

3.4 Instructional Use of Graduate Students

Governing Policies

Graduate Assistantship Policies
Graduate Contracts

Procedure

Mines is a 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, budgetary distributions, and faculty availability, as well as 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 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 students should not be hired as adjuncts, but through the mechanisms described below.

Graduate Hourly Appointments

To allow the most effective use of faculty time, 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:

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 in an instructional capacity. 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 linked above, after review of the policies at links above. Note that tuition remission is not included in Hourly appointment contracts.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

To allow the most effective use of faculty time and to provide graduate students experience in a teaching role, it is appropriate for the institution to employ Graduate Teaching Assistants. Such appointments may be given to graduate students under the policies and procedures currently in place:

1. All full-time graduate students are eligible. Students are selected and appointed based on 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, aiding students with problem sets and laboratory exercises, supervising laboratory and recitation sections, grading homework and exams, and other duties as appropriate 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 Assistantship contract forms and processes, after review of the policies at links above. Note that tuition remission is included in Teaching Assistant contracts.

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 an advanced doctoral student to be an instructor of record in a course if they meet specific criteria of experience and expertise. Teaching Fellow Appointments acknowledge these qualified students as being instructors of record. The Dean of Graduate Studies has authority to approve Teaching Fellows on a case-by-case basis.

To request approval for a Teaching Fellow, the Department Head or Program Director 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 has 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, supported by their academic transcript, C.V., and/or relevant references. For example, the appointee may have taken a similar course as an undergraduate, have taken a graduate course in the same area, or have served as a teaching assistant for the course previously.
3. The appointee must have had relevant teaching experience at the appropriate level or must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in SYGN600: Fundamentals of College Teaching.
4. A full-time permanent faculty member must be assigned as the supervising mentor for the appointee and agree to:
 - Review and approve syllabi, homework assignments, laboratory instructions and exams.
 - Observe selected classes and provide feedback.
 - Assist the appointee with any decisions about unusual or challenging situations that may arise during the class.
 - Monitor grading practices and assignment of grades.
5. The course mentor should not be the appointee's academic advisor and must certify that it will not cause a conflict of interest if there are occasions when the course mentor will give the appointee grades in their own courses or vote on their performance on the comprehensive exam or thesis defense as part of a thesis committee.
6. At the end of the semester, the faculty course mentor must submit a written analysis of the appointee's performance to the Department Head or Program Director and Graduate Dean. The analysis should

be based on factors that include the teaching evaluations submitted by students in the class, the mentor's personal observations of the appointee teaching the class, and the written material prepared and distributed by the appointee.

Documentation of the first five conditions for any student being considered as a Graduate Teaching Fellow, plus course information, must be submitted to the Graduate Dean at least three weeks prior to the start of each semester so that review and/or approval can be done in a timely manner.

If approved by the Graduate Dean, appointments may be given to graduate students under the policies and procedures currently in place. Note that tuition remission is expected as part of Graduate Teaching Fellow contracts.

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