

Information for Graduate Students:

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GTA ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES**

Purpose of the Committee:

1. To help Graduate Teaching Assistants develop strong teaching skills.
The work of the GTA Advisory Committee in GTA evaluation and training is intended to provide basic training and assessment that complements whatever individual faculty members may choose to provide on their own.
2. To gather, through visits to GTA run classes, information to be retained in each student's teaching file. This information will be used:
 - a. in preparing teaching letters for students' dossiers when they go on the job market.
 - b. as evidence of teaching competence when a student is a candidate for funding beyond the period of guaranteed support (if the student is otherwise making normal progress).
 - c. in determining possible recipients of departmental teaching awards and nominees for the University's graduate student teaching award.

Composition of the Committee:

At least five members of the department, plus the director of graduate studies (DGS) ex officio and the placement officer (PO) ex officio. (It is not expected that the DGS or PO will be involved in the routine operations of the committee, but it may be helpful for the DGS and PO to participate in the committee's spring meeting.)

Who will be visited:

Students will be visited once during each of the first four semesters in which they have teaching assistant appointments. Students will then be visited the first time they teach their own course. And they will be visited once again in the second semester of the fourth year or first semester of the fifth year. This final visit is intended to provide more recent assessment both for purposes of teaching award nominations and to aid in crafting a strong teaching letter for the job market. Additional visits beyond these six will be arranged as the committee deems advisable in individual cases or as requested by students. Students are strongly encouraged to request additional visits in order to avail themselves of

opportunities for further development and to strengthen their teaching files.

Who will visit:

Ordinarily, all GTA visits will be made by regular committee members, but a faculty member not on the committee may be asked to visit when no regular committee member is available.

Procedure for visits:

1. Visits will ordinarily be conducted by members of the committee, and insofar as reasonably possible, GTAs will be visited by a different faculty member each of the first four semesters.
2. The visits will be scheduled by agreement between the visitor and the GTA being visited.
3. Visits should, ideally, take place between the fourth and sixth week of the semester. This will give GTAs time to begin to establish a routine and rapport with their students, while allowing sufficient time thereafter for such follow-up visits as the visitor may deem advisable.
4. The visiting faculty and the GTA shall meet before the visit so that the GTA can brief the visitor about how he or she runs section, any concerns he or she has about the section, any expectations communicated to him or her by the faculty instructor for the course, and any questions or concerns the GTA may have about the visit.
5. The visitor shall meet in person with the GTA after the meeting to discuss the visitor's observations and impressions and any additional concerns or questions that the GTA may have. As appropriate, the visitor will provide feedback regarding current teaching strengths and weaknesses and offer specific suggestions for improvement.
6. The visitor shall also write a report, using the committee's report form, and using the questions on the form as a guideline. GTAs will be given a copy of the report. A copy will also be placed in the GTA's teaching file.

GTA Advisory Committee Meetings:

1. The chair of the Committee will communicate early in the fall semester and again early in the spring semester to assign visitors to GTA sections and, in the fall, to arrange for committee members to write teaching letters for specific individuals.
2. The Committee will meet in the spring semester to review their observations of students (and, if necessary, the committee's procedures) and to discuss any recommendations to be made to the department regarding nomination for teaching awards. The department's graduate student representatives and the GTA mentors will be invited to present any graduate student concerns and will be excused before the committee

undertakes its other business. This meeting will take place before the department's spring meeting at which the progress of graduate students is discussed.

Additional Responsibilities:

The committee will be responsible for organizing an annual fall **GTA training session** for incoming students, as well as a training session for students who will, within the next year, be teaching their own courses for the first time. The committee may, over time, also devise such additional training sessions as it deems advisable or as graduate students may request. It is anticipated that the training sessions will be run jointly by at least two of the committee members and two advanced graduate students.

The committee will be responsible for **reviewing syllabi** for graduate student taught courses or for requesting such review by relevant faculty members.

The committee will be available to **hear any graduate student teaching related concerns**. Graduate students may contact committee members directly or relay their concerns through their representatives.

The committee will be responsible for reviewing the teaching files of graduate students who will be entering the job market and for writing a **teaching letter** to be included in each student's dossier summarizing strengths and accomplishments. The committee will also include, along with the teaching letter of each student who has completed the GTA training program, a form explaining the department's program.

In the spring of each year, the committee will review files of eligible graduate students to determine, in accordance with departmental guidelines, the appropriateness of presenting the department's **teaching award** to one of the GTAs, and the appropriateness of nominating a GTA for any other university-wide teaching awards.

The chair of the committee will be responsible for selecting, in consultation with committee members and other faculty, those graduate students who will serve as GTA mentors as a part of the GTA Mentoring Program. GTA Mentors should be provided with an explanation of their responsibilities. New GTAs should be contacted and notified of who the GTA mentors will be and how they might avail themselves of the mentors' assistance.