

University Professorships for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Guidelines 2024

The University Professorships for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence (UPUTE) are conferred upon the most accomplished teachers of undergraduates at Texas A&M University. UPUTE recipients exhibit uncommon excellence and devotion to the education of undergraduate students. These professors are not only exceptional instructors, but also innovators in pedagogy, exploring new teaching methods, and seeking engagement with other educators in pursuit of excellence.

Faculty Affairs is responsible for issuing the award guidelines and managing the overall awards process. For general questions regarding these guidelines, you may contact Faculty Affairs at [\(979\) 845-4274](tel:9798454274) or awardsprograms@tamu.edu.

Table 1. Timeline for the University Professorships for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Awards

February 26, 2024	Award nominations submitted to awardsprograms@tamu.edu by 5:00 p.m.
March 4, 2024	Selection committee meeting
April 2024	University Professorships for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award recipients honored at the university-wide awards ceremony
May 1, 2024	University Professorships for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award recipients recognized by name at the Transformational Teaching and Learning Conference
May 2025	University Professorships for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award recipients, having completed one year of the professorship, showcase their approaches with a plenary TED-style talk at the Transformational Teaching and Learning Conference

Nomination Eligibility

1. At the time of nomination, candidates for UPUTE must have at least five years of full-time service to Texas A&M University and should show a sustained record of teaching excellence.
2. Previous holders of the Professorship may be re-nominated by their college/school and will count as the allotted nomination for the college/school. Previous holders will be given equal consideration with other nominees.
3. Recipients of the UPUTE are expected to contribute to ongoing professional development in teaching at Texas A&M University by facilitating, with the support of CTE, campus-wide enrichment opportunities for colleagues.

Nomination and Selection Process

1. There are 18 nominating academic colleges/schools. Each college/school may nominate one member of the university faculty each year.
2. All nominations must be routed through the Department Head and Dean for approval. Self-nominations are not accepted. The Dean is not required to be the author of the nomination letter.
3. The selection committee, assembled by Faculty Affairs, makes recommendations to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.
4. The term of the professorship is 3 academic years (Sept-Aug) with no automatic renewal.
5. University Professorship for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence recipients receive a framed certificate and a \$5,000 annual supplement to their salary in September in each of the three years, as well as an annual \$5,000 discretionary spending account for support of their teaching program and professional development.

Selection Committee Information

1. A member of the Center for Teaching Excellence serves as a permanent voting member, and the rest of the committee is made up of representatives from five randomly selected colleges/schools each year.
2. Colleges/schools are encouraged to invite committee members who exemplify teaching excellence, including, but not limited to, previous winners of this award.

Selection Criteria

Successful nominees may exemplify the following:

1. Engaging and innovative instruction and course design.
2. Rigorous expectations for undergraduates, coupled with support for students to achieve those expectations.
3. Impact beyond their classrooms (e.g., mentorship of other faculty and graduate students in the area of undergraduate instruction, involvement of undergraduates in research, adoption/application of their undergraduate teaching instructional techniques and course materials by others).
4. Broader impact on disciplinary pedagogy.

Submitting Nominations

Each nominating college/school should email submissions to awardsprograms@tamu.edu by the deadline in Table 1. Every submission should include the following items:

1. Nomination Packet for each nominee
Submissions must use the provided nomination packet template found [online](#).
2. Professional Photo for each nominee
Please provide a recent close-crop headshot in full color, minimum 300 dpi.

Nomination Details

Preparing a Nomination

1. Collect and prepare all required materials.
2. Organize the required materials into the appropriate sections of the template and save as a single PDF.

Required Sections

1. Nomination Letter – **LIMIT: 4 pages**
A letter supporting the granting of an UPUTE professorship to the nominee. The letter should provide evidence of the impact of their teaching on Texas A&M undergraduate students, a summary and assessment of peer and student evaluations on quality of teaching, evidence/impact of the candidate's teaching innovation and scholarship throughout the Texas A&M community, and potential for fulfilling expectations associated with the award.
2. Biographical Summary — **LIMIT: 300 words (1 paragraph)**
This paragraph should provide a concise summary of the relevant major achievements for the nominee. It should include the following:
 - Name of the nominee; current position; number of years employed at Texas A&M; highest degree received
 - Career highlights, including selected awards and honors, relevant to undergraduate teaching.
3. Candidate Statement – **LIMIT: 1 page, single spaced**
This statement should include a very brief outline of the candidate's teaching philosophy and accomplishments, her/his preliminary plans for using the UPUTE professorship to influence the campus community during the award period, and strategies for fulfilling the obligations of the professorship.
4. A short curriculum vitae listing relevant accomplishments – **LIMIT: 5 pages**
5. Letters of Endorsement — **LIMIT: up to a total of 6 pages**
These may be from any source (colleagues, students, former students, administrators, etc.). Please advise letter writers that the endorsements will be read and evaluated by a range of selection committee members who may or may not be familiar with the nominee's discipline. Therefore, the significance of the nominee's accomplishments that are of a specialized or technical nature may need to be explained carefully. Because this is a teaching award, attention **MUST** be focused on their teaching accomplishments and impact.

University Professorship for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence (UPUTE) Rubric

Criteria	Exceptional 3	Accomplished 2	Effective 1	Not Provided 0	Score
Engaging and innovative instruction and course design.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches for broader educational impact through the optimal interaction of student, instructor, discipline, and infrastructure • Utilizes evidence-based best practices in teaching and learning • Designs a well-aligned course as evidenced through learning outcomes, activities, assignments, and assessments • Applies innovative strategies and technologies • Demonstrates evidence of student engagement and student learning 					
Rigorous expectations for undergraduates, coupled with support for students to achieve those expectations.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses assessment as a tool for facilitating learning as well as a tool for measuring learning • Applies Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion • Provides prompt, targeted feedback on student work • Monitors student understanding and addresses misconceptions • Invites and responds to feedback on the learning environment • Engages students in creating a path to learning success • Prepares students for future courses and career • Models and mentors how to think in the discipline 					
Impact beyond their classrooms (e.g., mentorship of other faculty and graduate students in the area of undergraduate instruction, involvement of undergraduates in research, adoption/application of their undergraduate teaching instructional techniques and course materials by others).					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influences approaches of peers who teach sections of the same course or related courses • Influences approaches of peers across campus • Engages in course development and/or redesign • Leads or collaborates on curriculum redesign • Mentors faculty peers, teaching assistants, and/or undergraduate peer tutors • Mentors undergraduate researchers • Serves on building committees for modern teaching spaces • Serves on selection committees for learning management system 					

Criteria	Exceptional 3	Accomplished 2	Effective 1	Not Provided 0	Score
Broader impact on disciplinary pedagogy.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influences teaching culture by sharing teaching ideas and practices informally in meetings or via social media • Participates in creation of Open Educational Resources or other online learning materials adopted by other institutions • Shares teaching practices and results at campus or disciplinary conferences • Conducts classroom research (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning – SoTL) and publishes in disciplinary journals 					
Other criteria well supported by evidence-based teaching practice.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages learners in active learning • Uses high-impact practices to provide transformational learning experiences • Encourages a growth mindset regarding learning • Promotes use of study strategies supported by research on how people learn 					
Other					

* The associated evidence listed within each focus area are suggestions to prompt your evaluation of candidates. There may be additional evidence not listed in the rubric that would serve to support that area. Further, nominees may exhibit strength in some of these areas but are not necessarily expected to excel in them all.