



November 29, 2006

TO: Academic Deans
Department Chairs and Program Directors
CCAS, CPS, ESIA, GSEHD, GWSB, SEAS, SPHS

FR: Donald R. Lehman 
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: **Graduate Students in Instructional Roles**

This memo supercedes my memo of October 2005 on “Teaching of Courses by Graduate Students at GW” and supplements my memo on the hiring of instructional personnel, “Part-Time Teaching at GW and the Care Required in the Designation of Part-Time Faculty and Graduate Students Who Are Teaching,” which is attached and which has been modestly revised. This new memo, and its companion chart, “Classifying Graduate Student Teaching Roles,” clarifies existing distinctions, introduces the new position class of Instructional Assistant, and calls on departments and schools to ensure that any part-time instructional personnel who are graduate students at GW are properly screened, hired, and trained for their roles. These new understandings have been developed through consultations with representatives of the schools, HR, and the Office of the General Counsel.

Purposes

To enable select GW doctoral students to pursue academic careers, it is increasingly important that we provide them with a progressive set of teaching experiences, ranging from teaching assistant to independent course instructor. At the same time, we have a clear responsibility to our undergraduates to ensure that all instructors are fully competent with respect to both the content and methods of instruction. In addition, as a University we seek to make optimal use of graduate student support funds in order to provide multi-year support packages to outstanding doctoral students, while at the same time adequately meeting teaching needs through a combination of graduate student support and instructional support funds.

Within that broad context, the specific problems addressed by this policy memo include the hiring of graduate students as GTAs when instead of receiving full support packages (i.e., \$15,000 or more in salary and stipend or in salary, plus tuition support) they receive only a modest salary or salary-plus-stipend and/or tuition for limited service; wide variations across schools and departments in the size of the salary component of GTA packages; the hiring of lab and other course assistants as part-time faculty; the taking on

of additional positions by graduate students who have full graduate student support packages and who should be limited to no more than 20 hours of responsibility so that they can concentrate on their studies; and the hiring of graduate students who lack adequate preparation as part-time instructors.

Categories of Course Assistants

The attached chart summarizes the ways in which graduate students can potentially be involved in supporting instruction at GW and the qualifications and training they should have in order to assume these positions. First I discuss assistant roles and then turn to independent teaching by graduate students.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs, 51122). To be appointed as a GTA through graduate student support account 51122, a graduate student, in most cases a doctoral student, should receive a support package that typically consists of salary, stipend, and tuition. As called for by the Strategic Plan for Academic Excellence, these packages should include at least \$15,000 in salary and stipend. The salary component should be in the range of \$4,500-\$7,000 for duties that entail up to an average of 20 hours per week.

In some instances, it may be permissible to appoint a graduate student worthy of graduate student support as the equivalent of a half-time GTA (e.g., to assume a limited instructional support role for about 7-11 hours a week). Half GTAs should receive between \$7,500 and \$12,000 per academic year in salary plus stipend, at least \$2,500 of which is salary provided as compensation for the performance of assigned duties, plus at least partial tuition support. The same principle should apply in hiring Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) and Graduate Administrative Assistants (GAAs): They should receive either full or half packages of graduate support.

GTAs, and GRAs and GAAs as well, should be top graduate students whose education we have chosen to support by providing them with significant stipend and tuition funding in addition to salaries. Graduate students should no longer be appointed as GTAs, GRAs, or GAAs if they are to receive less than \$7,500 per year in salary or in salary plus stipend. If additional graduate students are needed to support instruction, they should be hired instead through a new part-time instructional support position class, Instructional Assistant, using account 51123, or as hourly Student Aides (51129 or 51225).

Students appointed as GTAs with full support packages should not, during the same semester, also serve as part-time lecturers or instructional assistants (see below) hired through account 51123. Rather, they should be limited to no more than 20 hours a week of GTA responsibility, as the primary purpose of their support package is to facilitate their progress toward the degree.

Instructional Assistants (IAs, 51123). The position of Instructional Assistant was created in the fall of 2006 to better distinguish between graduate students (or other individuals) hired to assist a course instructor and part-time instructors serving as the

instructor of record for a course or section. Instructional Assistants do not have graduate student support packages, are not GTAs, and should not be called GTAs. Whether they are graduate students or other qualified individuals, they either assist with a professor's course or assume responsibility for a specific lab, recitation, or discussion section that has 0 credits attached to it. They are distinct from instructors of record who plan, manage, and determine the grades for a 1-credit or more course, lab, or section (i.e. part-time Lecturers, see below).

Instructional assistants are hired primarily to meet instructional needs, though secondarily their work may help them finance their education and provide them with teaching experience, whereas Graduate Teaching Assistants are appointed primarily to support their education and only secondarily to support University instructional needs. This is an important distinction.

Instructional Assistants have ongoing, regular duties during a semester (as contrasted with irregular hourly student workers), are to be hired through the Faculty Personnel office using a new position class within the 51123 account, and are paid on a per course or per section basis. Salaries should be in the range of \$1,000 to \$3,175 depending on the extent of duties. Instructional Assistants do not qualify for benefits, as regular part-time employees do, nor do they qualify for partial subsidy of student health insurance costs as GTAs, GRAs, and GAAs receiving graduate student support packages do. They may be given separate tuition award fellowships from the graduate student support budget if a program chooses to support their education.

A school or department that wishes to hire graduate students as Instructional Assistants should contact Geri Rypkema in the Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships to ensure their proper hiring and inclusion in GTAP training during their first semester of service.

Student Aides (51129 or 51225). Graduate students who perform instructional assistance duties of a primarily mechanical nature on a limited and irregular basis (e.g., nonsubstantive grading, recording of grades, library research, copying, posting of material on course websites, audiovisual or lab equipment support, maintenance of lab supplies, etc.) should be hired through the normal Student Employment procedures as Student Aides. Note that U.S. graduate students with unmet financial need of at least \$5,000 can be hired as work-study students (through 51225) at a cost to the hiring department of only 25% of the salary (contact Geri Rypkema for details or see <http://www.gwu.edu/~fellows/wkstdy.html>).

Categories of Independent Instructors

Outstanding doctoral students with academic career goals may on occasion be appointed as GTAs designated as Graduate Lecturers (through 51122), or as part-time Lecturers (through 51123), to teach courses or sections of courses independently. In either case, the University's objective is to allow only a *small and select* number of our most experienced doctoral students such opportunities for independent teaching, under tightly controlled

conditions designed to ensure a positive learning experience for both the students taught and the instructor in training. All such appointments must be approved in advance by the school's associate dean in charge of graduate studies. This will require the development of new procedures within each school, as the hiring of part-time instructional personnel typically has been managed independently of the graduate office.

Graduate Lecturers (51122). Although there is not a distinct position class for Graduate Lecturers, an advanced doctoral student who has GTA experience, will continue to be the recipient of a graduate student support package, and meets other criteria, can be appointed as a graduate teaching assistant with the specific title Graduate Lecturer through account 51122 to teach a course or course section independently. The mix of salary and stipend should be what it normally is for a GTA package.

The opportunity to teach an independent course or course section as a Graduate Lecturer should be given only to an outstanding doctoral student whose record suggests that he/she will be an excellent teacher. He/she must:

1. Be a doctoral student in good standing (i.e., on track to complete within six years, with satisfactory grades, no incompletes, etc.);
2. Intend to teach at the college/university level;
3. Have completed the University's certification requirements for new GTAs (i.e., orientation, online course) and have had at least three semesters of GTA experience with good student evaluations every time, or equivalent evidence of competence;
4. Be assigned to teach a small independent course or course section, one that does not have its own GTA support;
5. Have an assigned faculty mentor who assists in designing the course; reviews syllabi, handouts, exams, and other instructional materials; and regularly observes and gives feedback to the GTA; and
6. Work no more than 20 hours a week (and have no other duties as a GTA or part-time instructor).

Lecturers (51123). A graduate student who is no longer the recipient of a graduate teaching assistantship and has been identified as the most qualified candidate available to serve as the instructor for a 1-credit or more course or section (even if there is a primary instructor of record for the course to which a section is attached) should be hired as a part-time instructor. For individuals lacking a PhD, that means being hired as a part-time Lecturer through account 51123, using the stated salary range for Lecturers of \$2,500 to \$3,175.

With regard to the hiring of advanced graduate students as part-time lecturers, a department should generally strive to staff its courses with individuals who have terminal degrees in the field. Thus qualified individuals with doctoral degrees should be preferred to graduate students who have not yet earned their degrees. If a qualified individual with a doctoral degree cannot be found, a late-stage doctoral student who has previously served as a GTA may be appointed. Amount of prior teaching or GTA experience, quality of performance as indicated by student evaluations and other evidence, and good standing

as a doctoral student (e.g., no incompletes, not on probation, on track for degree completion) should all be taken into account in making such appointments. A faculty mentor should be identified and should help ensure an appropriate level of competence in the classroom. Finally, the teaching engagement should not interfere with the student's progress toward the degree.

Doctoral students without prior GTA appointments or teaching experience should not be hired, as they have not been judged competitive for an assistantship and have not had the preparation and experience that GTAs or experienced instructors have had. Moreover, doctoral students from other universities must meet criteria at least as high as those we apply to GW doctoral students.

Training Requirements

In determining the training needs of different instructional personnel, a distinction should be made between those who provide mechanical/logistical support for courses (e.g., restocking the lab, troubleshooting the computers, mechanical grading, posting of web material, etc.) and those who assume teaching functions and interact, even remotely, with students (e.g., holding office hours, running labs or discussion sections, giving substantive feedback on assignments and papers, and otherwise interacting with students, face-to-face or not, on matters of substance in the course). Members of the first subgroup, consisting of most Student Aides and possibly some Instructional Assistants or departmental Graduate Administrative Assistants, do not need GTAP training, whereas members of the second group do need either full GTAP training or, if their teaching functions are quite limited, an abbreviated GTAP that serves to familiarize them with key university policies and resources.

The Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships will develop an abbreviated version of its GTA orientation program to orient limited-service assistants or aides. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the students to be hired are notified of and complete whatever training is required of them. The Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships will advise on which training program, full or abbreviated, is most appropriate given a description of the particular instructional support role. Instructional Assistants and GTAs should receive further orientation, guidance, and feedback from the instructor of record for the course in which they are assisting so that the experience contributes to their professional development. Both Graduate Lecturers and doctoral students serving as part-time Lecturers should receive faculty mentoring and supervision as well.

Department and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each hiring department to ensure that it hires individuals who are qualified for instructional positions. In addition, the associate dean for graduate or doctoral studies in each school should review appointment requests to ascertain that potential GTA appointees are deserving and to determine that any student proposed for appointment as a Graduate Lecturer, Instructional Assistant, or part-time Lecturer is

appropriately qualified, as defined above. The dean should also attempt to ensure that students receiving full graduate student support packages do not take additional positions (e.g., as Instructional Assistants or part-time Lecturers). Each school should therefore have or put in place a set of procedures to ensure that any appointment of a graduate student to an instructional position is reviewed by the graduate dean's office before it goes to the Office of Faculty Personnel. If a student does not qualify for independent teaching, the hire form should be returned to the department.

Schools hiring doctoral students from other GW schools or colleges to teach courses as GTAs, Graduate Lecturers, Instructional Assistants, or part-time Lecturers are to adhere to these guidelines. They should check with the student's associate dean for graduate or doctoral studies about the standing of the student, his or her other activities, and the appropriateness of the hire before proceeding with it.

As always, we count on schools and departments to ensure that all new GTAs are known to the Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships as early as possible in the spring or summer so that they can attend the fall GTAP orientation and participate in the online GTA course and workshops (or do so in the spring if they are spring appointees). We now ask that you do the same for Instructional Assistants, should you need to appoint them, as most will have substantive teaching roles and will therefore be required to complete GTAP in their first semester of appointment.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

CLASSIFYING GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING ROLES

TITLE	Account	Appointment	Duties	Payment for Services plus merit award(s)	GTA PROGRAM (GTAP) REQUIREMENTS/ QUALIFICATIONS
Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)	51122	Graduate studies office or GSAF to Faculty Personnel	Assists with instruction, grading, office hours, discussion and/or laboratory sections	Package consisting of assistantship: stipend, tuition and monthly salary Full package = \$15,000+ in stipend + salary, plus tuition GW student health insurance partially subsidized.	GTAP required the first semester of the GTAship in order to be a GTA. Must satisfactorily complete the program to be reappointed.
Graduate Lecturer (GL); subtype of GTA	51122	Graduate studies office or GSAF to Faculty Personnel	Instructor of record, with mentor support	Package consisting of assistantship: stipend, tuition and monthly salary. Full package = \$15,000+ in stipend + salary, plus tuition GW student health insurance partially subsidized.	Prior completion of the GTA Program plus three semesters of GTA, IA, and/or teaching experience are prerequisites. Should be restricted to advanced GTAs with academic aspirations.
Instructional Assistant (IA)	New Position Class created within 51123- Request position number from GSAF (contact Geri Rypkema rypkema@gwu.edu)	Graduate studies office/School to Faculty Personnel	Teaches zero-credit laboratory and/or discussion section, NOT instructor of record; OR performs GTA-like duties for a professor without a GTA package/appointment.	No support package-- Monthly salary only to provide instructional support on a course by course basis. GW student health insurance NOT subsidized.	GTAP typically required the first semester of appointment – Must satisfactorily complete to be reappointed. If support role is primarily noninstructional, abbreviated GTAP is required.

CLASSIFYING GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING ROLES

TITLE	Account	Appointment	Duties	Payment for Services plus merit award(s)	GTA PROGRAM (GTAP) REQUIREMENTS/ QUALIFICATIONS
*Lecturer	51123	Graduate studies office/School to Faculty Personnel	Instructor of record, or teaches laboratory/discussion section (one credit)	Monthly salary GW student health insurance NOT subsidized	Successful completion of the GTA Program and three semesters of GTAsip or IAsip or equivalent experience are prerequisites. Should generally be restricted to advanced and experienced doctoral students with academic aspirations.
*Teaching Fellow	51123	Graduate studies office to Faculty Personnel	Special mentored, advanced teaching opportunity	Monthly salary, normally with some tuition GW student health insurance partially subsidized	Must be experienced, successful GTA who has satisfactorily completed GTAP.
Student Aide	51229 or 51225 (Work Study IF student is eligible and Work Study position has been established)	Department to Student Employment	Normally assists with non-instructional duties such as lab setup	Hourly wage (student worker or work study) GW student health insurance NOT subsidized	Abbreviated GTAP may be required if position involves interaction with students; otherwise department handles orientation and training
*Graduate students appointed as Lecturers or Fellows should be late-stage doctoral students aspiring toward teaching careers in higher education who have received good evaluations during their GTAsips and are in good academic standing and on track toward their degrees.					