

# Distinguished Teaching Award (DTA) 2026

## Nomination Guidelines and Procedures

### Overview of the Award

The DTA recognizes individual faculty for sustained excellence in teaching. Beyond an individual exemplary class, such sustained excellence in teaching incites intellectual curiosity in students, inspires colleagues, and makes students aware of significant relationships between the academy and the world at large. Recipients receive a cash award from campus and recognition by the Academic Senate. They are honored at a public ceremony, and are permanently indicated as Distinguished Teachers in the UC Berkeley catalog. Distinguished Teachers are often called upon by campus to provide a voice in teaching-related issues.

### Eligibility

All members of the Academic Senate and non-Senate faculty with continuing appointments who have not previously received the DTA, with the following additional requirements:

- A. Nominees must have ***at least 8 semesters in residence*** at the time of nomination. The current fall semester does not count towards this requirement. The 8 semesters are typically, but need not be, consecutive.
- B. While long years of service are neither necessary nor sufficient for recognition, nominees typically have ***taught at least 6 regularly scheduled courses*** (or at least 4 such courses in the case of fulfilling a double course load within the department, e.g., large enrollment courses) ***in the last 8 semesters in residence***. However, if the nominee has been on Active Service-Modified Duties (ASMD) status in the last 8 semesters in residence, the review period can be extended by the length of the ASMD period (e.g. 2 semesters).
- C. ***Only one nominee from each department*** will be considered in any year. A candidate with a joint appointment may be nominated by one department, with the consent of the other departments with which the candidate is affiliated. Note this means that the Committee on Teaching (COT) will reach out to departments if there is more than one Stage 1 nomination from a department, so the department can choose which candidate to support.
- D. Nominees must be ***available*** in early spring 2026 for classroom observations that will occur if they are selected as a Stage 2 finalist. ***Please note that departments are strongly encouraged to reach out to the committee if there is a candidate who never teaches in the spring but would otherwise be eligible for consideration whom the department would like to nominate.***

## Selection Criteria<sup>1</sup>

In general, all Distinguished Teachers will excel in each of the following areas:

- Effective design and redesign of courses;
- Ability to engage and inspire in students independent and original thinking;
- Enthusiasm and vitality in learning and teaching;
- Creating inclusive classrooms and supportive environments for all students.

In addition, the following criteria may apply, recognizing that nominees teach a variety of sizes of class, undergraduates/graduate students, and may not be Academic Senate members:

- Active involvement in and guidance of student research projects;
  - Advising students with attention and care;
  - Mentorship and supervision of GSIs that facilitates effective teaching;
  - For Academic Senate faculty, excellence in creative and scholarly work, and evidence that the nominee's excellence in teaching and research go hand in hand;
  - For non-Senate faculty, contributions to the teaching mission of the University.
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## STAGE 1

### Step 1: Initial Google Form Nomination - Due September 17, 2025

Anyone on campus – student, staff, faculty – can nominate someone by filling out the [2026 UC Berkeley Distinguished Teaching Award Stage 1 Nomination Form](#) by September 17, 2025. The form asks for identifying information about the nominator and nominee and how the nominee meets the criteria for the award.

***Departments need not submit a form to be able to choose a nominee themselves, and may ultimately put forward a nominee for consideration who was not nominated via this form. The purpose of this form is to encourage others on campus to alert departments to people whose teaching they admire, and why, for the department's consideration.***

### Step 2: Notify Departments of Nominations - By September 24, 2025

Department chairs will be notified by September 24, 2025 of those teachers from their departments who were nominated by others via the google form. Department chairs will then have the choice of whether, and whom, to nominate, with each department being able to choose one nominee to move forward for consideration. *The nominee need not be chosen from those nominated via the google form.*

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<sup>1</sup> The Committee on Teaching draws criteria from a number of sources, including but not limited to the [University of California Academic Personnel Manual, Section D, Criteria for Appointment, Promotion, and Appraisal](#), and the [Committee on Teaching's policy on the Evaluation of Teaching for Advancement and Promotion](#).

### Step 3: Submit Stage 1 Nomination Materials - Due EOD October 29, 2025

For each nominee, COT will ask departments to submit the following information **by October 29, 2025** by uploading materials to the provided Google Drive folder:

- A. *Nomination letter.*** This letter should, in 2000 words or less, describe how the nominee excels in the criteria above. The letter carries significant weight with the Committee and is the most important document to be submitted. This is your opportunity to explain the nominee's superlative classroom teaching methods and teaching service to the department and campus, and to preempt any potential perceived weaknesses in the file. In the event of a repeat nomination, the letter should explain improvements or changes.
  - a. **NOTE:** We realize that some departments have dedicated teaching committees to help with tasks such as award nominations and some do not. Feel free to explain in your letter any context you think would be helpful for the committee to know in terms of your department's resources.
- B. *Chronological list of courses taught in the last 8 semesters in residence.*** If the nominee does not have 8 consecutive semesters in residence, the department should explain any breaks in teaching.
- C. *Quantitative evaluation scores and department averages for the 8 courses listed in (B).*** The COT recognizes that such scores are an imperfect measure of teaching effectiveness, and considers them as part of a holistic assessment of the nominee's materials.
- D. *Raw evaluations (student comments) for 2 courses in the last 4 semesters in residence.*** Submit in PDF format. You may, if desired, submit an additional one-page document if you feel the need to flag or explain any student evaluation(s) you view as inappropriate for consideration (e.g., inappropriate ad hominem attacks).
- E. *Teaching schedule for 2025-26,*** to confirm the possibility of class observations in the spring semester.

Please do not inform the candidate they have been nominated.

Once this additional information is collected, COT members will review and rank each nomination based on the selection criterion listed above and select the Stage 2 finalists.<sup>2</sup>

***Prior to selecting the candidates who will move on to Stage 2, COT may request additional information from a department to be considered in the selection process.***

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<sup>2</sup> These initial rankings are used as a starting point for the COT discussion but need not bind the committee in choosing finalists. Finalists will be chosen after, and based on, the discussion.

## STAGE 2

COT will notify departments if their nominee has been selected as a finalist by mid December 2025, before the end of the fall semester.

### Step 1: Additional materials - Due EOD February 4, 2026

All finalists and their departments will be asked to submit the following additional materials by **February 4, 2026**:

1. The COT will share a link to a Google Drive folder labeled with the finalist's name and department with the department liaison. The folder will only be viewable to the department liaison and to COT members; the department will have editing rights. For your convenience, the folder will already have provided templates for identified materials below.
2. The department should fill out or upload the following to the Google Drive folder:
  - a. **Grade Distribution Chart (provided template)**: Grade distribution from 4 courses (the 2 courses with raw evaluations from Stage 2, plus 2 additional courses in the most recent 4 semesters of residence (this can include Fall 2025 if desired).
  - b. **Raw Student Evaluations (as a PDF or .zip file)**: Raw (including written responses) student evaluations from the additional 2 courses in the Grade Distribution Chart above. (\*Note: The COT has included 1 google doc in each folder titled "SET comments" (Student Evaluations of Teaching). If desired, the department can use this optional document to mark any student comments that may be inappropriate or overtly biased.)
  - c. **Letters of Support (upload separately)**: No more than 5 total, including letters from current or former students or GSIs (if the nominee teaches both undergraduates and graduate students, ideally there should be one of each) and 1 letter from a colleague (campus or off-campus), ideally someone who has seen the candidate teach. No letters longer than 1,000 words should be submitted.
  - d. **Materials to be completed by the finalist (upload separately)**. The department should alert the candidate that they need to submit the following to the department for uploading. The department should then upload these materials to the bDrive folder:
    - i. **Reflective Statement**: A reflective statement by the candidate of teaching goals, objectives, and experiences, not to exceed 1,000 words.
    - ii. **Curriculum Vitae**.
    - iii. **Teaching Responsibilities Outside the Classroom (provided template)**: List of teaching responsibilities outside the classroom.
    - iv. **Class Materials (upload separately)**: Class materials for any 1 of the 4 courses for which evaluations have been submitted. Materials might include syllabi, handouts, tests, assignments, and so on (please submit no more than 50 pages, and fewer is fine). If these materials are available on a website, or through bCourses, please provide the link.

3. The department should ensure that the finalist is notified of the date of the Distinguished Teaching Award Ceremony in late April (the COT will notify the department of the date as soon as possible) and can attend if chosen as a recipient.

## Step 2: Review Stage 2 materials

COT members will be visiting finalists' classrooms to observe, sometime between the beginning of the semester and the first week of March 2026. Observers will be basing their classroom reviews on how the award criteria listed above are manifest in the classroom (e.g., how effective design of the course, development of critical thinking skills, inclusiveness, and enthusiasm are all translated into, or evident in, the classroom itself). COT members will also review the additional written materials provided by the nominee and departments.

Based on this review, COT will select up to 5 award recipients from the finalists in early March. Selection will again be based on an initial ranking using the criteria above, based on each finalist's entire portfolio and classroom observations, followed by committee discussion and vote.

The COT will then submit the names of their nominees to DIVCO for approval by the Academic Senate. Award recipients will be announced to the campus in mid March 2026 and will be celebrated at a ceremony near the end of April 2026.

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Please direct any questions or concerns to Josh Hug, 2025-26 Chair of the Committee on Teaching, at [hug@berkeley.edu](mailto:hug@berkeley.edu), or to the Center for Teaching and Learning at [teaching@berkeley.edu](mailto:teaching@berkeley.edu).

Thank you for your interest in celebrating distinguished teaching at Berkeley!