

To: Psychology Department Faculty

From: Graduate curriculum committee (all past and present members)

Date: 3/4/2020

RE: Recommendations for Graduate Student Teaching

At some point in their training, many graduate students in the Psychology department have undergraduate teaching responsibilities. The GCC believes that these experiences should be structured to support the students' professional development. Although there may be specific requirements for graduate students completing Teaching Competency projects and the Teaching Fellowship program, GCC believes that there are practices that will maximize the benefit that graduate students derive from teaching experiences and, in turn, improve the quality of instruction for CSU undergraduate students. This document is not meant to replace the requirements for Teaching Fellows or students completing teaching competency projects. Rather, this document sets department-wide expectations for graduate student teaching. Additionally, GCC recognizes that responsibilities and funding sources differ for graduate students teaching and/or TAing face-to-face and online courses. This document is meant to apply to face-to-face and online courses.

Based on a review of guidelines from other universities, published literature, and a national program (Preparing Future Teachers), GCC identified three components that are necessary for graduate students to derive a professional benefit from their teaching experiences. They are training, supervision, and feedback.

Throughout this document we will refer to the following 4 levels of GTA roles:

- Classroom support TA
- Lab instructor TA
- Graduate student instructor of record
- Teaching fellow

### **Training**

Ideally, the responsibility graduate students take for courses increases commensurate with their teaching skills:

1. Class support TA (lecture and online courses)
2. Lab instructor TA
3. Graduate student instructor of record (lecture and online courses)
4. Teaching fellow

Graduate students should be given teaching responsibilities that are appropriate for their level of training, experience and knowledge.

- It is recommended that before becoming a graduate student instructor of record, students have:
  - Been a class support TA for the course
  - and

- Been a Lab instructor TA
- At a minimum, before becoming a graduate student instructor of record, the student should have:
  - Delivered at least one guest lecture for which they have received feedback from a faculty who taught the same course (if possible)  
And, when applicable,
  - Completed the corresponding graduate course or have equivalent experience as evaluated by the faculty who teaches the course
  - Received their Master's Degree
- Preferably, taken a department-approved course in teaching/instruction (if not offered/possible other courses can also meet this requirement including those offered by TILT)

Enforcement of the above requirements will occur prior to course assignment via the main office.

Preferably, all graduate students planning to pursue a position as a graduate student Instructor of record will attend or have attended relevant training sessions available through the department or TILT. Preference for graduate student Instructor of record positions will be given based on the number and quality of training that a student has completed, prior relevant supervised teaching experience, and the feedback received from faculty about relevant prior teaching experiences. Training in and experience with teaching about the diversity of the human experience, by intersectionalities, locally and globally, and training in and experience teaching a diversity of students will be given credit for selection to graduate student Instructor of record positions.

### **Supervision**

#### **Teaching Fellows**

All Teaching Fellows shall be supervised by faculty with experience teaching the course.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

- Communicate with the Teaching Fellows prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
  - advise the Teaching Fellows on the creation of the syllabus
  - educate the Teaching Fellows regarding university resources relevant to the course including but not limited to university policies regarding academic integrity
  - oversee the negotiation of duties between the Teaching Fellows and their Classroom support TA(s), if applicable
- Observe at least one of the Teaching Fellows' lectures and provide developmental feedback
- Meet regularly (no less than once per month) with the Teaching Fellows to
  - provide support and check in for potential issues
  - advise the Teaching Fellows with regard to the creation of exams, and educate the Teaching Fellows on procedures for evaluating exam items
  - review mid-term and end-of-semester student evaluations

- review feedback on classroom observation(s)

### **Graduate Student Instructor of Record**

All graduate-student instructors of record shall be supervised by a faculty member, preferably with experience teaching the course.

- Graduate students who are instructors of record for courses offered during Fall and Spring sessions are responsible for securing agreement from a faculty member to serve as their supervisor as a condition for their being approved to teaching the course. The students will register for PSY 784, Supervised College Teaching, with the supervisor being responsible for the student's grade.
- Graduate students who are instructors of record for courses during the summer session will be supervised by a single faculty member designated by the Psychology department.<sup>1</sup> That faculty member will receive a Summer stipend, as determined by the Chair of the Department. The students will register for PSY 784, Supervised College Teaching, with the supervisor being responsible for the student's grade. Students should register the following Fall, or if graduating that semester, the previous spring semester.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

- Communicate with the graduate student Instructor of record prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
  - advise the graduate student Instructor of record on the creation of the syllabus
  - educate the graduate student Instructor of record regarding university resources relevant to the course including but not limited to university policies regarding academic integrity
  - oversee the negotiation of duties between the graduate student the Instructor of record and classroom support TA, if applicable
- Observe at least one of the graduate student Instructor of record's lectures and provide developmental feedback
- Meet regularly (no less than once per month) with the graduate student Instructor of record to
  - provide support and check in for potential issues
  - advise the graduate student Instructor of record with regard to the creation of assignments and exams, and educate the graduate student Instructor of record on procedures for evaluating exam items
  - review mid-term and end-of-semester feedback from students
  - review feedback on classroom observation(s)

### **Lab instructor TAs**

All Lab instructor TAs shall be supervised by a faculty with knowledge of the lab content area.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

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<sup>1</sup> This responsibility can be part of the graduate programming coordinator position as needed.

- Communicate with the Lab instructor TA prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
  - advise the Lab instructor TA on the creation of the syllabus and assignments
  - educate the Lab instructor TA regarding university resources relevant to the course including but not limited to university policies regarding academic integrity
- Observe at least one of the lab instructor TA's class sessions (lecture, demonstration, etc) and provide developmental feedback
- Meet regularly (no less than once per month) with the Lab instructor TA to
  - provide support and check in for potential issues
  - advise the Lab instructor TA on grading procedures (e.g., written assignments, creation of exams, if applicable)
  - review mid-term and end-of-semester student evaluations

### **Class Support TAs**

All class support TAs shall be supervised by a faculty member who is the instructor of record for the course, or the supervisor for a graduate-student instructor of record.

Faculty supervisors are expected to

- Communicate with the class support TA support prior to the beginning of the semester (preferably with a face-to-face meeting) to:
  - advise the class support TA on their responsibilities regarding grading assignments and class attendance, if applicable
  - educate the class support TA regarding pertinent university policies (e.g., sexual harassment and academic integrity)
- In order to promote the class support TA's professional development, class support TAs should be encouraged to:
  - help create exams and evaluate exam items, if applicable
  - give 1-2 guest lectures to be observed by the faculty supervisor and for which the TA receives developmental feedback. We acknowledge that this may not be practical in courses which employ multiple class support TAs. In this case, alternative arrangements should be made for students who wish to give a guest lecture.

### **Feedback**

Research has shown that 'previous teaching experience and feedback are important to the teaching outcome of graduate teaching assistants. But unguided experience usually leads to the same or less effective behaviors as a result of poor or non-existent supervision' (Shannon et al., 1998; as cited in Huang, Strawderman, & Usher, 2013).

- As described under supervision, all Teaching Fellows, graduate student instructors of record, lab instructor TAs and class support TAs should be observed at least once while giving a lecture. Supervisors should provide developmental feedback to the graduate student within one month of performing the observation. Feedback should be delivered in writing and explained in a face-to-face meeting with the student.

Feedback should include:

1. the date(s), time(s), and places(s) of the actual observation(s)
2. the name of the class, the instructor, and the number of students
3. a brief summary of the goals of the class
4. a careful description of what went on in class
5. a categorical rating (satisfactory/needs additional development/unsatisfactory)
6. suggestions for improvement
7. summary comments and a descriptive assessment of the quality of the teaching and learning during the observation period that is appropriate to the student's developmental level

A model teaching observation form will be supplied to all faculty (on the T drive and also uploaded on the online GradAdmin tool) and can be used or faculty can seek additional resources via TILT for performing observations.

<https://tilt.colostate.edu/teachingResources/guides/peerObservation/>

As described under supervision, all Teaching Fellows, graduate student instructors of record, and Lab instructor TAs are expected to collect feedback from students at the midpoint of the semester and the end of the semester. The supervisor is expected to review this feedback with the graduate student instructor with a view toward identifying areas for improvement.

**Feedback Recording Mechanism:**

All this information will be recorded/maintained on the new department graduate admin tool (this will be reviewed at the end of each semester to ensure that all GTAs have been supervised and recorded)

**Where:** <https://cnsdrake.natsci.colostate.edu/gradmin>

There is a funding tab associated with each student that contains the following information:

- supervising instructor
- if the GTA position was supervised for the semester
- GTA can upload the syllabus
- ability to upload notes (one private and one the student can see)
- choice of a quick rating system (satisfactory/needs additional development/unsatisfactory)

**Fair compensation**

- The committee recommends that a compensation model be developed by faculty and then consistently applied to graduate students teaching--with annual reviews of the compensation model by GCC and then by the faculty and chair to assess how it works.
- A compensation model will be developed and proposed to faculty by GCC.

**Faculty compensation/credit:**

- GCC recommends that faculty supervisors be compensated/receive credit for their teaching supervision work. The mechanism for fair compensation/receiving credit will be proposed to faculty by the chair, with annual reviews by the faculty and chair to assess how the model works.

**Status:**

- Documents was voted on during the March Department meeting, unanimously passed. (26)