same award in subsequent years.
- Award winners are also not eligible in subsequent years for a different award based on the same work.

Nomination Materials:
- Completion of the online form
- Nomination Letter
- Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae (2 pages)
- Project Summary or Teaching Statement (1 page)
- Appendix Materials

Guidelines for Nomination Submission

Successful nominees must submit a clear and well-organized nomination package **in a single PDF document** (you can combine PDF files for free here**).** Faculty reviewers will be from many different fields across the University; therefore, the Project Summary or Teaching Statement should be written in plain English that is clear and unambiguous so that the proposal is understandable to readers completely outside of the discipline. Nonetheless, the intellectual underpinnings of the work should be clear. Nominees may submit nominations for more than one award; however, each nomination must be materially and categorically different and tailored to the particular award to which it is directed. For example, students may apply for a research/creative scholarship award in addition to a Teaching Award/Engagement and Social Advocacy Award. Submitting identical nominations for

more than one award may result in disqualification from one or all award categories. The format described below must be followed rigorously; non-compliance with the format or failure to submit all materials by the submission deadline may result in the disqualification of a nomination. All nomination materials must be submitted using the following link: Graduate Student Awards Form

Nomination Materials

Nomination letter:
The nomination letter should be from the Research/Creative Scholarship supervisor (for the creative scholarship, master's and doctoral level research awards), or the program director, department chair, or faculty member (for the Teaching, as well as the Engagement and Social Advocacy Awards). If the person writing the nomination letter is not a CSU faculty member, that nomination should be accompanied by a letter of support from the program director, department chair, or CSU faculty member familiar with the nominee's work. For teaching awards, at least one nomination letter should be from someone knowledgeable about your teaching (not necessarily your advisor).

Nomination letters should describe the significance of the nominee's contributions relevant to the award criteria. The letter should specify the nominee's substantive contributions to the final product (i.e., for Research/Creative Scholarship or Engagement/Social Advocacy), particularly if the work or achievement was co-authored or a group or team effort. It should also specify the nominee's unique contribution, the significance of the nominee's contribution, and the credentials of the nominee relative to the standards of his or her discipline. For the Research/Creative Scholarship Awards, the nominator should comment on the stage of completion of the work, timeline for completion, and plan for dissemination of the findings. For the Engagement/Social Advocacy Award, the nomination letter should attest to the relevance and rigor of the applicant's activity with a statement on the impact the work has made within the community.

Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae: 2-page maximum (one-inch margins, single spaced, 12 pt. font)

- If nominated for a teaching or teaching assistant award, the CV should list the courses you have taught.

Project Summary or Teaching Statement: 1-page maximum (one-inch margins, single spaced, 12 pt. font)

- *Teaching statement (teaching/teaching assistant awards only):* For the teaching and teaching assistant awards, a one-page teaching statement is required. This statement should not repeat the list of courses taught from your CV; it should instead give the committee insight into how you approach teaching and how this helps students learn. An effective teaching statement describes your philosophy toward teaching in general, and gives specific examples based on how you teach, your interactions with students, or your own experiences as a student. This should be an organized piece of writing similar to what you would submit when applying for jobs, and there are many online resources with ideas about what to include.

- *Project summary (all other awards):* This should include an abstract or summary of the research or creative scholarship, thesis or dissertation, or engagement and social advocacy activity for which the student is being nominated. For the engagement/social advocacy award, the nominee should demonstrate the impact of the activity and the ability to sustain or replicate it.

Appendices:
Nominees must submit evidence of their accomplishments. Examples include published articles, drafts, conference proceedings or presentations, and a thesis or dissertation. Other examples of evidence that may be included in this section: impact factor and other evidence of journal quality for published articles, number of citations or downloads of published articles, evidence of peer review and acceptance rates for journal articles and conference presentations, evidence of awards and recognitions or grants earned, evidence of the significance of the contribution to the field and/or the impact on students (e.g., teaching evaluations, course improvements, letters of support, or evidence of innovation and creativity in research, creative scholarship, engagement or social advocacy, or in the classroom) or the community (e.g., letters from professionals or community members substantiating the nominee's contributions to engagement and social advocacy, or evidence of innovation and creativity).

Category Descriptions

Master's and Doctoral Research Award:

These awards are granted to graduate students for research that is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation which has the potential to make a substantial contribution to their field.

Awards will be granted as follows: one Outstanding Master's and two Outstanding Doctoral Research Award and one Excellent Master's and one Excellent Doctoral Research Award will be granted in each category below:

- Research in Natural Sciences (incl. Health Sciences), Engineering, and Mathematics
- Research in Law, Education, Social Sciences, Arts, Humanities, and Business

Teaching Awards:
Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Award

These awards are granted to two graduate students who have demonstrated excellence in assisting the course instructor of record as a course grader, course tutor, review session instructor, lab instructor, or in another supportive teaching role. The successful nominee will demonstrate the ability to facilitate student learning, the willingness and ability to solicit and reflect on feedback about teaching and implement changes for improvement, and excellent knowledge and enthusiasm for the course subject matter.

Graduate Student Teaching Award

These awards are granted to two graduate students who have demonstrated extraordinary performance in teaching as the instructor of record. The successful nominee will demonstrate the ability to facilitate student learning, the willingness and ability to solicit and reflect on feedback about teaching and implement changes for improvement, and excellent knowledge and enthusiasm for the course subject matter, and the ability to utilize a variety of teaching strategies appropriate to the course content.

Creative Scholarship Award

This award recognizes and rewards graduate students for sustained and substantial creative scholarship contributions in their field of study. This award is intended to reward substantial creative scholarship achievements including, but not limited to, a thesis, dissertation,, capstone project, non-graded work, or work completed outside or above and beyond core curricular classwork.

The creative scholarship must have been conducted while a graduate student at Cleveland State University. This category is only for those disciplines in which research is not the norm (e.g., exhibitions of visual art, publications of fiction).

One Outstanding Achievement award and one Excellent Achievement award will be granted to a doctoral or master's student in the following category:

- Creative Scholarship (This category is only for those disciplines in which research is not the norm (e.g., exhibitions of visual art, publications of fiction).

Engagement and Social Advocacy Award

This award will be granted to two graduate students who have demonstrated an exemplary commitment to community engagement and/or social justice advocacy. The nominee's commitment to engagement and/or social justice must be mutually beneficial to student learning, academic scholarship and community well-being, and be demonstrated through practice, research or professional service in their field