

**Office of the Provost
Provost's Award for Excellence in Doctoral
Mentoring 2026 Guidelines**

The Award

The Provost's Award for Excellence in Doctoral Mentoring will annually recognize outstanding mentors who have had the greatest impact on students who are seeking research doctorate degrees. Up to four awards will be made each year.

Each Provost's Award for Excellence in Doctoral Mentoring will consist of a cash prize of \$2,500 to the graduate faculty member to recognize excellence in mentoring. All persons selected for this award will be honored publicly.

Evidence of Excellence in Mentoring

Training the next generation of researchers is a vital part of the academic mission of the University of Pittsburgh. Fundamental to the success of the enterprise are the faculty members who serve as mentors to our doctoral students. Ideally, faculty mentors provide intellectual and personal leadership that helps to support, encourage, and promote the personal and professional development of students. This relationship is expected to provide a foundation for a student's career long after the degree has been granted.

Eligibility

Any current, active graduate faculty member who supervises graduate students pursuing PhD degrees or other research doctoral degrees and who has served as a primary mentor (e.g., as thesis committee advisor) for **five or more doctoral** students is eligible to be nominated. While a minimum of five students is required, the focus of the award is to recognize the quality of the mentoring provided and not the number of students mentored.

Nominations

Written nominations may be made by any individual or group of faculty, graduate students, or alumni who have evidence of the nominee's mentoring capabilities. Letters of nomination should be no more than three pages and should provide evidence of mentoring effectiveness through specific examples, such as ways the nominee:

- provides intellectual leadership, respects students' goals, and helps students work to accomplish them;
- actively guides students' research and training;
- clearly articulates expectations and holds students to high standards;
- actively involves students in professional situations and publications;
- broadens access and reduces barriers for all students to succeed; and
- helps students achieve meaningful goals including post-degree employment.

The letter should indicate the nominator's signature, address, email address, phone number, and relationship to the nominee (e.g., faculty colleague, student, chair of the department, etc.). Letters of nomination are due by October 10, 2025, and should be sent electronically Dr. Amanda Godley (vpgodlev@pitt.edu).

Selection Procedures

Eligible faculty nominated for this award will be invited to submit a mentoring dossier. Any deviations from the directions will result in disqualification.

- Curriculum Vitae (no more than 10 pages in length);
- A separate list of current and former doctoral students that the nominee has directed or worked closely with. This list must use the PAEDM student list template. For each student, you will be asked to include:
 - the student's name;
 - the faculty mentor's role (e.g., dissertation advisor, dissertation committee member, mentor through a professional organization, etc.);
 - current status of student (i.e., current student, graduated);
 - if graduated, student's current or recent position (institution, position, and title);
 - achievements that indicate student success (e.g., publications, fellowships, awards, etc.) especially if the mentor played a role in that success (e.g., by nominating the student for an award or position); and
 - (optional) a brief explanation of the significance of the student placement/position/achievement for reviewers outside your field.
- A statement on mentoring philosophy and practices (no more than three pages in length);
- A letter of support from a faculty member (such as a chair or director of graduate studies) familiar with the nominee's **mentoring achievements**, including mentoring of students who may not be their advisees and contributions to mentoring initiatives at Pitt or academic/professional organizations. This letter should **explain any relevant discipline-specific factors** or benchmarking that would help the selection committee better understand the mentoring philosophy of the nominee and the success of the nominee's mentoring, such as the expected doctoral advising load in the department; typical graduation rate (X PhD students per year or 10 years); typical/strong post-graduation outcomes and job placements in the discipline; expected co-authorship with graduate students and whether graduate students are first author on those publications; and the significance of particular awards or grants. Note that the original nomination letter will be included in the dossier and may count as the letter of support;
- Five letters of support (no more than one page in length each) from **former doctoral students**. Student letters of support cannot be written or signed by more than one student. The most effective letters will be from students directly mentored by the nominee and with whom the nominee has worked closely. These should be students who successfully completed their degree. Letters from students who can describe

how the mentor's support contributed to their achievements are often particularly effective.

Please refer to the [Mentoring Dossier Materials webpage](#) for examples of exceptional mentoring philosophy and practices statements and to download a template for the current and former doctoral student list.

Selection Criteria

Intellectual Leadership:

- Actively guides students' research and training
- Clearly articulates academic expectations and holds students to high standards
- Actively involves students in writing grants and publications
- Is accessible for advice and assistance
- Broadens access and reduces barriers for all students to succeed

Professional Leadership:

- Helps students to network with other professionals and faculty
- Actively involves students in professional situations including participation in meetings
- Assists students in career preparation, whether in academia or other career paths
- Helps students secure post-degree employment, whether in academia or other career paths
- Provides assistance in post-degree professional work, whether in academia or other career paths
- Respects students and plays an active role in achieving their intellectual and career goals
- Instills in students the human values and importance of our responsibility and contributions to the society at large
- Helps students integrate their professional activities and goals with their outside lives and plans

Nominees will be provided instructions on how to submit these materials electronically via InfoReady Review by early-November 2025.

The mentoring dossier submission must be completed by December 8, 2025. For questions regarding the award please contact Amanda Godley (vpgodley@pitt.edu).

The Awards Committee, appointed by the Provost, will evaluate the nominations and recommend a slate of winners to the Provost. The honorees will be announced in early spring.