



## **POLICY ON TEACHING BY GRADUATE STUDENTS**

### **Teaching requirement**

As an integral part of Ph.D. level training in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, all MCB graduate students are required to complete the equivalent of two semesters as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI; a.k.a. teaching assistant) in MCB courses. MCB graduate students are not required to teach during their first year. One semester of teaching will normally be in a laboratory course and one in a lecture course; each semester of service should correspond, in terms of the effort required, to the equivalent of a 50% GSI position (see "Workload" below). The Department feels that such teaching experience is critical for solidifying the student's basic understanding of the primary foundations of the disciplinary fields in MCB. This Departmental teaching requirement is normally fulfilled during one semester of the second year and one semester of the third year. To provide pedagogy support and document completion of the teaching requirement, students enroll in MCB 380 when they are teaching and they must receive a passing grade (see "Evaluation" below). The Department provides the opportunity for teaching a third semester for those MCB students interested in increasing their teaching experience. Approval of the full membership of the student's Thesis Guidance Committee is required. In return, the GSI will, if necessary, receive an extension to May of the sixth year for completion of the experiments toward the Ph.D. degree. During the semester/year in which the student teaches the Thesis Mentor would provide any necessary supplement to the GSI, if below the MCB stipend.

### **Appointment and selection procedures**

The bulk of the teaching assignments are made in May of the prior academic year. Priority for teaching assignments in MCB courses is given to MCB students in their second or third year who have not completed their teaching requirement. In the late spring, the MCB Graduate Affairs Office (GAO) sends a notice to those MCB students who are eligible for teaching service. Students apply on-line and can list any relevant experience, areas of interest and expertise, and preferences for teaching in specific courses to be offered the following year. After this information is collected, it is given to the Divisional GSI Advisor (see Graduate Advisers List). All eligible MCB students will be tentatively placed based on projected needs for GSIs in the various courses to be taught by the MCB Department. Second-year students shall not be required to teach in the semester in which they will be taking their oral qualifying examination, unless the student specifically indicates a willingness to do so. All instructors and GSIs will be notified by the GAO of their tentative assignments for the next academic year by the end of the spring semester. All GSIs will be supplied with a copy of this policy MCB Policy on Teaching by Graduate Students by the GAO along with their appointment letter and Graduate Division and Union information. Prior to the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters, when pre-enrollment figures are available, the Divisional GSI Advisor, in consultation with the GAO, will make any necessary adjustments in GSI assignments in order to ensure maximum uniformity in the undergraduate/GSI ratio in each Departmental course.

If any vacant GSI positions remain, the Divisional GSI Advisor, with the assistance of the GAO, will recruit qualified graduate students from other departments or Graduate Groups. To assist with this recruitment process, any vacant GSI positions must be listed at the Campus Career Planning and Placement Center. It is the responsibility of the Divisional GSI Advisor to specify in these listings the minimum qualifications for any vacant GSI position.

Foreign students must demonstrate their proficiency in spoken English before being assigned to a GSI position. Information on how to fulfill this requirement for a satisfactory demonstration of English proficiency is available on the Graduate Division web-site at <http://gsi.berkeley.edu/lpp/index.html>. First year international students should have a passing score before the end of their first year.

### **Summer Session GSI Positions**

No MCB grad student may hold a GSI position in the summer without permission of their thesis mentor. Teaching in the summer does not count as one of the two required GSI assignments for MCB students. Summer GSIs instructors are not regular faculty and do not provide the same coaching/mentoring opportunities as GSI appointments during the Fall and Spring semesters. Third time GSI summer appointments are not paid an additional supplement. However, the summer GSI salary will not be deducted from your annual stipend and thus the amount you are paid as a GSI will be in addition to your annual stipend. Summer Session Instructors select the GSIs for their course(s). Hires are handled through the MCB Divisional and Course Support Supervisor and the Summer Sessions Office.

### **Workload**

According to the guidelines set forth by the Graduate Division, the amount of time necessary to fulfill the duties of a 50% GSI position should not exceed an average of 20 hours per week for the duration of the semester. The scope of work for lecture and laboratory courses is summarized below.

Lecture courses: The optimum ratio of students-to-50% GSI position in lecture courses has been set at 50 by the College of Letters and Science. However, due to limitations of both GSI funds and the number of available graduate students, the ratio of undergraduates per GSI in MCB courses recently has been more like 75 (two sections of ~37 students each). To ameliorate this situation, the number of Reader positions available to assist GSIs with grading of examinations, problem sets, etc. has been significantly increased and the format of courses has been significantly altered. Nonetheless, each 50% GSI is expected to: attend all lectures; lead two weekly discussion sections (maximum of 40 students); hold office hours; and, assist the instructor as necessary with audio-visual aids, grading, proctoring exams with faculty, and the preparation and distribution of handouts and exams. Graduate students are not permitted to deliver regularly scheduled lectures in MCB courses, except when the responsible faculty instructor is unavailable due to a medical emergency or another unforeseen circumstance.

Laboratory courses: The MCB Department strives to maintain a ratio of between 12 and 15 students per 50% GSI in laboratory courses. In laboratory courses that meet two afternoons per week, GSIs serve throughout the semester, i.e. for 15 weeks. In laboratory courses that meet three afternoons per week, GSIs serve for a total of 10 weeks during the semester. GSIs should attend lab lectures, supervise undergraduates, and follow specific guidelines of instructor for each lab course. Perform technical demos of specific procedures, grade lab reports, hold office hours of at least 1 hr./wk., and proctor exams with faculty.

### **Remuneration**

All MCB students are guaranteed support throughout the normal period of graduate training at the set MCB stipend level, as specified in detail in the "MCB Graduate Student Support" policy statement. As discussed above (see "Teaching Requirement"), service as a GSI in two courses is an essential element of the graduate training program in MCB and is required for the Ph.D., regardless of the source of funding for the student. While teaching, MCB students who are appointed as GSIs may receive additional salary above the set MCB stipend, and receive GSI salary funds as specified by the United Auto Workers contract for Graduate Student Instructors. Non-MCB students who are appointed as a GSI in MCB courses will be remunerated for the services they render according to the UAW contract and receive fee offsets as established by the Graduate Division. (See also Summer Session.)

### **Training and supervision**

All MCB GSIs work under the direction of a regular faculty member. Hence, course-specific training and supervision is provided by the instructors of record in the courses to which GSIs are assigned. This training typically takes place in the form of weekly (or more frequent) "GSI Meetings". The MCB-sponsored Bio1A course has, in addition to the regular faculty instructors, an Academic Coordinator who trains and supervises GSIs in this course.

During orientation week in August, all entering graduate students in MCB receive laboratory safety training from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, which is relevant to their service as GSIs in laboratory courses as well as to their own dissertation research. There is also a required training by the Department during Orientation week (prior to the start of classes).

MCB students are also required to attend the campus-wide GSI training conference sponsored by the Graduate Division Office of GSI Training on the Friday prior to the start of the semester in which they have their first teaching assignment. GSIs must also take the on-line GSI Professional Standards and Ethics Online Course. In addition, throughout the academic year the Graduate Division Office of GSI Training offers a number of informal workshops that all GSIs on campus are welcome to attend. Notices are sent via email or can be found on the Graduate Division web-site listed above.

### **Evaluation process**

MCB students who serve as GSIs in MCB courses will be evaluated both by the faculty instructor(s) and the undergraduates enrolled in the course for which the GSI serves.

All MCB students serving as GSIs enroll in the appropriate section of the course MCB 380 (there is one section for each Division) in order to document the fulfillment of their two semesters of teaching service. MCB 380 is graded S/U, and the grade will be assigned on the basis of a written evaluation of each GSI that is provided at the end of the semester by the course instructors. Samples of the evaluation forms used can be requested in the GAO.

Student evaluations of GSI performance also will be collected by each Division from students enrolled in the course both at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Mid-semester teaching evaluations are not kept on file; they are sent directly to the GSIs so that they can make use of this feedback before the course is over. Final teaching evaluations are forwarded by the Division to the Graduate Affairs Office, where they are kept on file and made available for individual GSIs to review. Sample evaluation forms for MCB courses are available in the Graduate Affairs Office. Non-MCB students who serve as GSIs in MCB courses will also be evaluated both by the faculty instructor(s) and by the undergraduates enrolled in the same course. These evaluations will be taken into account in considering requests for re-appointment of a non-MCB student as a GSI.

Each year in March, the Divisions will nominate a specified number of GSIs for the University's Outstanding GSI Award. These nominations are normally based primarily on the outcome of the student evaluations as well as instructor evaluations. The MCB Department bestowing of Outstanding GSI Awards is conducted in a prominent forum (e.g., at Divisional Asilomar retreats) to emphasize their importance. The University also holds a reception for all Outstanding Graduate Student Instructors every April.

### **Grievance procedures**

Grievances concerning assignments to specific courses should be referred to the appropriate Divisional GSI Advisor. Grievances concerning workload, working conditions, or relations with students, co-instructors (faculty or graduate students or staff) should be resolved between the student and the instructor, if at all possible. If necessary, unresolved grievances of this nature should be referred to the Divisional GSI Advisor. If a satisfactory solution cannot be achieved by the Divisional GSI Advisor, the Division

Head will appoint an ad hoc committee to resolve the issue. The final board of appeal in the MCB Department for resolution of GSI grievances lies with the MCB Graduate Affairs Committee. However, MCB students should feel free to utilize other avenues and procedures established by the University for resolving student grievances.