University-wide Standards for Teaching Assistants at Florida State University

These are University-wide standards that any student must meet prior to assuming one of the various instructional roles. These are meant to be university-wide minimum standards; departments may adopt additional or more stringent standards. Graduate programs which do not use graduate students in instructional roles would not be affected by these standards. They are meant to cover the formal use of teaching assistants in course instruction. Extra help sessions and voluntary tutorials in addition to regular class meetings would not normally fall under these requirements.

Certification of General Teaching Competence:
Each semester in accordance with guidelines of the Commission on Colleges (SACS) and the standards outlined in the following sections, the Academic Dean of each College is required to certify in writing to the Vice President of Faculty Development and Advancement and the Dean of The Graduate School that each student who serves as a teaching assistant (TA) in the classroom or online is competent to teach and for international teaching assistants (ITA) that they are also competent to teach in spoken English. (SACS statement see below)

General:
Administrative responsibility for the teaching assignment rests within the department in which the student is employed as a teaching assistant (TA). Each department is responsible for providing orientation, training, supervision and evaluation of its graduate student TAs, and for assigning a faculty member to work closely with the individual graduate student to assist him or her in carrying out teaching responsibilities and to facilitate professional development. There should be a departmental orientation for TAs prior to beginning their teaching responsibilities. It is also recommended that all TAs attend the fall orientation program sponsored by the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) before beginning their teaching responsibilities.

It is recommended that each program have a discipline-specific teaching manual for its teaching assistants to supplement the university teaching manual, Instruction at FSU which can be viewed on line (http://learningforlife.fsu.edu/ctl/explore/onlineresources/I@FSU.cfm).

Graduate Assistantship Job Code:
To monitor compliance with university policies and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements, it is imperative that the proper appointment classifications be used for teaching assistants. It is the responsibility of departments that employ graduate teaching assistants to establish the appropriate job code according to teaching responsibility. The Graduate School and the Human Resources Office will verify the requirements for each classification and are the offices to contact if there are any questions. Job codes can be accessed: http://hr.fsu.edu/PDF_Forms/compensation/NRA_Job_Codes.pdf

As a general rule:
Levels 1-4

W9185 Graduate Assistant (Teaching) - Stipend (FLSA Exempt)

This Graduate Assistant shall be classified as a degree-seeking graduate student who assists in the teaching function, but does NOT have primary responsibility for teaching. The appointee must be fully admitted to and meet the requirements of the University, be fully admitted to a graduate degree program, and be under the supervision of a faculty member. EXAMPLES: Graders, tutors, recitation leaders, lab supervisors, assistant to faculty instructor.

Levels 5-7

M9184 Graduate Teaching Assistant – Stipend (FLSA Exempt)

This Graduate Teaching Assistant shall be classified as a degree-seeking graduate student who has a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and performs primary teaching duties that are related to that student’s academic program. The appointee must be admitted to and meet the requirements of the University, be fully admitted to a graduate degree program, and be under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member. EXAMPLE: A graduate student having full instructional responsibilities for a credit class.

Minimum Requirements for Different Levels of Instruction (provided face-to-face or online):

1. **Grader**
   - a program specific statement of standards for graders

2. **Proctor for Computerized Exams and Laboratories**
   - undergraduate majoring in the discipline
   - specific instruction on proctoring exams and laboratories
   - attend training on Sexual Harassment, Academic Honor Policy and the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
   - supervision by the faculty member teaching the course

3. **Lab section**
   - undergraduate majoring in the discipline
   - specific instruction in laboratory demonstration
   - attend training on Sexual Harassment, Academic Honor Policy and the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
   - direct supervision by senior lab assistant /or faculty member in the teaching discipline
   - planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

4. **Recitation/discussion section**
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- undergraduate degree in discipline or related field
- some graduate work completed or enrolled in
- attend the TA Orientation/PIE Teaching Conference held each fall before the beginning of the semester or an equivalent
- attend training on Sexual Harassment, Academic Honor Policy and the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- direct supervision by a faculty member in the teaching discipline
- planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

**Course level types 5-7 presume the teaching assistant is providing the primary instruction in the course.**

5. **Lower-level course**
   - 18 hours of graduate work in teaching discipline
   - attend the TA Orientation/PIE Teaching Conference held each fall before the beginning of the semester which includes training on the following FSU teaching policies: Sexual Harassment Policy, Academic Honor Policy, American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Grading Policies, Textbook Adoption Procedure Policy, Syllabus Policy, Class Attendance Policy, Final Exam Policy, Copyright Law Regulations (Copyright Revision Act of 1976 “fair use”) and Course Evaluation Policy or an equivalent
   - student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
   - direct supervision by a faculty member in the teaching discipline
   - planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

6. **Upper-level non-major non-liberal studies course**
   - Master's degree or equivalent
   - attend the TA Orientation/PIE Teaching Conference held each fall before the beginning of the semester which includes training on the following FSU teaching policies: Sexual Harassment Policy, Academic Honor Policy, American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Grading Policies, Textbook Adoption Procedure Policy, Syllabus Policy, Class Attendance Policy, Final Exam Policy, Copyright Law Regulations (Copyright Revision Act of 1976 “fair use”) and Course Evaluation Policy or an equivalent
   - student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
   - direct supervision by a faculty member in the teaching discipline
   - planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

7. **Upper-level major course**
   - Master's degree or equivalent
-enrolled in doctoral level course work and strongly encouraged to have completed two semesters of doctoral level course work
-attend the TA Orientation/PIE Teaching Conference held each fall before the beginning of the semester which includes training on the following FSU teaching policies: Sexual Harassment Policy, Academic Honor Policy, American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Grading Policies, Textbook Adoption Procedure Policy, Syllabus Policy, Class Attendance Policy, Final Exam Policy, Copyright Law Regulations (Copyright Revision Act of 1976 “fair use”) and Course Evaluation Policy or an equivalent
-student participation in a “teaching in the discipline” course or equivalent departmental orientation
-direct supervision by a faculty member in the teaching discipline
-planned and periodic evaluations of the teaching assistant

Certification of Spoken English for Graduate Teaching Assistants:
As noted above Academic Deans are required to certify to the Vice President of Faculty Development and Advancement and the Dean of The Graduate School that the TAs in the college are competent to teach. This statement should also include certification that all graduate TAs whose native language is not English are competent to teach in spoken English.

All international graduate students who are not native speakers of English, and who are going to be TAs, should take the SPEAK test when they arrive on campus (as noted below, students who scored 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the IBTOEFL may be exempted from taking the SPEAK test). The Center for Intensive English Studies (CIES) administers and scores the SPEAK test, CIES also offers courses in spoken English (EAP courses). The SPEAK test is administered several times in the week(s) prior to the beginning of each semester, and the scores are available within three to four days of the date the test is administered. Departments are urged to take advantage of this opportunity to receive an initial estimate of speaking ability. In addition, the SPEAK is routinely administered as an end-of-term evaluation for students enrolled in EAP courses. TAs not enrolled in EAP courses may also take the test at that time. Course offerings, as well as test dates for SPEAK tests, are published in fliers distributed periodically to departments, as well as via email to TA coordinators. This information is also available on the CIES Web site (www.cies.fsu.edu).

The standards for certification of spoken English are as follows:

- A score of 50 or higher on the SPEAK test, or 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the IBTOEFL, certifies a student to teach at any level.
- A score of 45 on SPEAK, or 23-24 on the Speaking section of TOEFL iBT, certifies a student to teach at levels 1 & 2; and to teach at levels 3 & 4 for up to two semesters if also concurrently enrolled in an appropriate CIES English language course. By no later than the end of these two semesters, if the student's skills have not improved sufficiently to achieve a score of 50 on the SPEAK exam, the student will be eligible to only teach
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at levels 1 & 2. The student will only be allowed to teach at levels 3-7 by meeting at least one of the following two criteria:

- Achieve a score of 50 on SPEAK.
- Enroll in Advanced Spoken English for ITAs (EAP4831) and score 90 or better in the course.

- Student's scoring 40 or below on SPEAK should enroll in the appropriate CIES English language course(s) if the goal is to be a TA. Once a 45 on SPEAK is achieved such a student will be certified to teach at levels 1 & 2; and to teach at levels 3 & 4 for up to two semesters if also concurrently enrolled in an appropriate CIES English language course. By no later than the end of these two semesters, if the student's skills have not improved sufficiently to achieve a score of 50 on the SPEAK exam, the student will be eligible to only teach at levels 1 & 2. The student will only be allowed to teach at levels 3-7 by meeting at least one of the following two criteria:
  - Achieve a score of 50 on SPEAK.
  - Enroll in Advanced Spoken English for ITAs (EAP4831) and score 90 or better in the course.

- The standard for international students serving as ITAs in Modern Language and Linguistics is 45 (SPEAK) or 23 (TOEFL) if the student is teaching a course in their native language.

In unique instances a Department Chair or Dean may appeal the application of these standards by submitting a request to the Dean of The Graduate School. The Dean of The Graduate School will convene a committee to consider the request. The committee will consist of the Director of the FSU Center for Intensive English Studies; the Chair (or designee) of the Undergraduate Policy Committee; the person making the appeal; and the Dean of The Graduate School.

**Equivalent Previous Experience and Emergencies:**
With the exception of the 18-hours-in-the-discipline rule for primary instruction and in accordance with guidelines provided by the Commission on Colleges (SACS), the following options will be available to deal with special circumstances:

A student who through previous preparation or teaching experience has demonstrated knowledge and strong teaching skills can be exempt from some of the requirements in 3-7, as appropriate, by certification of the program chair.

In an emergency a department may appoint a graduate teaching assistant who has not met all the University-wide requirements for that level of appointment if there is an assurance that the student will meet the requirements by the end of the term in which the student is teaching.

**SACS Statement:**
Graduate teaching assistants: master’s degree in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced
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in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations. (Reference: Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS); Commission guidelines “Faculty Credentials” (Adopted Dec 2006).

**Sexual Harassment, Academic Honor Policy and FERPA policies and equivalency:**
University policy on sexual harassment training is provided by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance (EOC) within Human Resources (http://www.hr.fsu.edu), the Academic Honor Policy training is offered by the Office of the Dean of Faculties (http://dof.fsu.edu/) and the FERPA training is offered by the Office of the University Registrar (http://registrar.fsu.edu/). These offices provide training at the fall TA Orientation /PIE Teaching Conference. In addition PIE facilitates sessions in the spring usually during the second week of classes.

**Program for Instructional Excellence Workshops:**
The Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) supports and complements departmental TA training programs. To prepare TAs for immediate undergraduate classroom responsibilities, PIE conducts an annual two day teaching conference the Wednesday and Thursday before classes start in the fall semester. The conference is free to participants and focuses on policies and services at FSU as they relate to teaching. PIE offers workshops on teaching during the fall and spring semester and an online training series the “Basics of Teaching @ FSU”. PIE also assists departments in developing TA departmental training programs.