Graduate Student Employees - COE Policies

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Rationale for potential changes to TA/AI and GRA policies

- To ensure compliance with University policies regarding graduate student employee assignments.
- To eliminate disparities across departments in TA/AI and GRA pay and the assignment process.
- To ensure equitable and adequate support for graduate students and for course-related instructional activity.

TA/AI and GRA Pay and Assignment Values/Premises

- Graduate students should be compensated in accordance with their title. For example, graduate students who have been AIs and then serve as TAs should be paid according to their job function.
- In general, students who do not have a master’s degree should be compensated the COE Masters rate and those who have a master’s degree, the COE PhD rate. (See also Graduate Student Employees - COE Salary Rate Minimums.)
- Students who are AIs are expected to be Ph.D.s and compensated the COE AI rate. In the case of PhD students with split appointments (i.e., appointed at AI and TA); they should be paid in accordance with their title for each appointment.
- TAs/AIs/GRAs should be limited to 20 hours per week, where possible, given that they are compensated appropriately for 20 hours.
- Must consider that overloading graduate students with TA/AI/GRA assignments may interfere with their research and course work requirements.
- Pay rates should be commensurate with experience. Master’s student pay should be different from PhD student pay.
- Pay rates should be similar for TAs/AIs and GRAs.
- GRA appointments must include full tuition remission.
- TAs should be assigned to courses, not faculty. Develop clear criteria for the types of courses that require TAs/AIs, e.g., based on enrollment: course structure, content, etc.
- TAs should be provided to primarily support graduate students for course-related instructional activity. Must provide appropriate amount of support to faculty based on class and program demands. In making TA/AI assignments, special consideration should be given how to best match curriculum needs with faculty member needs.

TA Assignment Practices

TAs should be assigned to courses based on course workload. TA assignment practices should consider:

- Must have a critical mass of students in the class to assign a TA or AI (e.g., 10-hour TA is assigned for classes with 20-60 students; 20-hour TA is assigned for classes with 61-100). Courses with more than 100 students may need additional TA support. Please consider that students with 10-hour assignments must have 2 assignments to get tuition and insurance benefit.
- Some exceptions to enrollment minimum TA justification may be granted for:
  - Undergraduate courses with undergraduate writing flag
  - Field-based or practicum-based courses that require extensive student observation, assessment, or supervision
  - Physical activity courses (e.g., 20-hour TA for each 3-4 sections in all courses where TA teaching is assigned by the Department Chair)
  - Lab or Discussion sections (e.g., 20-hour TA for 3 lab sections of 20 students in each section)

In general, TAs should not be assigned to support graduate courses. When such an assignment is necessary to support the professional development of graduate students (e.g., in a department in which limited or no opportunities for graduate students to be involved in undergraduate instruction), TAs may not be involved in a final evaluative role of other graduate students’ course work. In this situation, the following criteria must be met and must also consider the workload elements above:

- Doctoral students may serve as TAs in master’s courses. However, only doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy may serve as TAs in doctoral courses.
- TAs that lecture in graduate courses must be directly supervised by the instructor during the lecture.
- TAs in graduate courses can contribute to reviewing and commenting on students’ work, but cannot provide the final evaluation and/or grade.
- Graduate students in a graduate course must be invited to opt out of having a TA review their work. This decision will, in no way, influence evaluation of the student in that course. In such cases, only an instructor of record will review that student’s work.
- Must have a critical mass of students in the class to assign a TA (e.g., 10-hour TA is assigned for classes with 20-60 students).

In general, the “writing intensive” criterion is not adequate to justify a TA in a graduate course that otherwise does not meet enrollment criteria. Since most graduate courses have substantial writing requirements. However, graduate courses intended to directly support student writing skills (e.g., courses on writing for publication, grant writing, thesis or dissertation development) or that assign heavy stats or assessment work may be eligible for 10-hour TA support.

Assignment Practices should be followed when assigning TAs and AIs. You may deviate from these practices IF your assignments are more conservative than those outlined above. E.g., you may wish to assign a 10-hour TA to an undergraduate course with 60 students due to the nature of the course.