Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards
East Carolina University
Graduate School

Deadline to Submit: February 1, 2026   **Submission Link**

The East Carolina University (ECU) Graduate School and Graduate Faculty recognize the importance of the university's teaching mission to student success. Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) aid the faculty in providing outstanding education to our students. The Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards recognize graduate students who have demonstrated exemplary teaching assistant performance. GTA duties vary and could include serving as an instructor-of-record, grading assignments, leading labs, developing class materials, holding discussion groups or study sessions, or individual tutoring. Whether in the classroom, lab, or online, GTAs are recognized as an integral part of the success of the ECU teaching mission and their excellence should be celebrated. Nominations are encouraged from the diverse array of "course" experiences GTAs may provide such as performances, lessons, lectures, lab sessions, individual tutoring, study groups, discussion groups, as well as the tasks associated with developing and prepping courses and instructional experiences (e.g., building slides, Canvas sections, other course materials, etc.)

GTAs awarded the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards will have demonstrated an elevated level of professionalism along with commitment and enthusiasm to their teaching duties and the students they serve. GTAs recognized with this award will have shown a higher level of skill in their duties than typically expected of GTAs. This may include outstanding performance in organization and delivery of subject matter, exceptional communication with faculty and the students they serve, a positive attitude towards students and learning along with flexibility, fairness, and a high degree of personal integrity (i.e., maintaining confidentiality and observing FERPA policies).

Award Categories

There are three categories. Students can be nominated in only one category, per year. One submission per degree program for each award category is allowed.

- **Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant – Master's Degree**.
- **Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant – Doctoral Degree**
- **Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant – Exemplary First Year (either master's or doctoral degree)**

Deadline

The deadline for nominations to be received is January 15, 2026. The award recipients will be notified in March 2026 with the official presentation at the University Teaching Awards Ceremony organized by the Office for Faculty Excellence.

Eligibility

Graduate students who have provided teaching services through a GTA appointment/contract are eligible to be nominated for this award. The GTA must have been on an active contract for Fall 2025 and/or Spring 2026 to be eligible. Nominations are not limited to students who serve as instructor-of-record; any graduate student serving as a GTA is eligible regardless of their specific teaching duties. Excellence in performing their teaching duties is what this award seeks to acknowledge. The GTA is also eligible regardless of how many hours per week are assigned to their teaching workload. The amount of teaching duties is not as important as demonstrating excellence in performing the duties. At the time of submission (the deadline date), the student should be holding a GTA position and be involved in the teaching process. Students no longer on teaching contracts should not be nominated for past work. Graduate students are not eligible if their graduate assistantship is primarily a research or administrative appointment. The student must have a graduate teaching assistant contract.

Nomination Materials

Please combine all materials into one PDF for submission. Nomination materials may be compiled from the past 3 years; however, the student must be an active GTA on contract to be nominated in this award cycle.

1. One submission per degree program for each award category is allowed. Nominations should be submitted by a faculty/staff representative on behalf of the degree program.
2. Nomination Letter(s) – ideally, the nomination letter should come from the faculty member who is providing teaching related supervision and/or mentorship to the nominee **or** the Graduate Program Director. If multiple individuals wish to nominate the same student, they may choose to file one joint letter or may include up to 3 letters, no more than 6 pages total. The letter from the faculty member who supervises the student **must** include a listing and thorough description of the GTA's teaching duties over the past 2-3 years. Three years is not required, but for students who are nominated for the experienced category, understanding the totality of their experience will be helpful to the award committee. For students nominated for the first-year award, only one year of teaching experience is expected to be described.
3. Nominee Teaching Statement – The nominee should provide a statement describing their teaching philosophy, areas in which they excel, examples of excellence in their

teaching duties, or any other information that would help the committee assess the nomination. No more than 2 pages.
4. Additional Optional Materials (that demonstrate the evidence of impact on students)
    a. Evaluations of the student's teaching by faculty/administrators.
    b. Peer observations of teaching (other GTAs, other graduate students).
    c. Photocopies of spontaneous thank you notes, emails, or course evaluation essays are allowed. The names of other GTAs or faculty members should be redacted.
    d. Student Letters of Support – letters or statements from the students positively impacted by this GTA. Recognizing these letters and statements may come in the form of emails, a PDF of an email is acceptable.
5. The maximum number of pages is 20 pages, which should be combined into one PDF.

Nomination Process

One faculty member should provide demographic information and upload the PDF using the online application (**SUBMISSION LINK**).

Demographic information needed when submitting:

- Student *Preferred* Name, Banner ID, Degree, Program Name, and Email Address
- Nominator Completing the Application: Name, Email

The individual completing the submission should receive an email confirming its submission. If you do not get one, please contact (Kathy Cox, Associate Dean, Graduate School coxka@ecu.edu.

Notification of Selection

The nominator and student(s) chosen will be notified in late February – early March. The student(s) will receive the award at the university's annual teaching award ceremony, typically held in April.