

## 3.4 Instructional Use of Graduate Students

### Governing Policies

Assistantship Policies  
Graduate Contracts

### Procedure

Mines is a relatively small, technical university with a reputation for teaching excellence. Consequently, it is important for Mines to establish policies that will maintain the pedagogical benefits of a small-university environment, while at the same time promoting prominence in identified research areas. The staffing of undergraduate and graduate programs is a particularly important aspect of meeting these sometimes-competing challenges.

It is Mines' policy that regular, full-time faculty should be instructors of record for all undergraduate and graduate classes. Given variability in student populations and budgetary distributions, the difficulty in some disciplines of attracting faculty, and finally, the importance of instructional experience for doctoral students seeking future academic employment, situations may arise where it makes sense to deliver some of our curriculum by qualified graduate students. This recognition, however, does not obviate the requirement that regular, full-time faculty have overall responsibility for all classes.

The following guidelines define the terms and conditions under which a graduate student may be employed to assist in instructional delivery.

### Graduate Hourly Appointments

To allow faculty to manage their time efficiently, undergraduate and graduate students may be hired on an hourly basis to assist faculty in laboratory setup and grading. Such appointments may be given to graduate students under the policies and procedures currently in place (<https://www.mines.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-assistantship/?CMSPAGE=GS-Grad-Contracts>), including:

1. All full-time graduate students are eligible. Students are selected and appointed on the basis of the needs of the departments and the capabilities of the students.
2. The duties of a Graduate Hourly Appointee in a classroom role are strictly limited to setting up laboratory facilities and grading assignments. Hourly Appointees may not have direct, day-to-day contact with students. They may not deliver lectures, supervise laboratory exercises, or be given any instructional duties or responsibilities.
3. Departments may make the appointments at any time using the standard Graduate Hourly contract forms and processes

### Graduate Teaching Assistants

To allow faculty to manage their time efficiently, and to provide graduate students experience in a teaching role, it is appropriate for the institution to support the notion of Graduate Teaching Assistants. Such appointments may be given to graduate students under the policies and procedures currently in place (<https://www.mines.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-assistantship/?CMSPAGE=GS-Grad-Contracts>), including:

1. All full-time graduate students are eligible. Students are selected and appointed on the basis of the needs of the departments and the capabilities of the students.
2. The duties of a Teaching Assistant are limited to setting up laboratory facilities, providing assistance to students with problem sets and laboratory exercises, supervising laboratory and recitation sections, grading homework and exams, and other duties as appropriate but under the direct supervision of faculty in charge of the course. Teaching Assistants may not have primary responsibility for delivering lectures, lead in the preparation of laboratory exercises or be given broad teaching duties or responsibilities.
3. Departments may make the appointments at any time using the standard Graduate Assistant contract forms and processes.

### Graduate Teaching Fellows

Neither Graduate Hourly Appointees nor Graduate Teaching Assistants are instructors of record for any courses in which they are involved. It may, however, be appropriate for a doctoral student to be an instructor of record in a course. Teaching Fellowship Appointments acknowledge a student as being an instructor of record. Materials for contracting students as Teaching Fellows are available by contacting the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean of Graduate Studies has authority to approve Teaching Fellows on a case-by-case basis.

To be approved as a Teaching Fellow, the Department Head should submit to the Dean of Graduate Studies documentation that certifies the following conditions have been, or will be met:

1. The appointee must be a PhD student in good standing who has completed the basic course work and minimum number of credit hours required for the degree and have an approved Admission to Candidacy form on file in the Graduate Office.
2. The appointee must have the demonstrated expertise to teach the given course.
3. The appointee must have had some teaching experience or have completed, or be concurrently enrolled in, SYGN600, Fundamentals of College Teaching.
4. A full-time permanent faculty member must be assigned as mentor and agree to:
  - Review and approve syllabi, homework assignments, laboratory instructions and exams.
  - Observe selected classes and provide feedback.
  - Monitor grading practices and assignment of grades.
5. The course mentor should not be the student's academic advisor and further must certify that it will not cause a conflict of interest when they give the graduate student grades in their own courses or vote on the student's performance on the comprehensive exam or thesis defense as part of a thesis committee.
6. At the end of the semester, the faculty mentor must submit a written analysis of the appointee's performance to the department head. The analysis should be based on factors that include the student teaching evaluations, the mentor's personal observations in class, and the written material prepared and distributed by the instructor.

#### Last Revision:

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