

## The Michael J. Pelczar Award for Excellence in Graduate Study (Spring 2026)

After earning multiple degrees at the University of Maryland culminating with a doctorate in 1941, Dr. Michael J. Pelczar's professional career at the University began in 1946 and spanned over 30 years. He was a Distinguished University Professor of Microbiology and served as Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research for many years. In honor of Dr. Pelczar's retirement in 1977, the Michael J. Pelczar Graduate Award was established from contributions made by friends and alumni and the award is intended to honor excellence in graduate studies.

The Michael J. Pelczar Award for Excellence in Graduate Study offers \$1,000 to an outstanding doctoral candidate who has demonstrated excellence beyond his or her course work, and who has served at least one academic year as a teaching assistant with a commendable performance.

### Criteria for the Pelczar Award

A nominee must:

- Be a doctoral student advanced to candidacy by April 1, 2026.
- Have demonstrated a high level of accomplishment in research;
- Have demonstrated excellence beyond course work (e.g., a dissertation that makes a significant contribution to a discipline, publications in national or international journals, election to honorary societies, and honors or awards by other groups);
- Have served at least one academic year as a teaching assistant with commendable performance; and
- Submit a personal statement of 1,000-1,500 words describing his or her accomplishments and other activities demonstrating excellence beyond course work. This statement should be written for a non-specialist audience.

Nomination packets must include:

- Nomination Cover Sheet (see page 2)
- The student's personal statement (see above); and
- The student's *curriculum vitae* (2 page limit); and
- Letter of support from the student's advisor describing the accomplishments of the student

### Submitting Nominations

A program may nominate ONE candidate for the Pelczar award. The nomination package should be submitted to the [Graduate School Awards Portal](#).

**Nomination Deadline: Noon on Wednesday, March 4, 2026.**

**Contact Information:** Please direct questions to Ms. Robyn Kotzker, Program Director for Office of Funding Opportunities, at 301-405-0281 or [rkotzker@umd.edu](mailto:rkotzker@umd.edu).

## The Michael J. Pelczar Award for Excellence in Graduate Study Cover Sheet

Michael J. Pelczar Award Webpage: [gradschool.umd.edu/funding/student-fellowships-awards/michael-j-pelczar-award-excellence-graduate-study](http://gradschool.umd.edu/funding/student-fellowships-awards/michael-j-pelczar-award-excellence-graduate-study)

**Nomination Deadline: Noon, Wednesday, March 4, 2026**

**Complete Nominations include:**

1. Nomination cover sheet
2. Student written personal statement
3. Student's C.V.
4. Advisor Letter

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directory ID or (UMD Email address): \_\_\_\_\_

College/School (use 4-letter code): \_\_\_\_\_

Department (use 4-letter code): \_\_\_\_\_

*Each department/program may nominate ONE student for this award*

Date (or expected date) of reaching candidacy: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_

Department's Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

**Programs:** Please gather these materials: 1) this nomination cover sheet, 2) the student's personal statement, 3) the student's CV, and 4) the recommendation letter. Submit materials to the GS Awards Portal at <https://terpengage.umd.edu/gsawards/s/>