

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

University Rule 33.99.08.C2, Approved July 27, 1998

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The employment of graduate students as graduate teaching assistants at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi will be carefully monitored. Graduate teaching assistants who have primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit and/or for assigning final grades must meet certain academic qualifications described below, be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training and be regularly evaluated.
- 1.2 Administrative responsibility for teaching assignment rests within the unit in which the student is employed as a teaching assistant. Graduate students interested in pursuing such an appointment should write to the appropriate dean or University Core Curriculum Program (UCCP) director.

2. QUALIFICATIONS

- 2.1 All teaching assistants must hold a bachelor's degree or the equivalent and be admitted as students for graduate study. According to the regulations of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, those teaching assistants given full responsibility for a class must have at least 18 hours of graduate work in the field of their teaching responsibilities.
- 2.2 Any exceptions to the above policy must be for demonstrably valid reasons and be approved in advance by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Each departmental unit will review the qualifications of all appointees at the time of appointment to ensure compliance with existing policies.

3. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

All appointments to positions of teaching assistants shall be on the basis of qualifications, suitability, and student status without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, national origin, or Vietnam veteran status. All appointments must be in keeping with the laws and regulations of the State of Texas and The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

4. DUTIES

Service assignments for each teaching assistant will be outlined at the time of appointment. Duties may include a range of assignments, from directing lab sessions, to grading assignments and leading discussion sections, to full charge of classes. The exact duties will depend on the needs of the department, the background and qualifications of the teaching

assistant, and the professional goals of the student. Work assignments should take into account both the needs of the department and the graduate student's obligation to make satisfactory progress in his or her chosen academic program.

5. APPOINTMENT

Teaching assistants are normally appointed for one-quarter to one-half time service. Teaching assistants who are one-half time employees will be expected to work 20 hours per week. Other levels of appointment will vary accordingly. Appointments exceeding half time should be made only under compelling circumstances and with the approval of the appropriate administrator. For college assignments, the appropriate administrator will be the dean. Appointments to teach Freshman Seminars will be approved by the Director of the Core Curriculum Program. Appointments are ordinarily for one or two semesters, but may in some instances be for only one or more summer sessions. Students must be in good academic standing, that is, they must not be on scholastic probation, at the time of appointment. Continuation of the assistantship is conditioned on satisfactory performance, both as a teaching assistant and as a student, throughout the term of appointment.

6. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANTS

6.1 International teaching assistants often provide students with valuable perspectives not readily available from other teachers. The international student is therefore a decided asset to the learning environment.

6.2 Like all faculty whose first language is not English, the appointment of international students as teaching assistants will be made only after certification of English proficiency and readiness for the classroom. Students whose English proficiency is not clear, or who may have other deficiencies that make success in the classroom doubtful will not be appointed. They may, however, pursue further training and be reconsidered at a later date.

7. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

7.1 Teaching assistants are appointed at a salary determined by the college or, in the case of Freshman Seminar mentors, by the University Core Curriculum Program. Salaries for graduate teaching assistants are set at or above the minimum level established by the University for graduate student employees. The salary level will take into account the appointee's training, prior experience and level of responsibility.

7.2 Student employee appointments are considered to be temporary appointments; these positions do not qualify for vacation, sick leave, emergency leave, or holiday pay. Social Security and Workers' Compensation insurance benefits, however, are provided to all student employees. Graduate students who work at least fifty percent time for four and one-half months or for a semester of more than four months and whose positions require that they be enrolled in graduate level courses are eligible to

participate in group insurance programs. For more information on benefits, see System Policy 31.02, Employee Insurance and Retirement Benefits; System Regulation 31.02.02, Eligibility for Employee Benefits; and System Regulation 31.02.05, Group Insurance Programs.

8. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1 A student employee is an employee performing part-time work incidental to academic training in an occupational category that requires all incumbents to be students as a condition of employment. Accordingly, the first priority of teaching assistants should be satisfactory progress in their academic programs. At the same time, the teaching assistant has responsibilities for satisfactory performance of employment duties. Teaching assistants and their advisors need to work together to ensure that both roles are successfully carried out.
- 8.2 The teaching assistant is responsible for becoming familiar with general academic procedures in the University Catalog, the Faculty Handbook, and the University's Policy and Procedures Manual. A copy of the Faculty Handbook will be available, for reference as needed, in the office of the dean of each college, the office of the University Core Curriculum Program, the Library Reserve Room, and the Human Resources Office. A copy of the University's Policy and Procedures Manual will be available in the same locations.
- 8.3 In situations in which teaching assistants believe they have a legitimate grievance regarding any aspect of their employment, they have a right to exhaust all proper channels in resolving the complaint. For teaching assistants in the colleges, the channels, in order, are: the immediate supervisor, department chair, the dean, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. For teaching Assistants in the University Core Curriculum Program, the channels are: the Director of the University Core Curriculum Program and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

9. ENROLLMENT

- 9.1 Each teaching assistant is expected to make steady progress toward the completion of an advanced degree. Any student employed as a graduate teaching assistant during a regular semester (fall or spring) must be enrolled for a least 6 hours of coursework in that semester. Any exceptions to this rule must have the prior approval of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- 9.2 All academic units should determine their requirements for taking and teaching courses up to the maximum set by the University and make these requirements known to their teaching assistants.

10. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

- 10.1 All new teaching assistants will undergo a period of orientation prior to beginning work. This orientation will include an overview of procedures, facilities, duties and University policies.
- 10.2 In addition, each department employing teaching assistants will provide systemic, on-going training. Such training may take the form of a course in teaching the subject involved which the teaching assistant will take during the first semester of work. In some cases, it will also involve mentoring assignments, with opportunities for observation of senior faculty in the classroom and frequent conferences to review such things as course syllabi, grading, classroom decorum and lecture styles.
- 10.3 The nature of orientation and training activities will vary from department to department, but each unit will be responsible for a plan that ensures each teaching assistant such support as will provide maximum opportunity for the development of teaching ability and professional perspectives.
- 10.4 The academic units responsible for the courses will be responsible for providing teaching assistants with such support (access to office space, computers, telephones, supplies, etc.) as appropriate to their activities.

11. EVALUATION AND SUPERVISION

- 11.1 Responsibility for employment of graduate students as graduate assistants should be coordinated appropriately with the Office of Student Financial Assistance.
- 11.2 Departments employing teaching assistants will conduct an evaluation of each assistant each semester. The results of the evaluation will be made available to the assistant and placed in the assistant's file. Appropriate follow-up should occur to ensure that the teaching assistant receives full benefit of the evaluation. The evaluation and supervision of teaching assistants should be conducted with two issues in mind: 1) the quality of work connected with the specific assignment and departmental tasks, and 2) the training value of the assistant's performance for future employment and professional development.
- 11.3 In cases where remedial measures are indicated to improve the assistant's performance, the assistant should be informed in writing of the recommended changes to resolve the problem. Situations leading to recommendation of dismissal for cause must be described in writing to the assistant, with copy to the dean or appropriate administrator.

11.4 Each teaching assistant will be clearly informed of who his supervisor is and of the chain of command within the unit. There should be a clear understanding of the sources of advice and assistance. The person who is to receive any complaints should be identified to the teaching assistant.

12. REAPPOINTMENT

Decisions regarding the reappointment of graduate assistants will be based on the needs of the institution and the past performance of the graduate assistants. To be reappointed, graduate students must have demonstrated satisfactory progress in their academic programs and satisfactory performance of their employment duties at the University.