

Teaching Mentorship (adapted from the Handbook)

Goals:

Our students will have adequate mentoring and instruction to help them fulfill their TA-ing and teaching responsibilities. In the case of PhD students, this means preparing students to teach their own courses and providing them with the opportunity to do so before going onto the job market.

If you are an Instructor of Record with TAs:

Instructors of record should contribute to the TA's development so that by the time they are asked to teach their own class they have experience of, or contribute towards, as many of the following as possible.

1. Grade a paper assignment.
2. Grade a quiz (optional).
3. Present new material to students.
4. Write a quiz.
5. Write a paper assignment.
6. Construct/design suitable in-class activities (e.g., construct discussion questions for small-group discussion).
7. Design a course. *
8. Write a syllabus.*

If you are an instructor of record for TAs, you must observe each student each semester and complete the annual evaluation form. See details on the observation guidelines and the annual evaluation form below.

If you are a Teaching Mentor for a student who is an instructor of record:

Students who teach their own class will be assigned or may choose a teaching mentor specifically for that course. The mentor will review the syllabus and reading schedule and may make suggestions to the student, and shall be available to discuss any other matter concerning the student's teaching responsibilities.

Faculty are responsible for observing students who are teaching their own courses (a) early in their first semester of teaching and (b) at least once in each subsequent semester of teaching. Students will always have the option of being observed on request. See details on the observation guidelines and the annual evaluation form below.

Teaching Development and Observation Guidelines

Purpose:

Students will be observed in the classroom by their faculty Instructor of Record, teaching mentor, or other faculty member for the purpose of learning about and improving their teaching skills and habits.

Format:

Faculty are required to meet with the students they observe both before and after the observation takes place and faculty can request to observe students if they believe it would benefit the student. Beforehand, student and observer should discuss the objectives and anticipated challenges of the lesson to come. Together, they should determine several guiding questions that will enable the observer to focus his/her feedback in a way that is especially useful to the student in improving his/her teaching. The following are examples of questions that might guide students and observers in requesting and giving feedback:

1. How does this instructor organize and manage class time? Does he/she retain students' attention and comprehension?
2. How does this instructor accomplish the learning objectives discussed prior to the class session? Is the instructor successful?
3. Is this instructor's knowledge of the content of the lesson accurate? Complete? Does it extend beyond the textbook? Does the instructor use salient examples and give clear explanations?
4. How does this instructor field questions from students? How does this instructor respond to student comments or answers to questions? How does he/she handle off-topic comments and questions?
5. Does this instructor engage the students in discussion? How does he/she facilitate interactions among students? What is the classroom environment like?
6. How does the instructor establish rapport with students? What is the character of the student-teacher relationship?
7. How is the instructor's style of presentation? What habits does the instructor have? Which habits or practices are distracting? Which are most effective?
8. How does the instructor encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning? How does he/she facilitate self-directed learning in the classroom?

During the observation, faculty should take detailed notes about the organization and execution of the class session with attention paid to the focus questions agreed upon ahead of time and anything else the professor deems relevant and helpful for the student. Afterwards, student and observer will meet once more to evaluate together the success of the class session. Students should be invited to reflect on their performance and their students' responses. Observers should provide detailed feedback that includes positive comments and constructive criticism and suggests possible changes.

This observation should be the basis for evaluation as part of the annual review process:

Annual Graduate Student Review Process

The aims of this review process are to give graduate students a better idea of their own progress through the program, to allow the DGS and advisor to pick up on problems with teaching and progression early on, and, by doing so, to encourage timely graduation and improve teaching skills. The process outlined here is designed to dovetail with the

existing department mentoring policy and formalizes much of what we are already doing.

Philosophy proposal:

1. This proposal is student-centered and geared to helping students to graduate on time and to help to improve teaching skills.
2. It only applies to PhD students for now, though much of it could in future be extended to Masters' students.
3. This review process will have two elements. First, it will acquire feedback on students' work as GATs, GARS, and Graduate Instructors of Record from the faculty who are either supervising them or serving as teaching mentors.
4. The process for teaching review is as follows:
 - a. A standardized form either for GATs, GARs or Graduate Instructors of Record will be distributed by the DGS at the end of each semester to the relevant faculty supervisor or teaching mentor.
 - b. The faculty supervisor (for GATs and GARs) or teaching mentor (for Graduate Instructors of Record) will fill in the form. Comments will only be qualitative (no numeric scores for instance).
 - c. These forms will be returned to the DGS who will read them, and pass them to the student's advisor (if the student has one). If any problems with teaching are identified (for instance, that the student's voice is too quiet, the expectations for students are too low/high etc.) then the DGS will discuss this with the advisor.
 - d. The advisor, or the DGS, if the student does not yet have an advisor, will give feedback to the student once a year, probably in the early summer. However, meetings may also be held early in the Spring semester, if something arises from Fall feedback that is best discussed at an earlier date.
 - e. Teaching feedback forms are not automatically kept on students' records. However, graduate students have the option of having their feedback forms included in their file to be drawn on for writing letters of recommendation.

Feedback Form for Graduate Instructors of Record (To be completed by Teaching mentor and returned to DGS)

Professor's Name:

Student's Name:

Class for which student is Instructor of Record:

Program: PhD Philosophy

Year in which student entered the program:

Main Advisor (if applicable):

Projected AOS/AOC (if applicable):

Supporting MA:

As a mentor for this student, please provide feedback on this course (what the student did well, where they could improve, other suggestions that may be helpful).

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Your feedback will be passed on to the student concerned by their advisor, or by the DGS if the student doesn't yet have an advisor. Is there anything additional you would like to communicate to the advisor and DGS in confidence about this student's work as an instructor of record?

Feedback Form. Graduate Assistant: Teaching (To be completed by faculty Instructor of Record and returned to DGS)

Professor's Name:

Student's Name:

Class for which student was GAT:

Year student entered program:

Main Advisor (if applicable):

Projected AOS/AOC (if applicable):

Supporting MA:

As a mentor for this student, please provide feedback on his or her performance as a GAT (what the student did well, where they could improve, other suggestions that may be helpful)

.....
Your feedback will be passed on to the student concerned by their advisor, or by the DGS if the student doesn't yet have an advisor. Is there anything additional you would like to communicate to the advisor and DGS in confidence about this student's work as a GAT?