

University Undergraduate Teaching Awards Candidate Packet Guidelines 2025

****This document should be shared with the candidate, packet preparers, and uploaders.****

The packet has been designed to ensure that compiling the candidate packet is consistent across candidates and is a reasonable length to review. The purpose of the packet is to provide strong evidence that the candidate meets the high expectations specified in the [evaluation rubric](#); the criteria listed are simplified.

The awards are very competitive, and we want you to submit the best packet possible. When packets do not conform to the guidelines below it makes the process unfair and introduces bias. If a packet does not follow the guidelines, it will be returned for correction (without a deadline extension).

- Please confirm that the candidate meets the eligibility criteria, including a commitment to equity and inclusion in teaching.
- Candidates will be considered for all awards for which they are eligible. Please do not label packets with a specific award name.
- Sample syllabus and assignment should appear as presented to students; no reformatting or editing required.

Please follow the formatting guidelines & page limits. Packets not following these guidelines will be returned for correction. If the packets are uploaded at the deadline, extra pages will be disregarded or removed. No deadline extensions will be given to revise packets,

- ✓ 1" margins
- ✓ single-spaced paragraphs
- ✓ font no smaller than 11 pt. Aptos or Calibri
- ✓ follow section page limits

Section	Max. # Pages
Teaching Philosophy	1
Appointments & Courses Taught at Penn State	1
Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Activities & Service	2
Letters of Support	4
Subtotal	8
Sample Syllabus	N/A
Sample Assignment (same course as syllabus)	N/A

For questions, contact the Teaching Award Coordinator, Deidre Yingling, at day12@psu.edu.

Packet Sections

1. Teaching Philosophy Statement (1 page max.)

A teaching philosophy is more than beliefs about teaching and learning. It explains why a faculty member does what they do in their courses. Compelling teaching statements mention students and provide examples of how the instructor enables learning for all students. Effective statements do not focus on the faculty member's content expertise. Teaching philosophies of previous Atherton, Eisenhower, and Alumni Teaching Fellow recipients are available on the Penn State Teaching Awards website.

2. Appointments and Courses Taught (1 page max.)

a. Appointments

Please include only Penn State appointments, ranks in the format below:

20##-present Rank Title, Academic unit, Campus/College
20##-20## Previous rank/title, Academic unit, Campus/College

b. Courses Taught (most recent first)

You may include as many undergraduate courses as possible without exceeding the page limit.

Please exclude independent study courses. Example format:

Semester YYYY	ABBR ###, Course Name (short name OK)	Enrollment
Semester YYYY	ABBR ###, Course Name (short name OK)	Enrollment

Please include activities and service that have contributed to the improvement of course-based, undergraduate teaching excellence and student learning at Penn State. Please exclude teaching achievements at other institutions.

3. Penn State Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Activities (2 pages max.)

c. Innovation in Teaching

Examples of innovation might include development of a new program, creation of new teaching materials (not updating old materials), significant revisions using evidence- or research-based pedagogical methods. Developing a new course is not necessarily innovative, but a case may be made that it is.

d. Equity and Inclusion in Teaching

Candidates should identify steps taken to address inequities in students' access to opportunities, resources, and information (before and in-class), and how they ensure that students know they are welcome and that their contributions are valued. Examples might include communicating high expectations (and that students can meet them), reducing implicit bias and microaggressions, attending to representation in-class and in class materials, setting clear communication and behavioral norms, and offering opportunities for anonymous feedback. It could also involve course and assignment redesign to decenter whiteness as the academic norm and/or engage students in consideration of the impacts of those norms on those historically excluded from the field.

e. Service for Undergraduate Teaching and Learning

Include instruction-related committee service, contributions to program assessment, leadership of or participation in learning initiatives, at all levels (program, department, division, college, campus, and university).

f. Teaching and Learning Scholarship

Articles, conference presentations, instructional or teaching grants, and instructional websites/pages, blog posts, and podcasts related to undergraduate teaching and learning at Penn State.

g. Instructional Development Activities

Articles, conference presentations, instructional or teaching grants, and instructional websites/pages, blog posts, and podcasts related to undergraduate teaching and learning at Penn State.

h. Instructional Development Activities

Leading or participating in a teaching community, delivery of or participation in workshops or short courses, and teaching conference attendance.

i. Mentoring for Teaching

Mentoring for teaching involves regular communication about undergraduate teaching over a period of time. Include mentoring i) other Penn State faculty for teaching; ii) being a teaching mentor for graduate and undergraduate students who teach. Please exclude undergraduate student advising and research mentoring from this teaching award packet.

****Eisenhower Award:** To be considered for an Eisenhower, the candidate must include evidence of service as a teaching mentor to:

- multiple Penn State faculty, and
- Penn State faculty during multiple years

Conducting required peer reviews of teaching does not constitute mentoring.

4. Letters of Support (4 letters max., 1 page each)

A **maximum** of **four** letters of support may be included in the packet. Each letter must include the writer's name and email address. **Please provide each letter writer with the following guidelines:**

Every letter of support should:

- state why the faculty stands out above and beyond all other good teachers;
- provide examples of teaching activities or behaviors that demonstrate the extraordinary teaching of the faculty member (expertise in the field and meeting with students are expected of all who teach); and
- be one page or less in length.

j. Recent Undergraduate Students (3 students max.; 1 page each)

Letters from three students who have taken an undergraduate course with the faculty member during the previous two years. If a student has graduated during the past two years, they may still write a letter as a recent undergraduate student.

Letters from the following are **not appropriate**:

- ✓ undergraduate Learning Assistant or undergraduate TA
- ✓ undergraduate research advisee
- ✓ graduate TAs or research advisees

k. Peer Review of Teaching Letter (1 page)

The letter author must have conducted a Peer Review of Teaching for an undergraduate course taught by the candidate. It may be based on a required peer review. However, it should be a new letter that addresses the [undergraduate teaching award criteria](#). It should include examples and discuss why this faculty member is an exceptional teacher.

5. Example Syllabus

The syllabus will be reviewed for alignment with the award criteria and teaching philosophy. Include a copy of one original course syllabus used by the instructor in an undergraduate course; no modification is necessary. Screenshots from Canvas are appropriate for courses without a syllabus document; please ensure that screenshots are readable according to the font guidelines above.

6. Example Assignment (from the same course as the syllabus)

The assignment will be reviewed for alignment with the syllabus, learning objectives, and teaching philosophy. A copy of one original undergraduate course assignment from the course which the above syllabus was submitted; no modification is necessary. The assignment may be an in-class or outside of class assignment.