



Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools

An Affiliate of the Council of Graduate Schools

2026 MAGS Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Education Award

The Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) is pleased to announce the 2026 MAGS Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Education Award. The award will be distributed to a MAGS member school in recognition of innovative approaches and models of excellence in graduate education. This award recognizes efforts at any stage in the graduate student life cycle from admissions through degree completion to outreach with alumni.

Award Considerations:

The MAGS Excellence and Innovation and Graduate Education Award Committee seeks applications that embody excellence and/or innovation, including:

- New strategies supporting graduate education
- Emerging techniques, methods, or theories
- New tools or technological approaches enhancing graduate education
- Innovative pathways in building sustainable models supporting graduate students
- Curricular reform efforts

These are just some examples as you consider applying for the award and this list should not be considered exhaustive.

Purpose of the Award

The purpose of the award is to encourage, recognize, and reward excellence and innovation in graduate education at either the graduate school or program level. Applications may relate to all facets of graduate education, including outreach, recruitment through selection and admission, retention, instruction, and degree attainment. In sum, we welcome efforts addressing any aspect of the graduate life cycle.

Eligibility Requirements:

Any current MAGS member institution or graduate program within a MAGS member institution is eligible for the award.

MAGS member institutions may submit *only* one application. Any internal institutional selection processes are the responsibility of the MAGS member institution. Please plan ahead for internal review so that the institutional submission is identified and forwarded to MAGS by the January 10th deadline.

Application Guidelines: Applicants must be a MAGS member in good standing at a program or graduate school level. Application materials must include:

1. A Nomination Document (1000 – 2000 words) that:
 - Details the program, project, or initiative that the MAGS member institution has designed - tell us **what** you have developed;
 - Demonstrates **why** the pertinent graduate program, project, or innovation is significant;
 - Considers pathways for sustainability (including budget design, grant funding, or other methods considering **what** “sustainability” might mean for the project);
 - Examines broader lessons for MAGS member institutions and shares implications for **how** MAGS institutions could build similar reforms.
2. All application materials must be sent to the Chair of the MAGS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Education Committee, Dr. Margaret Nettesheim Hoffmann, **by uploading to the [Google Form](#)**
3. Submissions should be received **no later than January 15, 2026.**
3. Submissions will be reviewed by members of the MAGS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Education Committee.
4. The 2026 MAGS awards consist of a Winner and an Honorable mention. Awards will be recognized publicly at the MAGS 2025 Annual Meeting.
5. Questions about the eligibility requirements or award guidelines should be directed to Margaret Nettesheim Hoffmann, Chair of the MAGS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Graduate Education (excellence@mags-net.org).