

Graduate Faculty Mentor of the Year Award 2026 Guidelines

Outstanding faculty mentors are critical to graduate education and to creating a successful graduate student experience. Graduate Faculty who make exceptional contributions to a student's (or students') graduate education and experience are to be commended. The Graduate Faculty Mentor of the Year Award recognizes faculty with outstanding achievement in mentoring students. This Award serves the dual purposes of recognizing outstanding mentoring provided by individual faculty and of reminding the university community of the signal importance of mentoring to graduate studies.

The Graduate School invites nominations for the campus-wide 2026 Graduate Faculty Mentor of the Year Award. Award winners will receive \$1,000 to support mentoring activities. **The nomination deadline is 12:00 noon on Wednesday, March 11, 2026.**

Past Mentor of the Year Award recipients can be found [here](#).

NOMINATION GUIDELINES

ELIGIBILITY

All members of the Graduate Faculty are eligible for nomination. Past awardees are not eligible for a period of three years following receipt of the award.

Currently enrolled graduate students at the University of Maryland College Park are asked to make a nomination for the Award. The nomination letter must be signed by at least five graduate students or recent graduates who support the nomination. Please identify one student to act as the contact person for the nomination.

One letter of nomination per faculty member will be accepted.

The Award is intended for faculty mentoring doctoral students, but mentoring at the master's level might be appropriate in some cases (such as MFAs).

LETTER OF NOMINATION

Nominations will comprise a letter of no more than three (3) pages, single-spaced. Please use 12-point font size and one-inch margins. The faculty mentor's name, department, title, and rank must be clearly noted on the top of the letter.

The letter should describe the mentor's activities and positive effects on student success, and it should convey the student's (or students') experience of those effects.

Each of the five points listed below must be addressed carefully, by providing concrete examples for each one. Please prepare your letter in a format that clearly identifies each of these points, one by one.

1. The faculty member's engagement with the student or students in developing short and long term research goals.
2. The faculty member's communication with the student or students regarding progress on the research and any changes in direction or schedule.
3. The faculty member's facilitation of the student's or students' development of innovative research and dissertation topics.
4. The faculty member providing the student or students with significant opportunities to develop and practice professional skills.
5. The faculty member's support of the student or students with encouragement and moral support.

SUBMITTING THE NOMINATION

Nomination letters must be in PDF file format. Please submit nominations to the Graduate School Awards Portal at terpengage.umd.edu/gsawards/s/

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee of faculty and students is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The 8-10 member multi-disciplinary committee will evaluate the nomination letters using the 5 criteria listed above.

CONTACT

Please direct questions to the Office of Funding Opportunities, Program Director Robyn Kotzker at rkotzker@umd.edu.