

Committee on Educational Policy
Policy on the Appointment and Use of Graduate Student Instructors

“Graduate student instructor” (GSI) refers to a graduate student having primary responsibility for the teaching of a course, e.g., a Teaching Fellow or Associate In, not a Teaching Assistant.

The principles outlined below are designed to permit flexibility in staffing courses and to provide teaching opportunities for graduate students, a valuable component of professional development. However, CEP believes that good educational policy requires that Senate faculty regularly teach in the core of each major program. Regular involvement of Senate faculty in the undergraduate curriculum contributes to excellence and continuity, and ensures that Senate faculty have the first-hand knowledge needed to exercise effective curricular oversight. In addition, excessive use of graduate instructors limits faculty interaction with majors and prospective majors, making it difficult for students to get faculty guidance and appropriate letters of reference, and limits the opportunities of students to interact with established scholars.

Appointments

GSI appointments must generally meet the 5 conditions detailed below. The approval process will depend on which of **A-B** holds:

A. Appointment is for teaching a lower-division course and conditions 1-5 below are met; *or*, the student in question has previously been approved by CEP to teach the course in question (not a different course), and conditions 1-5 are met.

For this category CEP gives blanket approval, leaving it to deans and departments to ensure that conditions 1-5 are met.

B. Appointment is for teaching an upper-division course, *or* the sponsoring agency is requesting an exception to any of conditions 1-3 below. (Conditions 4 and 5 are mandatory.)

For category B, appointments must be approved by CEP itself. Requests must be made using the attached form. The normal routing of requests is from the department chair to the appropriate divisional dean, and from the divisional dean to CEP. Concurrence of the Graduate Dean (a brief email suffices) must be sought prior to the request moving to CEP.

The CEP deadline for submission of requests is **the end of the 4th week of the quarter prior to the quarter in which the course is to be taught**, for example, the 4th week of spring quarter for a course to be offered in fall. Course-sponsoring units that submit requests after the deadline should bear in mind that CEP approval is not a rubber stamp and have a back-up plan in mind for mounting the relevant course.

Conditions on the approval of graduate student instructor appointments:

1. The student has advanced to Ph.D. candidacy.
2. Per APM 410, the proposed student has at least two years (or equivalent) of college teaching experience, either as an instructor or a teaching assistant.
3. As judged by evaluations from the three most recent teaching quarters, the student's teaching is very good or better.
4. The appointing unit attests to the student's competence to teach the course in terms of both subject knowledge and teaching ability.
5. The appointing unit agrees to provide faculty oversight and mentoring to the GSI. At a minimum, this entails appointing a faculty member who will:
 - a) oversee the course description, reading list, and final grades and evaluations;
 - b) review the last three sets of student evaluations for the appointee and meet prior to the beginning of the course to discuss any issues._
 - c) meet with the GSI before instruction begins to discuss course content, pedagogy, logistics, tests and assignments, grading and evaluation, and the faculty code of conduct;
 - d) conduct one class visit, and follow-up meeting with the GSI, during the first two weeks of the teaching quarter;
 - e) be available to discuss matters related to the course throughout the quarter.
 - f) act as formal supervisor of any TAs associated with the course, including providing any final evaluation of their role as TAs (since graduate students cannot supervise and evaluate other graduate students).

GSI Appointment Approval Form

Information for CEP approval of a Graduate Student as an Instructor.

Please answer all questions. Use additional sheets as necessary, but please number your responses to correspond to the questions below.

Student's name: _____

Department: _____

Course: _____

Quarter to be offered: _____

Expected enrollment in course: _____

Date graduate student was advanced to candidacy for Ph.D. _____

If not advanced, what is the expected date of advancement? _____

1. Name and signature of the on-going faculty member who has agreed to oversee instruction according to condition 5(a-f) above. **Faculty mentor must receive a copy of condition 5(a-f).**

(name)_____
(signature)

2. If this is the student's first GSI appointment, please list all of the student's university and college teaching history (as teaching assistant or primary instructor), and provide complete evaluations for the **most recent three quarters** of teaching. If this is not the student's first GSI appointment, please provide evaluations from the last GSI appointment. [The evaluations will be returned.]

3. Assess the student's research competence as it relates to this course.

4. What major requirements does this course satisfy? What General Education requirements?

5. Are all five conditions on GSI approval satisfied (**see the list on page 2**)? If not, which ones have not been satisfied? For any of conditions 1-3 (advancement to Ph.D. candidacy, 2 years of university or college level teaching experience, very good or better evaluations), justify why they should be waived. Conditions 4-5 cannot be waived.