2007
Graduate Assistant Handbook
Philosophy

Programs of graduate study have been established at Northern Michigan University to assist the students in gaining advanced knowledge within a chosen discipline, and to facilitate the transformation from the role of student to that of professional scholar. Graduate assistantships attract good students. The primary role of the graduate assistantship is to facilitate progress toward completion of the graduate degree, while receiving valuable professional training. The graduate assistant is expected to make progress toward degree completion, and he or she also receives professional work experience under the supervision of a faculty mentor. While graduate assistants are expected to carry out responsibilities greater than those of other graduate students, the opportunities for professional development are substantial.

Graduate assistants must perform well academically to retain their assistantship. As they develop their professional skills, assistants will receive regular counseling and evaluation by a faculty mentor. As employees of Northern Michigan University, graduate assistants must meet teaching, research, and/or administrative obligations. They also must work under the supervision of experienced faculty/staff and receive in-service training for assigned duties.
General Information

A. Qualifications for a Graduate Assistant Appointment

An applicant must:

- have completed all application processes;
- be enrolled in a degree or certification program with regular status; and
- maintain satisfactory academic progress to be eligible for both the Graduate Assistantship, and for the Tuition Scholarship.

Once appointed, the graduate assistant must:

- be enrolled in a minimum of six credits for part-time and eight credits for full-time graduate status relevant to the declared program of study during the fall and winter semesters, but no more than ten credits;
- maintain an overall graduate grade point average of at least 3.0;
- meet the qualifications of the particular assignment; and
- satisfactorily perform the duties assigned as evaluated by the faculty/supervisor.

NOTE: Graduate Assistants in the MFA program (Master of Fine Arts) must enroll in at least one credit during the summer semester.

B. Job Description for Graduate Assistants

Duties of a graduate assistant are designed to complement the student’s graduate program and to advance the program of the assigning department. Duties assigned to the graduate assistant are subject to approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The workload of a graduate assistant consists of up to 20 hours per week during the fall and winter semesters. These 20 hours should include time for preparing materials used in the classroom, teaching, office hours, planning activities, and research assignments.

Graduate assistants are salaried employees of the university. Their pay dates begin the first pay day of the fall semester and end at the conclusion of the winter semester. As salaried employees, they have the same days off that faculty have during the year, which include holidays and semester breaks.

Typical duties and responsibilities of graduate assistants may include:
- teaching/supervising a lecture or a laboratory section under the direction of a faculty member;
• assisting in research projects for a department or individual faculty member;
• grading papers and developing curriculum materials; and
• performing limited clerical duties.

C. Graduate Assistant Stipends

Stipends for graduate assistants have been standardized for full time appointments. Some part-time assignments may be available and will vary depending upon assignment. Salary and tuition reduction fees are stated in both the contract and the job description for each position. Amounts for each year will be identified, but may vary between departments.

Graduate Assistant Tuition Scholarships
Graduate assistants normally receive tuition waivers for the period of time that they are appointed. Full appointments during the fall and winter semesters permit eight credit hours of tuition waiver per semester. Summer appointments offer up to a maximum of six credit hours of tuition waiver. A graduate assistant who has a full academic year appointment can enroll in six credits one semester, and use the remaining tuition waiver of two credits during the other semester (for a total of 10 credits). For the purpose of tuition charges, graduate assistants are considered residents of Michigan.

Summer Carry-Over Tuition
Graduate assistants may elect to use part of their tuition waivers from their current appointment to pay for summer credits. The maximum that can be “carried-over” is two credit hours from each semester, since the student must remain enrolled in at least six credits each semester of the academic year to be eligible for their assistantship. At the conclusion of the winter semester, the Graduate Office will prepare a list of all Graduate Assistants who have unused credits leftover from the academic year, and submit this list to Student Services and the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office will put the tuition stipend on the student’s record, as long as the student is registered for the credits. Failure to enroll in the approved summer credit hours by June 1 will result in forfeiture of the credit waiver. All credits paid for under this tuition waiver must be required graduate program credits.

Graduate assistants who enroll in summer session course work under this policy must complete all work assigned to their graduate assistantship by the end of the winter semester.
D. Ethical Research Conduct

During their graduate student career at Northern Michigan University, some students will conduct research as a part of the M.S. thesis work. Students conducting experiments involving human subjects, the student must complete a Human Subjects Research Review Committee (HSRRC) application (prior to beginning the research). The student cannot proceed with that research project until they have received approval to do so by the HSRRC. Similarly, graduate students who conduct research involving vertebrate animals must submit an application to the Northern Michigan University Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to the conduct of their research, and must receive approval of the proposed project before beginning their research. Finally, note that ALL graduate students who have utilized human or animal subjects in the thesis research project must submit a copy of their HSRRC or IACUC approval form with their thesis, or the thesis will be not approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

E. Laptop Computers Over the Summer

During the summer, graduate assistants who want to keep their laptop computer must be pre-registered for the fall semester. If the student fails to pre-register, he or she will be given the choice of either turning in the computer or paying the computer fee.

F. Failure to Meet Assigned Responsibilities

It is expected that graduate assistants will meet their assigned responsibilities in a professional manner. If for any reason they are ill or unable to carry out these responsibilities, they are expected to notify the faculty or staff mentor and the Department Head immediately. Appointed graduate assistants do not have the benefit of paid sick leave. If protracted periods of illness or absence exist, the Department maintains the responsibility to make recommendations that they assistant withdraw from the assistantship so that your assigned responsibilities are met. Because the appointment to a graduate assistantship does not provide the individual with employment rights, missed time is expected to be made up at the discretion of the departments.

Departments hold disciplinary responsibility for those assistants who do not meet assigned responsibilities. The Dean of Graduate Studies will be notified by the appropriate Department Head when a graduate assistant fails to meet assigned responsibilities and can have input to the disciplinary process.
Types of Graduate Assistants

Four types of graduate assistantship employment opportunities exist at Northern Michigan University:

A. Research & Administrative Assistants

Responsibilities of research and administrative assistants will vary. Research and administrative assistants are assigned a faculty or staff member who will supervise the work done on a specific project. A full-time research or administrative assistant is expected to work 20 hours per week.

When research assistants or administrative assistants first meet with their faculty or staff supervisor, outcomes that allow the student and his or her supervisor to evaluate project progress will be identified. Regular meetings to review progress will be heard.

If the graduate assistant feels that the workload is too heavy or that they are working too many hours, or if there is some question about the direction the graduate assistant is to follow with his/her project, the matter should be discussed with the faculty or staff supervisor. If the problem is not satisfactorily reconciled, then the assistant should make an appointment with the appropriate department head. The graduate assistant may contact the Dean of Graduate Studies if he or she remains uncomfortable or cannot resolve the conflict.

B. Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants have a different role within the University than other types of graduate assistants. The department is the primary resource for information regarding teaching expectations.

The Role of the Teaching Assistant

Teaching assistants are expected to complete their course work and to teach each week throughout the semester. Teaching assignments require approximately 20 hours of work each week. During this time, assistants will teach, hold office hours, attend departmental meetings, prepare for classes or labs, and grade/evaluate student work. Some weeks, such as midterm and final exam week, may require more time; however, others will require less time. To maintain their assistantships, graduate assistants must achieve an overall 3.0 GPA.
Some teaching assistants act as liaisons between students and professors because their assignments require assisting a professor in teaching a large lecture class or taking over the class or lab. This means that the professor will have less contact with students and will rely upon the assistant to solve student problems and provide students with help. Depending on the specific situation, most assistants will have to handle these problems themselves; however, the teaching assistant may also consult with a mentor or faculty member. Recurring student concerns should be discussed with the professor.

Academic advising is the undergraduate adviser’s role. Teaching assistants should refer all students to their advisers or to the Undergraduate Bulletin for specific information concerning the completion of their degree programs.

Office Hours
Teaching assistants are expected to hold four office hours each week. Teaching assistants should include these hours in their syllabus and on their office doors. Without encouragement, many students will be reluctant to stop by an instructor’s office. Others visit only when they have problems in class or questions about the subject matter. It is important to make students feel at ease early in the semester or students may never take advantage of their teaching assistant’s office hours.

The following are strategies to help the teaching assistant use their office hours efficiently. When a student arrives, the teaching assistant should:

- avoid long, aimless, conversations with the student;
- pinpoint the student’s problem and keep the discussion on track;
- take notes to serve as a reminder in the case of an on-going conflict; and
- be a good listener.

A student experiencing personal problems may visit his or her teaching assistant. Students with personal problems can greatly benefit from the services at the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center is staffed with trained professionals. Teaching assistants should take their students’ problems seriously, but they should never act as counselors. They must honor the trust that students place in them by keeping their conversations with students confidential.

C. Teaching Assistants in the Master of Fine Arts in Writing Program

Graduate Assistant-MFA (GA-MFA) students are selected by the English Department to work as teaching assistants for the Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing. These GA appointments differ from other NMU teaching
assistant appointments because their contracts run for the full calendar year, and because their program of study is a three year program (as opposed to two years for master’s degree students). The following list outlines the differences between GA-MFAs and other GAs at NMU:

• All of the qualifications for a GA appointment previously stated apply for the GA-MFA appointment with the addition that, during the summer, each GA-MFA must be enrolled in at least one, but not more than four hours of the 16 hours of graduate credit covered by the tuition scholarship, to receive the summer portion of their stipend.

• The GA-MFA letter of appointment includes teaching one course in the fall, one course in the winter, and one course in the summer.

• The pay stipend for the GA-MFA’s will be one and one-half times that of the regular graduate assistant, with one third of the stipend paid during the fall, winter, and summer semesters. Typically, these appointments extend from the week prior to the start of the school year, to July 31 of the following year, but the pay is set up on a continuous pay schedule of 26 paydays.

University Policies

Confidentiality of Student Records

The university’s regulations regarding the protection of student records comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. This federal law was designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the rights of students to inspect and review their educational records, and to provide procedures for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings.

To ensure student privacy, teaching assistants should adhere to the following guidelines:

• never reveal test grades, homework grades, course grades, or other information about a student’s progress to anyone other than the student to whom the grades are assigned;
• never read grades aloud, post grades outside of the office, disclose grade information over the phone, or return exams by placing them on a desk for students to examine;
• never return a paper or exam to a student’s roommate, spouse, parent, etc., unless written permission has been previously granted; and
• never allow a student to look through the grade log.
Teaching assistants must keep careful records of all grading. This is important in determining final grades, and is crucial if a student files a grade grievance. If attendance contributes to the final grade, absences should be recorded in the grade book.

**Student Rosters**

The Registration and Scheduling Office issues rosters for each class. Teaching assistants will receive their course rosters in their departmental mailboxes and/or electronically on the first day of classes. Each roster will contain the following information:

- course number;
- sequence number;
- instructor’s name;
- classroom location;
- time and day of class;
- student names; and
- student identification numbers.

Updated rosters will be issued after the first week of classes. Final rosters are issued at the end of the semester for instructors to record final course grades. Final grades are submitted electronically.

**Drop and Add**

Courses may be added during the first week of classes each semester and may be dropped any time during the first eight weeks without a grade penalty. To drop or add a class, students must fill out a drop/add card. This card may be obtained at Registration and Scheduling and in most department offices.

Teaching assistants have the right to administratively drop a student after the first week of classes. An administrative drop is issued when a student fails to attend class for the entire first week, and the instructor removes that student from their roster.

Students often approach instructors during the first week of class seeking permission to attend a class. Teaching assistants should always check with their supervisors to review departmental policy prior to admitting additional students.

Students who do not perform well in class may choose to drop the course. Under certain circumstances, a teaching assistant may recommend that a student drop the class. For example, students who have not regularly attended class may be behind in their work, and it may be advisable that they drop the
class rather than earn a low grade. Teaching assistants should consult with their faculty mentor prior to advising a student to drop the class.

**Sexual Harassment**

As instructors, teaching assistants should be aware of the university’s official policy on sexual harassment, approved by the Board of Trustees, available at: http://www.nmu.edu/www-sam/humanres/AdminPoliciesMan/sexualharassmentADM.htm. The Human Resources Office also has copies of this policy.

**Organizing a Course**

Classes should be organized before the semester begins. When scheduling the class, teaching assistants should note any holidays on the academic calendar.

Teaching assistants should review the textbooks to see how much material needs to be covered, and then decide what to discuss for each unit of study. Once this has been arranged, tests, quizzes, and major projects need to be included in the lesson plan. Many departments require that certain subjects be covered during the semester. When designing the syllabus and course in general, teaching assistants should pay close attention to those departmental standards.

When organizing the semester, teaching assistants must be realistic and practical. Evenly spacing major exams, papers, and reports over the course of the semester gives students time to prepare for the next large assignment, and it also gives the teaching assistant time to grade the projects before the next one is due. Students will become accustomed to the regularity of the assignments. Teaching assistants may find it helpful to contact an experienced graduate assistant and/or their mentors to make sure that the workload they have planned is realistic.

**Preparing a Syllabus**

Writing the syllabus requires thinking through the entire semester. This can be challenging for a first-time teacher, but it will organize the course, and give it direction throughout the semester. New teaching assistants may find it helpful to meet with their supervisor, mentor, or department head for guidelines regarding syllabus specifics. Also, most supervisors will provide new teaching assistants with sample syllabi for use as guides. Assistants are strongly advised to strictly adhere to the syllabus when teaching a class.

The syllabus should include the following information:

- instructor’s name, office location, contact phone number, email address and office hours;
• course title, course number, course call number, number of credit hours, class meeting time, and class location;
• specific goals and objectives for the class;
• course policies regulating attendance, tardiness, and late papers;
• textbooks and other materials required for the class;
• guidelines for determining final grades;
• calendar listing dates of assignments, quizzes, and exams;
• disclaimer indicating that the syllabus may be subject to change; and
• the Americans with Disabilities Association statement.

Organizing the First Day of Class

Teaching assistants should use the first class period to set the tone for the semester. The teaching assistant should be punctual, prepared, friendly and professional.

Since students often find themselves in the wrong room, many instructors find it helpful to write the following information on the board:
• the course title and call number (example, EN 111 College Composition);
• their name; and
• their office location and phone number.

Teaching assistants should introduce themselves to their classes, and tell students about their academic background. Graduate teaching assistants should let students know that they are assistants, rather than professors, and they should indicate how they would like to be addressed by the class.

Assistants should take roll using the roster, and ask students how they prefer to be addressed. Some students prefer not to be called by their legal names, so instructors should be courteous and honor their students’ requests (within reason). If a student’s name did not appear on the course roster, the teaching assistant needs to ensure that the student is in the correct class. Confirming that the student has properly registered is the student’s responsibility.

Each student must receive a copy of the syllabus. Teaching assistants should review it with their students, outlining important policies regarding late work, grading, and class participation. Students need the opportunity to ask questions regarding the syllabus and the course in general.

Accepting Limitations

Students assume that their instructors are knowledgeable about the discipline they teach. However, knowing everything is not a prerequisite for effective teaching. Sometimes students ask questions to which the teaching assistant
does not know the answers. When that happens, the assistant should be honest and inform students that he or she does not know, but will respond to the question by the next class meeting.

Occasionally, a teaching assistant will make mistakes in class. Admitting those mistakes is important. If misinformation is given in class, the teaching assistant should correct the mistake as soon as possible.

**Using Group Interaction Skills**

Teaching assistants should consider developing some lesson plans that require their students to participate in group activities. In this case, the teacher becomes the group facilitator, clearly indicating the objectives of the activity and making a point to:

- Be friendly and responsive. Reinforce the students for their ideas, and accept contributions from all students.
- Encourage reluctant students to make contributions to the group. Provide equal discussion time for everyone so that all will have a chance to express their ideas.
- Be organized. Establish standards for the group to use when choosing content or procedure or when evaluating decisions. Remind students to avoid decisions that conflict with professional standards.
- Express group consensus, summarizing the findings of the group. Describe reactions to ideas and solutions.

**Selecting a Mentor**

New teaching assistants may have questions about teaching and may want to talk to someone about their teaching style, lesson plans, tests, and other concerns. Teaching assistants should establish a mentoring relationship with a faculty member or administrator in their department. Some departments require each teaching assistant to have a mentor. In the departments in which it is not required, it is good for teaching assistants to establish a mentoring relationship with a faculty member. Teaching assistants should find a faculty member they are comfortable with, and ask that faculty member to be his or her mentor.

**Learning and Teaching Styles**

**Learning Styles**

To teach effectively, teaching assistants must remember that not all students respond to the same teaching style. Research on student learning styles suggests that some students learn best from well-organized lectures, visual aids, direct application problems, and computer instruction. Some students perform
optimally with readings, theories, hypotheses, and proofs, while others respond best to independent study situations, challenging exploration, open-ended problem solving, and hands-on simulation activities. Finally, some students work best in classrooms where audio-visual materials are used as supplements, where the instructor utilizes part of the class period for question and answer or discussion time, and where the class period maximizes interpersonal communication.

Writing and Giving a Lecture

The first task in organizing a lecture is topic selection. This includes setting parameters for the material. Teaching assistants must remember that students can retain only a certain amount of new information at one time. After deciding the lecture topic, the teaching assistant must define his or her purpose. Lectures should be clear and direct. Each component of the lecture should support an objective.

Several types of organizational strategies can be used when presenting information. Both cause/effect and problem/solution organizational styles are useful for persuasion presentations. Students sometimes need motivation to respond. A teaching assistant can do this by posing questions that require critical thinking, rather than merely asking the students if they have any questions.

Presentation Style

As teaching assistants begin their presentations, they should explain their purpose. Beginning lectures with open-ended questions allows students to become involved with the information.

When explaining a process or procedure, teaching assistants should periodically check to ensure that students understand the information by asking questions. Teachers should try to avoid leading questions, so students freely draw their own conclusions.

Students may begin to pack their bags prematurely. To prevent this, most instructors can stop their lectures and remind the students that class time remains. Ignoring the interruptions early in the semester may lead to student disruptions for the remainder of the semester.

General Guidelines for Using Visual Aids

When preparing visual aids for class presentation, the teaching assistant should consider the following guidelines:

- make them large and easy to read;
- rehearse with them;
- maintain eye contact with students while using them; and
- discuss them, rather than merely read them.
Planning and Leading a Discussion

Discussions are often part of lectures. In small class sections, students need to get involved with the information being presented. To do this, teaching assistants can begin with open-ended questions and provide some information about the topic so the students begin to develop responses.

Discussion sections have four main purposes:
• to review or interpret material covered in lectures;
• to focus on specific readings;
• to motivate and encourage students to do research; and
• to apply course material to everyday life.

To address these objectives, teaching assistants should ask questions that probe for answers, illustrating the major objective of a session. Questioning students about related and current issues often aids instructors in generating discussions. Paying attention to students’ gestures can serve as an accurate guide to their interest in the subject matter.

When teachers allow students to respond to each other during the course of a discussion, the students often perpetuate the discussion themselves. Teachers who maintain eye contact with their groups, and occasionally paraphrase segments of the discussion, facilitate and direct their groups.

Sometimes, teaching assistants find themselves with a quiet class. The following are suggestions for combating this problem.

• Have the students arrange their desks in a circle.
• Introduce controversial or contemporary issues in class. Students may be concerned not only about national news, but also with popular culture.
• Divide students into small discussion groups. When students report their findings to the whole class, this encourages consensus building.
• Make the tone and style of the discussion inviting and relaxing.

Planning a Lab

At the beginning of the semester, teaching assistants should make sure that they know what laboratory equipment is available, where the equipment is located, and how to use it properly. Teaching assistants should meet with their supervising instructor to review the course material and to identify potential hazards with each experiment and to prepare instructions accordingly for their students.
When planning a lab, teaching assistants should:
• Provide first-hand experience with specific procedures, measurement techniques, and materials. Make sure to understand exactly how to use the required equipment.
• Demonstrate and supplement topics covered during the lecture.
• Introduce students to scientific ways of thinking and strategies.

Prior to the experiment, it is important that the teaching assistants:
• Explain safety procedures and warn students of potential hazards and how to deal with them.
• Have students hypothesize possible outcomes.
• Reinforce inquiry by encouraging students to ask “why” questions about the theories that form the basis for their experiments.

During the experiment, teaching assistants should:
• Help students collect data, learn how the data should be analyzed, and see the “big picture” of the experiment.
• Be aware of safety procedures for high-voltage devices, toxic chemicals, and infectious organisms.

After the experiment, the teaching assistant should:
• Help students who have received unexpected results understand why they may have generated those data.
• Discuss the format of the lab report for the data that was collected.

Conducting a Laboratory

During the lab, teaching assistants should circulate among students, answering questions and posing new ones. If a question arises that interests the rest of the class, teaching assistants should focus class attention on it to generate class discussions. In a laboratory setting, teaching assistants need to help students develop, experience, and practice their own methods of problem solving. Small group work is an essential part of the lab experience. Having students cooperate in problem solving encourages them to turn to each other for further understanding. At the conclusion of the lab session, students often benefit from a discussion about the experiment. Their comments will not only open communication, but will also help the teaching assistant pinpoint areas that confuse students, giving them the opportunity to clarify misunderstandings. Remembering the principles of scientific inquiry may help the teaching assistant evaluate student work in the lab. The teaching assistant should consider the following:

• How well did students follow directions and procedures?
• Did they state the purpose of the session clearly?
• How accurately did they gather data?
• How appropriate are their conclusions?
• Are the objectives of the experiment realistic?

Before evaluating students, teaching assistants should familiarize themselves with any departmental guidelines and/or expectations. Some departments have established criteria for grading. When teaching assistants return student work, they should announce to their classes the times when they will be available to answer individual student questions about their graded projects.

Responding to Student Writing: A General Guide

When evaluating student papers, some teaching assistants find it helpful to read the paper twice. The first time that they read it, they pay attention to content, organizational strategy, and purpose. They make grammatical and conceptual comments during the second reading. Students may get discouraged if no positive comments appear on their papers. Comments at the end of the paper should address both successes and suggestions for improvement. Concise comments work effectively.

Administering Quizzes

Quizzes address problems objectively, so it is important that students understand the purpose of the quizzes and the course content. Quizzes should address specific subject matter, experimental methodology, and overall experimental intent. When returning corrected quizzes, teaching assistants should:
• be prepared for questions;
• know why the correct answer is appropriate, and be ready to explain why other answers are incorrect;
• be aware of the different levels of understanding and learning styles among the students; and
• be complete and explicit in grading quizzes to permit adequate time to conduct the next laboratory.

Giving Tests

Students are often concerned about their grades and the methods used to determine them. Before teaching, the teaching assistant should have established guidelines for grading. They should be clearly listed in the course syllabus.

Some departments use standardized tests. Others ask that teaching assistants create their own exams. Teaching assistants should check with their department heads or supervisors so that they become familiar with their department’s testing policy. If their department does not offer testing guidelines, the assistants will have to find a testing method suitable for their classes. The most common types of tests are true-false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay.
Constructing fair tests can be difficult. Below are some guidelines that teaching assistants may follow to construct a fair test. Assistants should:

- relate test items directly to instructional objectives;
- keep directions clear and complete;
- use vocabulary appropriate to the educational level of the students;
- check for grammatical and spelling errors; and
- minimize or avoid the use of textbook or stereotyped language.

Teaching assistants must remain consistent while grading, especially when evaluating essay tests, lengthy lab reports, and student papers. Reading through several tests before grading them can help the assistant develop a standard for grading all exams. Explaining the grading system to the class, both in the syllabus and during class, is an important task for the teaching assistant. Teaching assistants must take time to give written feedback on papers and exams. Grading in ink can help avoid academic dishonesty.

**Submitting Student Grades**

Final grades are due by noon on the Tuesday following graduation. Registration and Scheduling sends all instructors an email message giving instructions about how to enter final grades on-line.
Evaluating Teaching Assistant Performance

Departments on campus use various measurements to evaluate classroom teaching. Teaching assistants should check with their department head or supervisor about the evaluation method used in their departments.

Student Ratings

At the end of each semester, students will be asked to conduct a written evaluation of the teaching assistant’s work as an instructor. This evaluation may be administered in person, or online, depending on the departmental practices.

When distributing the evaluations, the teaching assistant should designate one student to gather the completed evaluations and deliver them to the department secretary. The instructor should make it clear to the students that the evaluation process is done anonymously, so that no individual student identification is possible. Instructors must leave the classroom while their students complete evaluations.

The evaluations may not be viewed until after final grades have been turned in to the Registration and Scheduling office. Student evaluations can be very important for teaching assistants who will pursue a career in academia, since they can be used as part of a teaching portfolio.

Peer Observations

While there is no formal peer observation process on campus, input from other graduate and teaching assistants can be valuable. Teaching assistants can benefit from regular meetings. They may discuss difficulties they have encountered, and class activities that have been successful.

Faculty Observations

A teaching assistant’s supervisor will monitor performance in the classroom by observing the class occasionally. The supervisor will then meet with the assistant to discuss any problems, and to give the teaching assistant recommendations on how to improve their teaching style. Some departments videotape performance in the classroom.